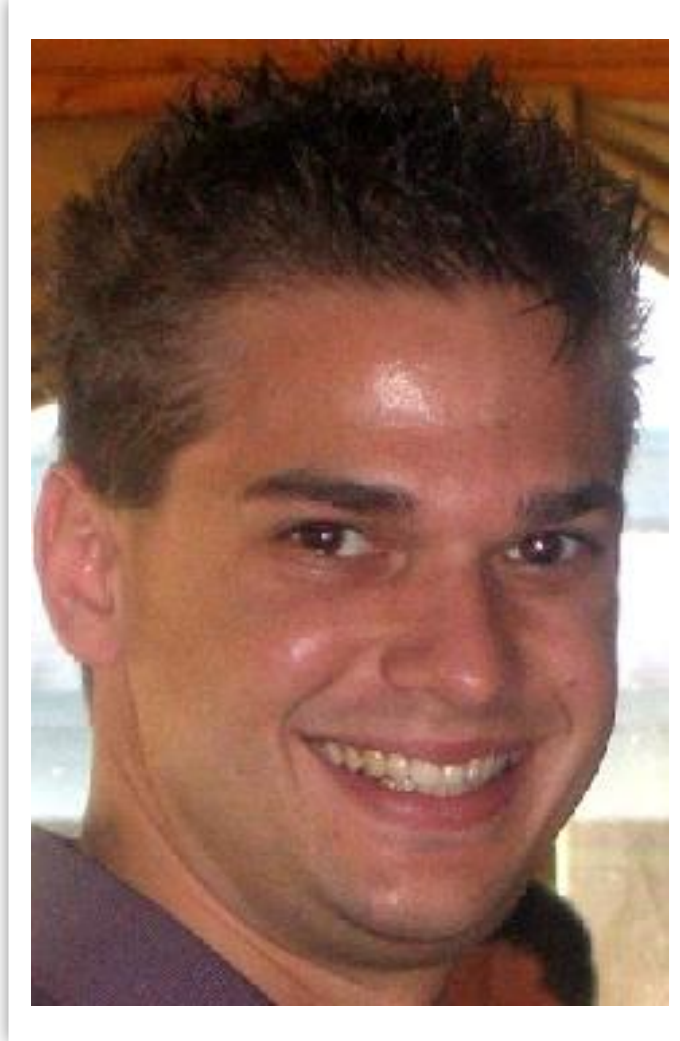


Ryan Skipper



April 28, 1981 - March 14, 2007

Born in Winter Haven where he was raised by his mom, Patricia, and step dad, Lynn Mulder, Ryan Skipper was brutally murdered in 2007 because he was gay. Outgoing and popular, Ryan lived his short life openly in rural Polk County where he attended college and aspired to one day open an internet cafe. But in March 2007, Ryan was targeted and violently stabbed to death by William Brown, Jr. (age 20), and Joseph Bearden (age 21), who admitted they did it because Ryan was gay. The brutal hate crime originally received very little local media coverage. But Ryan's story was featured in a 2008 documentary, "Accessory to Murder," and his killers' trials ultimately received national media attention in 2009 by CNN and TRU TV. Both of Ryan's murderers are now serving life sentences with no chance of parole. In 2009, Ryan's brother, Damien Skipper, attended the White House signing of the Mathew Shepard Act after President Obama became aware of Ryan's story. Ryan's parents, Patricia & Lynn Mulder, who still live in Polk County, are passionate activists who never miss an opportunity to speak out on behalf of LGBT equality.