

## Making a Difference: Max Hancock, Maryland

**As told by Max Hancock,  
Frostburg, Maryland**

**Max Hancock (00:00):** Hi, my name is Max Hancock. I use he, him, his pronouns. I'm from the Annapolis region of Maryland. But when I moved off to college, it was to Frostburg.

**Max Hancock (00:14):** I became president of my school's Gay Straight Alliance in 2018 really purely out of anger, I would say. I had, I think, a reasonably comfortable coming out experience, both as someone who likes people of every gender and also as a transgender man. But Annapolis isn't really as liberal as it seems to be. So my high school experience was a little rough. So when I became the president of the Gay Straight Alliance, it was like a door had opened to me, to make real change. So I started there. I started just really first and foremost by pestering the school to hold up their end of all the little agreements that they had made over the last couple of years.

**Max Hancock (01:14):** You say you're going to offer gender neutral bathrooms. Where are they? You say you're going to crack down on misgendering transgender students. Where is that happening? Eventually, that culminated in I got a couple of scholarships for youth leadership. And once I made it to college, I branched out. I joined a fraternity, which I never thought that I would do. I joined the student government. I'm working right now at getting a bill sent through to the Maryland General Assembly with local unions that would make labor contracts more universal. Because the more I learn about the world, the more I realize that no matter how bad it sucks for me, it does suck worse for someone else somewhere. And a lot of times, it's a friend or a neighbor that I can't just let it happen.

**Max Hancock (02:10):** I think I had a lot of privilege. So I figured I would use that to my community's advantage. I think a lot of people aren't prepared to be organized about their activism. So I don't know how much of my [inaudible 00:02:35] you can see right now. I am dressed like you would expect a young radical to dress. I've got all my patches and everything. But when it comes to making change in my community, I'll go out and hoot and holler with everyone else at marches and parades and rallies. But in my personal professional advocacy life, I found that it's really important to play by the rules just enough to get respect.

**Max Hancock (03:05):** I've learned all of the lingo. I've learned all of the legalese. I've learned how to write all the professional letters I need to write in order to look as reputable as I actually am on the inside. I think not a lot of people want to respect your scruffy looking transgender radical, so I try not to play into those behaviors as much as I can. Because if people think they [inaudible 00:03:37] one of those [inaudible 00:03:37], they absolutely will. So I've just learned to be very, very clean, as clean as I can be in my professional life.

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