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## Fearless: Emily Cranfill

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# Fearless: Emily Cranfill

## **Abstract**

Emily Cranfill '15 has been getting a lot of attention recently, but not necessarily for all of the volunteering, organizations, and groups with which she's normally involved. Since first hearing last week about the Ku Klux Klan's (KKK) plans to come protest in the town of Gettysburg, Emily has been inspired to take action by organizing a Rally for Unity Against Hate on campus this Saturday afternoon while the KKK will be protesting. And the responses to her fearless ideas, enthusiasm, and initiative have been staggering. [*excerpt*]

## **Keywords**

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, Rally for Unity, KKK, protest, racism, bias

## **Disciplines**

African American Studies | Inequality and Stratification | Race and Ethnicity | Sociology

## **Comments**

Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](#) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at [surgegettysburg.wordpress.com](http://surgegettysburg.wordpress.com) Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that -isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

# SURGE

[ VERB ] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

## FEARLESS: EMILY CRANFILL

October 4, 2013

Emily Cranfill '15 has been getting a lot of attention recently, but not necessarily for all of the volunteering, organizations, and groups with which she's normally involved. Since first hearing last week about the **Ku Klux Klan's (KKK)** plans to come **protest in the town of Gettysburg**, Emily has been inspired to take action by organizing a **Rally for Unity Against Hate** on campus this Saturday afternoon while the KKK will be protesting. And the responses to her **fearless ideas**, enthusiasm, and initiative have been staggering.



Clubs as varied as the [Black Student Union](#), the [College Republicans](#), [DiscipleMakers Christian Fellowship](#), [GBurg TV](#), and the [International Club](#) have all come together to support the message of the Rally for Unity Event: the importance of taking a **stand against injustice** “not by picketing or shouting or marching, but by **coming together as members of our campus community** to say, ‘**Hate has no place here.**’”

With the irregularly **high number of reported race-based bias incidents** this semester and the apprehensions some students legitimately have about leaving campus this Saturday while the KKK is in Gettysburg, Emily's plan to create this peaceful, anti-hate event gives students a **much appreciated outlet** to find and receive support. And Emily's been amazed by the **thankfulness and passion** with which people have approached her in talking about the event.

Emily's upbringing in **small-town Indiana where the KKK still has a real presence** was a key factor that shaped her experience growing up and, doubtlessly, has led to her **passion about spreading messages of acceptance**, community, and non-hatred. Coming from a mostly white area, Emily learned even more about the destructive power of racism **growing up with a biracial younger brother**.

“My brother is **one of the most influential people in my life**,” says Emily. “His experience is part of mine, even in the way that he's been identified based on the color of his skin... I want everything for him. And, as far we've come, **there's still so much more that needs to be done**. Whether we're talking about people of different races, ethnicities, genders—there's still so much that needs to be done.”



Emily's unique experience has given her insights into how race can be such a powerful defining factor, not only in terms of inequality and hatred, but also in terms of **her own privilege as a white woman**.

"I've always felt weird about having that desire for justice despite the fact that I've never really experienced discrimination personally in the ways others have. But coming to college has really **changed my perspective and awareness** of things. Like, my freshman year, my First-Year Seminar was Voice of the Rebel in America. I've been the Peer Learning Associate for the course every year since, and every time I learn something new, see something differently, and get a better idea of what my own **personal quest for justice and activism** looks like. It's changed my life forever."

In terms of organizing the Rally for Unity Against Hate for this weekend, her passion for identifying, **raising awareness** about, and **moving against the wrongs and evils in the world** has only grown. The event hasn't even happened yet, but she's already **learned so much about herself**, about the

roots of **humanity's propensity for cruelty**, and the **power of people coming together**, despite political, religious, and socio-economic differences. She says it best herself:

"To me, at the root of these issues, hate is always the cause—and there are a lot of different forms of hate. Ultimately, it doesn't matter whether or not the KKK comes—**hate happens in many ways** and we have to **combat it in its daily forms**. And we have to **fight it together**."

"You **can't stand by and watch** people do things that are wrong," says Emily. "Whether or not we think we're directly affected by racism, **it does affect us**. It doesn't matter if you're privileged or whatever. It's not about me. The reason I'm so humbled by the positive response I've gotten from the campus is that I'm not the issue here. I didn't do anything special, I just saw something that needed to be done, and did something."

\*\*The event will be held **Saturday, October 5th from 1:30pm-4:30pm on Stine Lake**. People are encouraged to bring a blanket, bring a friend, and **bring a positive attitude**.

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