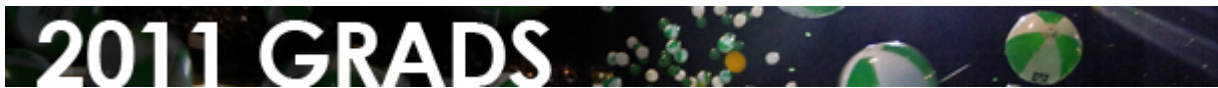


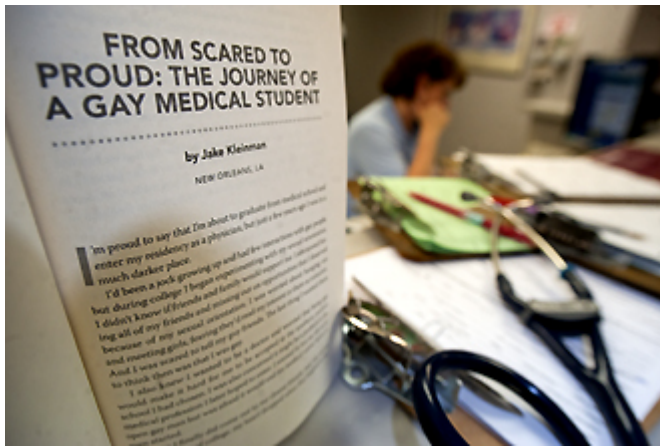
It Gets Better and Better for Med Grad

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At orientation during the past two years, medical school student Jake Kleinman has talked to incoming classes about diversity and acceptance. "At Tulane, we don't accept prejudices, and we embrace differences," says Kleinman, who's graduating with a medical degree on Thursday (May 12).



Tulane University School of Medicine grad Jake Kleinman hopes to be a role model for kids who are bullied. (Photos by Paula Burch-Celentano)



Kleinman contributed an essay to the book *It Gets Better* after he posted a video as part of the national campaign.

When he first came to Tulane, he admits, “as a gay Jew from New York, I thought I would be dead here in the South.” In spite of his trepidation, he came to the School of Medicine because he knew “it was a neat opportunity to help the city after Katrina.”

Kleinman has learned how accepting the New Orleans and Tulane community can be. When he speaks to members of new medical classes, he likens himself when he first arrived at the medical school to a patient who can't sleep and is nauseated. He asks each incoming medical student to pretend to be the patient's doctor. “That patient was me and how I felt,” Kleinman says.

On a particularly bad day, Kleinman asked himself what he could do that would be positive. He made a homespun [video](#) as part of the “[It Gets Better](#)” video project. Two gay men started the project in September 2010 as a vehicle for inspiring hope in young people, particularly gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender teens, facing harassment and bullying.

When the project's founders were collecting articles for their book, [It Gets Better: Coming Out, Overcoming Bullying, and Creating a Life Worth Living](#), they asked Kleinman to submit a chapter, “From Scared to Proud: The Journey of a Gay Medical Student.” The book of 100 essays was published this spring.

Kleinman, the first member of his family to become a doctor, is now looking forward to starting his residency training in pediatrics at Tulane. He also is buying a house with his partner, Robert Bacigalupi, a Tulane dermatology resident who received his undergraduate and medical degrees from Tulane.