

Madelaine Brown

Grand Prize Winner – 9-12 category

Topic: Dan Levy

In the iconic words of David Rose, creator and co-star of the sitcom *Schitt's Creek*, "I like the wine, not the label." This sentence cements David Rose as one of the first pansexual characters on television, and actor/creator Dan Levy as one of the principle promoters of LGBTQ visibility on screen.

Dan Levy is a Canadian actor, writer and producer, who I think has made the biggest impact on Canadian society in 2019. Along with his father, Eugene Levy (of the eyebrows), he created and co-starred in *Schitt's Creek*, which aired its first episode in 2015. The sitcom has a range of memorable characters, among them one of television's first pansexual characters, David Rose (played by Levy). Levy is openly gay, and makes a point with *Schitt's Creek* to show a world that is free of homophobia and intolerance, saying that *Schitt's Creek* "is a celebration of love between the family and between the relationships we build".

Levy has shown us a world that we can hope to see in the future, one where people of all genders and orientations can live and be accepted. He has moved LGBTQ visibility for people from all walks of life on television, by using the show as a space where queer characters can be queer, instead of focusing on coming out experiences. Levy was recently awarded the Davidson/Valenti award from GLAAD, an LGBTQ advocacy group. The award is given to someone who has made a difference in promoting acceptance for the LGBTQ community," says the GLAAD website.

As a young person, and a member of the LGBTQ community, watching this show and seeing these characters has made a huge difference for me personally, and for the LGBTQ community on a nationwide scale.