The Burials

STUDY GUIDE

OCTOBER 5 – OCTOBER 22, 2016
BY CAITLIN PARRISH
DIRECTED BY ERICA WEISS

2016/17 season
steppenwolf
for YOUNG ADULTS
Each year in Steppenwolf for Young Adults, we hope to engage our teachers and students in not only conversation about the work of art on our stages, but in an investigation about the way that art can help us discover new perspectives, inspire action in our communities or think about the way we engage our world in different ways. Our 2016/17 season theme asks, “When we stick to our guns, who pays the price?” Or, in other words, recognizing the culture of violence we live in, how do we participate through our beliefs and convictions?

This season’s fall show, The Burials, inspired by the enduring Greek tragedy, Antigone, explores the aftermath of a mass shooting: how one young woman, one family and one community responds to this tragedy in unique ways.

Given how hauntingly familiar this type of violence is, the aim of this guide is to relate the enormity of a story like Antigone to the epic nature of gun violence and mass killings in our country. And, alongside that, to ask how each of us can help to imagine a world without this type of tragedy and how we can inspire young people to help us lead the change in doing so.

We find hope and joy in collaborating with our amazing teacher partners. We find inspiration in leading young people in talk-backs at the theater after each show and getting to hear their always insightful reflections on our productions. We aim to provide—through the classroom activities outlined here—a way to use art as a means to inspire change and promote good.

Thank you for joining us for The Burials. We hope you will continue your engagement during our second show of the season, Monster, adapted from prolific young adult writer Walter Dean Myers’ extraordinary novel. Please see the back cover of this guide for more information.

See you at Steppenwolf!

From your SYA Team,

Hallie Gordon
Artistic Director
Megan Shuchman
Education Director
Emilio Robles
Curriculum and Instruction Manager

Jared Bellot
Education Assistant

When We Stick to Our Guns Who Pays the Price?

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ACCESSIBILITY DATES
American Sign Language-Interpreted Performance
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14 AT 7:30PM (public performance)
Open Captioned Performance
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14 AT 7:30PM (public performance)
Audio-Described Performance and Touch Tour
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15
1:30PM TOUR / 3PM CURTAIN (public performance)

STUDY GUIDE CURATED BY Jared Bellot
ARTICLES BY Jared Bellot, Sindy Castro, Emma Leff
EDITED BY Megan Shuchman
DESIGNED AND ILLUSTRATED BY David Mannato
The play ends with King Creon and the chorus:

Creon prays for death, the guards lead him back into the palace, and the chorus sings their final song.

Although the play is titled Antigone, the tragic hero here is King Creon and we follow his change in fortune. When Creon changes his mind about Antigone, it is too late. His actions have already laid out a domino effect of tragic events: Creon's son Haemon dies and Eurydice, Creon's wife, unable to take the pain of losing her son, kills herself.

Antigone contains five episodes and five odes. After Creon learns that Antigone has defied his orders and buried her brother, she is brought before the King to atone for her actions. The chorus sings of humankind's hubris (excessive pride in defiance of the gods) and laments about the curse that has befallen Antigone's family due to the actions of her father, Oedipus, the former ruler of Thebes. After Creon sentences Antigone to be buried alive, his son, and Antigone's love interest, Haemon, begs his father to reconsider to no avail. Antigone makes one final speech to the public before being sent away. Teiresias, a blind prophet, warns Creon that Thebes will suffer if Polyneices is not buried. Creon refuses, and the Chorus prays to the gods to protect Thebes.

The chorus enters as the elders of Thebes. They sing a song about how glorious Thebes is and how wrong Polyneices was in his actions.

The exodus is the final song after the last episode of the play where the moral of the tragedy is discussed. The audience experiences catharsis, a symbolic emotional release.

Antigone begins with a scene between Antigone and her sister Ismene. After hearing that King Creon has ordered her brother Polyneices' body to remain on the battlefield, Antigone tells her sister that she will give her brother the proper burial that the gods demand.

Antigone may have been written thousands of years ago, but don't be nervous. Greek tragedies (and our production of The Burials) follow a pretty reliable, easy to understand format. Check out the typical structure of a Greek tragedy below, and then see the opposite page for a plot breakdown of Antigone.
**The Burials Play Synopsis**

By Education Assistant Jared Bellot

The Burials is loosely inspired by Sophocles’ Antigone, and even though it is written in a contemporary voice, it follows the typical structure of many ancient Greek tragedies (see page 4 for more information about the structure of Greek tragedies and how the different parts come together to tell an epic story). Follow the red path for a synopsis of the play and check out the headers listed throughout to learn how this play mirrors the structure of Greek tragedy.

1. **Episode 1**
   - Sophie Martin and her friends, Janette and Jayden, sit outside of Anderson High School, having just voted in the local primary elections. Sophie tries to craft the perfect tweet to show her support for her father, Ryan Martin, who is running for Senate. Meanwhile, Sophie’s younger brother, Ben, records a cell phone video outside of the same school, speaking to the camera. As the students head into the building and the school day begins, chaos erupts as gunshots fill the hallways.

2. **Episode 2**
   - While the vigil is occurring, Senator Martin is being interviewed by Zoe Lucas. During the interview, Ryan vows to continue his campaign, despite the tragedy, and goes on to defend the rights granted to Americans by the Second Amendment. Ryan argues that if more guns were present at Anderson High School the day of the shooting, someone could have shot his son and prevented the other deaths from ever taking place.

3. **Episode 3**
   - The Martin family holds a private funeral for Ben where they are the only attendees. While Chloe is outwardly upset at her brother and wants to transfer to a new school, Sophie wonders aloud why they did not bury Ben next to their mother. Sophie makes an agreement with her father that if she and her sister return to Anderson High School (which Ryan thinks is important for his political image), he will get rid of all of the guns that reside in their home (which have been bothering Sophie since the shooting).

4. **Episode 4**
   - Upon learning of Sophie’s actions on the internet, Ryan scolds Sophie for not thinking through her actions. As Ryan demands that Sophie go on TV and apologize for her online comments, someone throws a bottle through their living room window. Ryan calls the cops and pulls out a gun to protect his family. When Sophie sees this, she realizes that her father has betrayed her trust and broken the promise he previously made to rid their house of all guns. The next day, Sophie begrudgingly sits down with reporter Zoe Lucas to apologize for her online comments.

5. **Episode 5**
   - A few hours later, Sophie and her sister Chloe sit outside their school covered in blood that is not theirs. The two girls try to make sense of the chaos and figure out if their friends were able to get out of the building safely. When Sophie and Chloe ask about their brother to see if he is OK, Mrs. Souder, a teacher at Anderson, reveals that Ben was the shooter and no one is allowed near his body. Both girls are shocked.

6. **Episode 6**
   - Back at school, students express very different reactions to the shooting during counseling sessions. Meanwhile, Sophie watches a video Ben posted online a few months ago that is unrelated to the shooting. She is shocked by the level of hate she sees in the comments section of the video and responds, writing that despite his crime, her brother was still a person, not a monster, drawing the ire of the online community.

7. **Episode 7**
   - The Burials is loosely inspired by Sophocles’ Antigone, and even though it is written in a contemporary voice, it follows the typical structure of many ancient Greek tragedies (see page 4 for more information about the structure of Greek tragedies and how the different parts come together to tell an epic story). Follow the red path for a synopsis of the play and check out the headers listed throughout to learn how this play mirrors the structure of Greek tragedy.

8. **Episode 8**
   - Mrs. Souder shares with Sophie her memory of the day and how helpless she felt/still feels and charges younger generations to act where her generation has failed. Inspired by Mrs. Souder’s words, Sophie picks up her phone and tweets out her opposition to her father’s pro-gun stance. The tweet quickly becomes viral and begins to spread across the online community.

9. **Episode 9**
   - Sophie is in the gym with Janette and Jayden sharing their memories of the shooting when Greg enters and gets into a fight with Sophie. The two are brought to the principal’s office by Mrs. Souder. While awaiting their punishment, Greg shares a story with Sophie about his best friend, Elliott, who was killed by Ben. The two discuss Elliott’s funeral and remember some of the victims of the shooting.

10. **Episode 10**
    - At the Martin home, Ryan confronts Sophie about her tweet. Sophie stands up to her father, attacking his position on guns and the way he handled Ben’s involvement in the shooting. The argument is heated, but eventually, Sophie cracks, apologizing to her father. After Ryan storms away, Sophie and Chloe share a moment where the two girls hug and sit together in silence, signifying the first time they have been brought together in the wake of this tragedy.

11. **Episode 11**
    - Sophie visits Brianna, who is still in recovery at the hospital. Brianna and Sophie bond over the ways in which their lives have been affected by being at the center of this event. Sophie apologizes for the shooting, to which Brianna reminds her, “you didn’t do anything.” Sophie and Brianna agree that neither of them want to see a gun ever again, and they decide to go to prom together so they don’t have to talk to other people while they are there.

12. **Episode 12**
    - Sophie and Brianna return to school, where Sophie is upset with Sophie and does not think her brother was the shooter, and even though it is written in a contemporary voice, it follows the typical structure of many ancient Greek tragedies (see page 4 for more information about the structure of Greek tragedies and how the different parts come together to tell an epic story). Follow the red path for a synopsis of the play and check out the headers listed throughout to learn how this play mirrors the structure of Greek tragedy.

13. **Episode 13**
    - Moved to action by her conversation with Brianna, Sophie arranges another interview with Zoe Lucas. During the interview, Sophieboldly states that she disagrees with her father’s position on guns and makes it very clear that she will not be voting for her father in the upcoming November election. Outside of a Martin home after the TV interview, Sophie and her father briefly reminisce about Ben before Ryan closes the door in Sophie’s face, kicking her out of their home for good. Before Sophie leaves, Chloe comes outside, bringing with her all of the remaining guns that Ryan had been hiding in the house in a duffle bag and handing them to Sophie to get rid of for once and for all.

14. **Episode 14**
    - Outside, at Ben’s grave, Sophie, Brianna, Janette, Jayden, Chloe and Greg enter, still in their prom attire from earlier that night, carrying shovels and guns that they have taken from the homes of family and friends. The teens lower the guns into a freshly dug hole and cover them with dirt. The teens dance together in the darkness as their posts about their protest with the hashtag #theburials goes viral.


GUN VIOLENCE, GREEK TRAGEDY AND THE STEPENWOLF STAGE:
A CONVERSATION WITH PLAYWRIGHT CAITLIN PARRISH AND DIRECTOR ERICA WEISS

Conducted by Education Assistant Jared Bellot

Education Assistant Jared Bellot sat down with playwright Caitlin Parrish and director Erica Weiss to discuss the inspiration for The Burials, the connection to Greek tragedy and the process of bringing a brand new play from page to stage.

JARED BELLOT: Caitlin, as a playwright, what inspired you to write The Burials? Why tell this story today?

CAITLIN PARRISH: [Erica’s and my] generation has been defined, for better or worse, by gun violence. I was in high school when the shooting at Columbine High School occurred in 1999, and I feel as though the conversation has always been “What is wrong with this particular generation of kids? Why are they dangerous?” But no one talks about the fact that we were a country obsessed with guns. Today in 2016, nearly 20 years after Columbine, we are still a country obsessed with guns, and still, no one wants to talk about it. Mass shootings have not gone away, they have only gotten worse. The Burials is my answer to gun violence in America.

JB: What does that answer look like? What is the driving idea at the center of this story?

ERICA WEISS: As a nation, we treat these mass shootings as isolated incidents that need picking apart. We ask “Why did this happen? Why was this person dangerous?” But we were also profoundly interested in creating a Greek amphitheater out of a high school? So the visual structure of Greek tragedy to keep us moving forward. Whenever we were trying to solve a structural or dramatic question, like how to make a particular scene or conflict more effective, we could turn to the elements look like any sort of atrium of a high school but

JB: Where does the connection to Antigone factor in to all of this? Why were you interested in exploring this issue through the lens of Greek tragedy?

CP: We wanted to take this story, which is a story about young people, and make it epic. We wanted to give young people a voice and elevate it. Antigone is an epic story in which a young person, a young woman, stands up to the state and says, “No. You are party to a tremendous ethical and moral wrong, and I cannot stand by and allow you to proceed. Even if that means sacrificing my life, I have to do what is right.” I’ve always loved the story, and I think it’s as resonant today as it was thousands of years ago. Antigone shows young people it can be their voices that matter. That it can be youth who take a stand.

JB: How was the story of The Burials influenced by the structure and story of Antigone?

EW: Antigone has been the gift that keeps on giving in terms of keeping the story honest and contemporary. Whenever we were trying to solve a structural or dramatic question, like how to make a particular scene or conflict more effective, we could turn to the structure of Greek tragedy to keep us moving forward. Finding the voice and tone of the original story and being inspired by it frequently wound up being a solution. We were not necessarily going scene by scene and directly adapting. But we were also profoundly interested in creating true catharsis. And the Greeks had a really good recipe for that.

JB: Will the world that we will see on stage reflect this connection to Antigone?

EW: Yes! The concept visually was how we create a Greek amphitheater out of a high school? So the visual of the set has the feeling of walking into an ancient Greek amphitheater, but all of the materials and structural elements look like any sort of atrium of a high school but presented in a way that is epic.

We’ve also, in the costumes, dressed everyone in contemporary clothes, but with little nods to the Greeks to continue to give the piece a feeling of the epic, which is the whole point, that stories about young people can be epic.

JB: What else did you do to prepare for this play?

EW: We were privileged to get to go to high schools around the Chicagoland area and talk to students about what their experiences have been growing up in a country where gun violence, and specifically school shootings, is a very real possibility. It was important for us to reflect and listen to the way that students experienced this reality. What do they think about the possibility for the future? What are they afraid of? We asked, “Do you think it will get better? How will it get better? What is the problem? And do you feel safe?” The responses were really profound, and you can’t help but feel a sense of immense failure when the answer to the question “Do you feel safe?” is no. But I don’t feel safe either. I don’t know how anyone can. That’s the problem. There are no safe spaces in our country.

CP: These students are looking for more security. What students described time and time again was how easy it would be to bring a gun to school if they really wanted to, and that they don’t feel the current security measures make them feel safe.

EW: And in Chicago, I think it’s important to note that there’s a lot experience and identification with gun violence that has nothing to do with these kinds of mass or school shootings. But that doesn’t mean that students are not very familiar with the threat of gun violence to a horrifying degree.

That was important to listen to, even though that is not the violence that is specifically referenced in The Burials. The one thing that we can connect is the how.

JB: Thousands of students across the Chicagoland area will be seeing this show. What do you hope that they take away from it?

CP: That their voices matter. That there’s something they can do being the age that they are. That it’s imperative that they do something. They should not make the same mistake that people in their 30s made when they were young and they didn’t speak up.

EW: And that there are some people who hear them and respect their voices and will look to them for leadership. I think this generation more than maybe any other can do something about this issue, because they have the ability to be very effective. And I want the adult members of the community—the teachers and parents—to come away with a broader empathy and respect and understanding for the perspective of young people and how they’re affected. We can’t talk [down] to young people and we can’t assume that we know best. And really, that’s the point. That’s the conversation we’re trying to create.

JB: Thank you both for taking the time to talk to me about the show. I can’t wait for The Burials!
PATTERNS OF RESPONSE: WHAT ACTUALLY CHANGES IN THE AFTERMATH OF MASS SHOOTINGS?

By SYA Intern Emma Leff

INTRODUCTION

In The Burials, Sophie comes to understand herself and her peers as pieces of a larger pattern — one of tragedy and inaction - surrounding mass shootings in America. She begins to use social media to respond to the violence her community experiences by speaking out against her father and in favor of stricter gun control.

Starting with the shooting at Columbine High School in Columbine, CO in 1999, which is considered to be the first mass shooting of this nature, there have been over 56 documented mass shootings in the United States of America resulting in 472 deaths and 420 injuries. Here, we profile eight events and track the legislative and community response to these shootings in order to identify what trends and patterns exist following mass shootings in America. We explore how we can stick to our guns, our beliefs, and our values, and make our voices heard in the aftermath of these tragedies.

I have a platform, because of my dad, and I feel like it's my responsibility to use it.

- SOPHIE, THE BURIALS

Columbine High School – Columbine, CO
On April 20th, 1999, Columbine High School students Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold attacked their school, killing 13 and injuring 24 before killing themselves.

Legislative response
In the year following the shooting, over 800 laws having to do with guns were introduced into state legislatures across the country, but only 10% of them passed. The federal government failed to introduce any legislation having to do with guns in that same period of time. The Colorado State Legislature failed to pass a bill that would require background checks for buying guns at gun shows (“closing the gun show loophole”), but advocates gathered enough signatures to bring the bill to a statewide vote in 2000 which passed into law with over 70% of the vote. This law has been proven to dramatically decrease the number of guns bought in Colorado. Following the shooting, security measures like security guards and metal detectors in schools increased drastically.

Community response
The Columbine shooting was not necessarily the first school shooting, but was largely responsible for making the public aware of the existence thereof. Following the shooting, awareness and guardedness surrounding school shootings have risen astronomically, shifting school environments significantly. Michael Moore’s critically acclaimed documentary Bowling for Columbine explored the shooting as a means to interrogate gun culture in America.

Virginia Tech – Blacksburg, VA
On April 16th, 2007, Seung-Hui Cho opened fire in several classrooms and other buildings on the campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University killing 33 and injuring 23.

Legislative response
Following the shooting, the federal government passed a bill considered the most significant gun control law in more than a decade that stopped gun sales to those considered criminals and mentally ill, as well as some other individuals. On the local level, Virginia put measures in place to better track those individuals prohibited from owning guns.

Community response
Many major news networks aired parts of a video manifesto sent by the shooter. These networks were largely criticized by the public as well as the American Psychiatric Association for exoticizing Cho’s mental illness. Broadly speaking, the event was a catalyst for larger conversations about mental health in America and police response to school shootings.

Aurora Movie Theater – Aurora, CO
On July 20th, 2012, James Eagan Holmes entered a movie theater during a midnight screening of The Dark Night Rises and released tear gas into the crowd. He proceeded to fire into the audience killing 20 and wounding 70.

Legislative response
There was no federal gun control legislation introduced following this shooting. However, in 2013, the Colorado State Legislature passed a series of bills preventing gun-buyers from skirting background checks by buying guns online or through private sellers as well as a ban on magazines with large capacities for ammunition. In response, the National Rifle Association and Rocky Mountain Gun Owners launched campaigns that forced the recall of two Democratic senators and the resignation of one, but failed to repeal the new gun laws.

Community response
Warner Bros, the distributor of The Dark Night Rises, responded to the shooting by offering condolences as well as cancelling premiere galas in Paris, Mexico, and Japan. Warner Bros also decided not to report box office numbers until July 23rd as a way to acknowledge the tragic nature of the situation. A few days after the shooting, a twitter account, @GunDeaths was created anonymously to document every gun death in America. The account continues to post casualties as they occur and has accrued over 15,000 followers.

In The Burials, Sophie comes to understand herself and her peers as pieces of a larger pattern — one of tragedy and inaction - surrounding mass shootings in America. She begins to use social media to respond to the violence her community experiences by speaking out against her father and in favor of stricter gun control.

I have a platform, because of my dad, and I feel like it's my responsibility to use it.

- SOPHIE, THE BURIALS
Sandy Hook Elementary – Newtown, CT
On December 14th, 2012, 20-year-old Adam Lanza shot his mother in their home and then proceeded to enter Sandy Hook Elementary School where he killed 26 students and teachers and then himself.

Legislative response
Given the particularly tragic nature of the death by firearm of twenty children and six educators, the legislative response to the Sandy Hook shooting was initially quite substantial. President Obama introduced sweeping gun control legislation, including measures for universal background checks on firearms purchases, an assault weapons ban, and limiting magazine capacity. However, these measures were struck down in the Senate in April of 2013. While federal response to the shooting in Newtown amounted to very little, the state governments of Connecticut, Maryland, and New York passed legislation cracking down on assault rifle ownership, magazine capacity, and background checks.

Community response
A “We the People” online petition “to immediately address the issue of gun control through the introduction of legislation in Congress” broke the record for most signatures on any petition created on whitehouse.org with almost 200,000 signatures in less than a week.

San Bernardino – San Bernardino, CA
On December 2nd, 2015, married couple Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik opened fire on a San Bernardino County Department of Public Health training event and Christmas party where they killed 14 and injured 24. They were pursued by the police and later killed in a shootout.

Legislative Response
Following the attack, President Obama called for legislation that would prohibit individuals on the US “anti-terrorism” No Fly List from purchasing guns. However, this proposal was met with opposition from Conservative legislators. The state of California is currently in the process of passing legislation that would crack down on the types of weapons most commonly used in mass shootings and require the collection of information of gun and ammunition owners.

Community Response
For the first time in 95 years, the New York Times published a front page editorial “End the Gun Epidemic in America” (calling for stricter gun control.) The NYT Editorial Board wrote, “America’s elected leaders offer prayers for gun victims and then, callously and without fear of consequence, reject the most basic restrictions on weapons of mass killing.” The article garnered over seven thousand comments. After the shooting, the topic trended on twitter under the misspelled hashtag #SanBernardno.

CONCLUSION
These eight incidents are just a select few of the thousands of incidents of gun violence that have taken place in the United States since the shooting at Columbine High School. While the United States represents less than 5% of the global population, it has been home to 31% of global mass shooters since Columbine, and leads the world in gun ownership (with 89 firearms per 100 residents). In 2016, our government is locked in a fierce battle over the extent of the rights granted by the Second Amendment, and mass shootings have become a much more normal part of our culture.

In looking at the incidents profiled above, we noticed three major patterns that emerged:

1. The Consistency of Community Response – Time and time again, we see strong and constant action from the community after an event like this takes place. There is power in communal action.

2. The Disconnect between Legislative and Community Response – While we see a consistently strong community response to mass shootings, the legislative response does not always follow suit. Federal and local legislators often fail to put forth gun control legislation, and even when they do, some of that legislation fails to pass.

3. The Short Lived Nature of Community Response – Though community response via news and social media is frequently strong in the days immediately following a shooting, the conversation frequently peters out within one week, becoming less concentrated and, consequently, less influential.

What patterns do you notice in studying this map? What surprises you? What community actions, on social media or otherwise, have you been a part of? How can we break the pattern of violence? How can we use our voices to stand up in the aftermath of these tragedies?
11-year-old Marley Dias is an avid reader and a lover of books, but the more books she read in school, the more Marley became frustrated with the lack of black female protagonists in the stories she was reading. Marley learned that fewer than 10% of children’s books published in 2015 had a black protagonist, and set out to create a resource for children like her. In the fall of 2015, Marley founded #1000BlackGirlBooks, a project to collect 1000 books with black female protagonists. Since then, Marley has collected over 4000 books for donation and assembled a database of 700 books for readers of all ages. She has also had the opportunity to speak at a number of events and conferences including the 2016 United State of Women Summit at the White House.

I started this because in my fifth-grade class I was only able to read books about white boys and their dogs. I understood that my teacher could connect with those characters, so he asked us to read those books. But I didn’t relate to them, so I didn’t learn lessons from those stories.

— Marley Dias

Marley Dias / Photo - Jazebel.com

Ethan Viets-VanLear is a poet and activist working against systems of police brutality, incarceration, and violence in Chicago. Growing up in Rogers Park on Chicago’s north side, Ethan noticed the intense “surveillance and oppression” that he and his peers faced from the police department and juvenile justice system. He began his activist work with Circles and Ciphers, a Project NIA program that uses restorative justice techniques with systems-involved young men of color in Chicago. Ethan has also worked with the Know Your Rights Project, which centers youth perspectives on the juvenile justice system and trains young people to be aware of and exercise their rights when in conflict with the law. Most recently, he has traveled to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland with the We Charge Genocide coalition. Members of We Charge Genocide formed the coalition after the death of their friend, Dominique “Damo” Franklin Jr., who died after being tased by Chicago police. At the United Nations, We Charge Genocide presented its report on the Chicago Police Department’s purported human rights violations and its alleged racialized violence against young people in Chicago. Through this presentation, We Charge Genocide strives to hold the Chicago Police Department accountable under several articles of the United Nations Torture Convention.

I see my work of trying to better my city/community and trying to change the ways we view and interact with others/the world as something we should all be doing.

— Ethan Viets-VanLear
Faatimah Knight is a student at the Chicago Theological Seminary who started the #RebuildWithLove campaign in response to a rising number of fires at black churches after the shooting at the Emanuel AME church in June of 2015. Knight partnered with Muslim service organizations to raise funds to help the seven churches affected rebuild their facilities. Initially, the campaign’s goal was to gather 500 dollars to send flowers to the families of the victims of the Charleston shooting. However the project garnered so much support that it has since raised over 100,000 dollars to aid the rebuilding efforts for black churches in the south. Knight has been featured in many news publications and honored at The White House for her work.

“I felt compelled to do something that would take a stand against hate. I wanted to show myself that I didn’t have to be crippled in fear and sadness by the hateful acts of others.”

– FAATIMAH KNIGHT

WAYS FOR YOU TO GET INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY:

Here you’ve read about some of the amazing work young people are already doing to better their communities, below you can find just a few examples of Chicago organizations you can get involved with to take action in your city.

THEATRICALLY

Albany Park Theatre Project

Albany Park Theatre Project is a community-based youth theatre ensemble that collaboratively creates work highlighting the stories of Chicago youth often overlooked by mainstream media and theatre. Together, APTP youth collect stories and create plays based on them to tell stories that deal with issues relevant to the community’s young people. The ensemble has devised pieces exploring topics like immigration, class issues, food culture, and the struggles of being a Chicago Public School student. APTP aims to empower young people to “envision a more just and beautiful world” through theatre and performance.

WITH YOUR WORDS

Young Chicago Authors

Young Chicago Authors is an organization that aims to empower young people through writing, performance, publication, YCA arms young people with the tools to craft and share their stories as well as to become empowered, critically engaged, and culturally-literate citizens. YCA sponsors a variety of programs that young people can attend to learn about and practice their skills and share their work in topics such as poetry, hip-hop, journalism, and emceeing. YCA is also the home of Louder Than A Bomb, the world’s largest youth poetry slam.

POLITICALLY

Mikva Challenge

Mikva Challenge is an organization that works to get Chicago youth involved in local politics and action civics. Through youth policy making, electoral engagement, and community problem solving, Mikva works with young people to strive for a better city and nation. Through programs like youth councils, in-school, and summer programs, Mikva helps youth practice their civic and advocacy skills through hands-on and project-based methods.
**NAVIGATING TOUGH SITUATIONS**

**STICKING TO YOUR GUNS**

By Teaching Artist Sindy Castro

**ACTIVITY TIME:** This activity is designed for 50 minutes, but works best over multiple class periods.

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**STEP 1 – REFLECT**

Have students individually reflect on the following questions. If needed, brainstorm or discuss some political/social issues before this step as a class. Tell students that these stories will be shared.

- Think of a social/political issue that is very important to you.
  
  **EXAMPLE:** Graffiti as an art form.

- What is a time someone you are close to (family, friend, teacher, etc.) disagreed with you about this issue? A moment where you felt like you had to stand up for what you believed in?
  
  **EXAMPLE:** My father disagreed with me on graffiti being a form of artistic expression.

- Were you surprised that they strongly disagreed with something you found to be really important to you? How did you feel?
  
  **EXAMPLE:** I was surprised that my father wasn’t seeing that graffiti was important to me and that practicing graffiti isn’t a waste of time but a real form of expression.

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**STEP 2 – DETAILS CHART**

On a separate sheet of paper, have students create a details chart modeled after the one below.

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**THE SITUATION**

Write about a time you had an argument with someone you have a deep relationship with because of something you strongly believe in.

Graffiti is an art form that I am passionate about and am learning more about. There was a time we were walking past an amazing piece on the way home and my dad started complaining about it.

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**THE DETAILS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where were you?</th>
<th>Who were you with?</th>
<th>What happened before the argument?</th>
<th>How did you feel?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We were two blocks from my house.</td>
<td>I was with my dad.</td>
<td>I said “Cool!” when I saw a graffiti piece. My dad listed all the things wrong with graffiti.</td>
<td>I felt angry because it felt like he was also insulting me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**THE OUTCOME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What happened at the end of this argument?</th>
<th>What do you wish would have happened instead?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My dad told me that I didn’t understand and that if I kept thinking about graffiti I would end up in jail.</td>
<td>That my dad would have realized that I had an interest in graffiti and was willing to let me show him some from famous artists. That he could see that it wasn’t just something gang members do. It’s an art form!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**STEP 3 – SCENE WRITING**

Have students pair up after filling out their Details Chart and discuss their memories with each other. After sharing both memories, students will select one of these memories to dramatize. Students will be recreating this memory by writing a scene together and then creating a second scene based on what they wish would have happened by writing an alternative WHAT IF ending to the scene.

**SCENE 1**

After selecting one partner’s memory to dramatize, use the template below to write a 10 line scene together about what actually happened. You should write this scene with two characters in mind – name one Character A and one B. See the example below to get you started.

**EXAMPLE:**

A: Hey dad, look at that cool graffiti mural on the side of that building!

B: Cool?!!?! That is not cool, that is a nuisance. Vandalism like that is the result of troublemakers thinking they can do whatever they want.

A: But it’s beautiful– I wish I could create something like that!

B: If you keep thinking like that, you are going to end up in jail. Graffiti is a gateway crime that leads you down a dangerous path. It lowers property value. It indicates gang activity. It’s ruining our neighborhood.

Etc...

---

**20 mins**

What happened at the end of this argument?

My dad told me that I didn’t understand and that if I kept thinking about graffiti I would end up in jail.

---

**What do you wish would have happened instead?**

That my dad would have realized that I had an interest in graffiti and was willing to let me show him some from famous artists. That he could see that it wasn’t just something gang members do. It’s an art form!
SCENE 2
WHAT IF you could improve the memory with what you wish would have happened? Rewrite the ending of your scene reimagining how you wish the conversation had ended. (Do you speak up? Do you educate the other person in the scene? Do they react differently?)

A: Dad, graffiti is not vandalism; it's an art form with a history of giving a voice to the voiceless.

B: What are you talking about?

A: Modern day graffiti started in the 70’s as a way to give people who didn’t have any other creative outlet a space to be heard, it was a political statement. And most graffiti has nothing to do with gang violence; it’s an art form that is practiced by artists and activists from across the world. If you’re interested, I can share some of what I’ve learned about the history with you, it’s really cool stuff and I think you would find it interesting!

B: I didn’t realize that it had such a history, I’d love to learn more.

Etc…

Now, write your own scene below using the space provided using the first 5 lines of your original text and adding a new ending to explore WHAT IF the outcome had been different.

A: ______________________________________

B: ______________________________________

A: ______________________________________

B: ______________________________________

A: ______________________________________

B: ______________________________________

STEP 4 - REHEARSE
Have students rehearse both versions of their scenes, the original and WHAT IF scene.

STEP 5 – PRESENT and REFLECT
Have student volunteers share their scenes for the class. After scenes are shared, have students reflect on the following questions either as a group or individually:

• What differences/similarities did you notice between Scene 1 and Scene 2?
• What patterns do you notice about the changes in the way we deal with arguments/disagreements?
• What is the most difficult part about disagreeing with someone you are really close to?
• When do you stand up for what you believe in, even if it means it might cause a rift in a close relationship?

THE SCENE

THE SCENE is a special opportunity for high school students to score an affordable ticket to a Steppenwolf production, meet Chicago’s most celebrated artists and connect with other teens who are passionate about theater. Each ticket includes dinner and post-show discussion with the actors.

TICKETS ARE $10

Purchase tickets at the door 30 minutes before the show, or in advance by calling Steppenwolf Audience Services: 312-335-1650. Use code 24361.

UPCOMING EVENTS

THE SCENE: THE BURIALS
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15
AT 3:00PM (post-show)

THE SCENE: MONSTER
FRIDAY, MARCH 3
AT 7:30PM (post-show)

Questions? Please contact Steppenwolf for Young Adults Education Assistant Jared Bellot at 312-654-5643 or jbellot@steppenwolf.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5
WEDNESDAY, MAY 3

All events last from 4:30-6:00pm

ADMISSION IS FREE!

To reserve your spot, please RSVP to Education Assistant Jared Bellot at jbellot@steppenwolf.org.
ONLINE RESOURCES:

**Gun Law Scorecard** – gunlawscorecard.org
This interactive map allows you to evaluate gun laws and their effects in all 50 states. Download a QR code reader to scan this code and visit the website.

**DoSomething** – dosomething.org/us
DoSomething is a website for teens that lets you sign up to do service and activism projects in your own community. They have ideas for projects on all sorts of topics and in a range of levels of difficulty. Download a QR code reader to scan this code and visit the website.

**10 Social Media Moments that Shaped the Gun Control Debate** – mediashift.org
A review of ten prominent times when social media was important to the way America understands and deals with guns. Download a QR code reader to scan this code and visit the article.

BOOKS:

**Taking Aim: Power and Pain, Teens and Guns** edited by Michael Cart
A collection of short stories for young adults about guns and their consequences.

**Leading The Way: Young Women’s Activism for Social Change** edited by Mary K. Trigg
A compendium of essays and stories by young women who are working to improve their communities.

DOCUMENTARIES:

**Under the Gun**
A documentary that focuses on the US debate on gun control through the lens of those impacted by mass shootings and daily gun violence. The film is available for purchase on platforms like iTunes and Amazon Video.

**Speaking is Difficult**
A short film that features footage of the scenes of mass shootings as they appear currently underscored by 911 calls from each shooting. Download a QR code reader to scan this code and watch the film.

**COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS ALIGNED WITH ACTIVITIES IN THIS STUDY GUIDE**

**COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR READING, STANDARD 2:**
Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

See Play Synopsis and Character Descriptions, pages 6 and 8

**COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR WRITING, STANDARD 1:**
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

See ‘Taking Action: Learning to Effectively Use Your Platform Activity’ page 16

**COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR SPEAKING AND LISTENING, STANDARD 3:**
Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

See ‘Navigating Tough Situations: Sticking to Your Guns Activity’ page 20

**COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR SPEAKING AND LISTENING, STANDARD 1:**
Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

See Examples throughout guide

If you need further information on how grade-specific standards fit into these anchor standards, please let us know.
The Young Adult Council is a unique program for passionate and motivated high school students who wish to learn the inner-workings of professional theater from the most celebrated artists in the city. In addition to face time with these leading professionals, Council members attend the best plays in Chicago, learn how to analyze and speak about these plays and lead events for their peers around Steppenwolf productions in hopes of inspiring a new generation of theatre enthusiasts and practitioners.

Applications are available on March 1, 2017.

Like the Steppenwolf Young Adult Council on Facebook! Or visit steppenwolf.org/youngadultcouncil for more information.

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- Tom and Elaine Wells
- Nina B. Winston

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Marcello’s Father and Sons Restaurant is the official partner of Steppenwolf for Young Adults.
This New York Times bestselling novel and National Book Award nominee tells the story of Steve Harmon, a 16-year-old boy in juvenile detention and an aspiring film-maker. His life has been turned upside down by his alleged participation in a robbery gone awry and now he might spend the rest of his life behind bars. As the prosecution makes its case, Steve writes his story as a screenplay, trying to understand if he’s really the monster they say he is.