

# Finding Radical Hope Documentary Teacher Resource & Advocacy Tool

## ***Introduction***

This guide has been written to support teachers in using the documentary film *Finding Radical Hope* as both a teaching tool with intermediate and senior students (Grades 7-12), and as an advocacy tool for teachers, parents, and administrators.



(Students at Prerna School, Lucknow)

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## ***Finding Radical Hope***

The documentary film *Finding Radical Hope*, co-directed by Chris Altorf and Andrew Kushnir, profiles a multi-year international research project that examines how young people are doing in our recent years of global unrest. Dr. Kathleen Gallagher (University

of Toronto) has for decades committed to a very distinct site for her award-winning research: the drama classroom. In this often-marginalized and underfunded space, young people have been testing their voices in the world and finding ways to ask for the world they want. Over the course of its 22-minute duration, *Finding Radical Hope* takes us through classrooms in North America, Europe and Asia, giving us a glimpse of over 250 students who participated in this remarkable study prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. It also sheds light on *Towards Youth: a play on radical hope*, the play that emerged from this research and premiered at Crow's Theatre in spring 2019, a Project: Humanity/Crow's co-production. Professional actors from Toronto embody the words of young people from across the globe in an effort to turn the public towards the power of arts education and drama's capacity to foster youth citizenship.



### ***Dr. Kathleen Gallagher's Research Project***

**Youth, Theatre, Radical Hope and the Ethical Imaginary project** is a SSHRC-funded five year multi-sited international ethnographic study. Working with partners in Taiwan, India, Greece, England, and in Toronto, the study investigates how the drama classroom can cultivate relationships, dispositions, and values that orient young people towards, and support them in, engaged citizenship.

This project builds upon a previous SSHRC-funded study (**Urban School Performances**) that discovered 'hope' and 'care' as significant constructs in young

people's engagement with schools by investigating how these concepts relate to the development of young people's broader civic engagement, and how the collaborative nature of drama work can incite intercultural dialogue and civic engagement for youth in global contexts.

### ***Towards Youth***

**Project: Humanity** is a non-profit, Toronto-based theatre company focused on creating original and innovative socially-minded audience experiences through the arts. Their commitment to joining and advancing community conversations on issues of social importance has resulted in award-winning plays and social interventions.

Playwright Andrew Kushnir wrote and co-directed *Towards Youth*, a play constructed entirely from the interviews, classroom encounters, and video footage of the Radical Hope research. The play helps audiences better understand the struggles and ingenuity of young people in vastly different geopolitical sites, and further, how the adult world could turn differently towards youth; how our very democracy depends upon our capacity to think relationally and to engage civically in this increasingly politically polarized moment.

The world premiere of *Towards Youth* also presented a further research opportunity to explore the ways that audience members are affected by documentary theatre that enables us to 'visit' the stories and experiences of others. This research project, called ***Towards Youth: Youth Civic Engagement and Theatre***, allowed us to carry out 76 adult audience interviews and 89 youth interviews; 2 actor interviews; 3 facilitator interviews; 2 teacher interviews; and 9 observed verbatim workshops with youth in Toronto schools carried out by facilitators from Project: Humanity.



(Cast members of Towards Youth: Back L-R Aldrin Bundoc, Zorana Sadiq, Amaka Umeh, Loretta Yu, Stephen Jackman-Torkoff, Liisa Repo-Martell  
Front: Emilio Vieira  
Photo credit Aleksander Antonijevic)

## **Classroom Activities: Finding Radical Hope**

### *Curriculum Connections*

#### **Grade 7:**

B2.1 construct personal interpretations of drama works, connecting drama issues and themes to their own and others' ideas, feelings, and experiences

B3.1 compare and contrast how social values are communicated in several different drama forms and/or styles of live theatre from different times and places

#### **Grade 8:**

B2.1 construct personal interpretations of drama works, connecting drama issues and themes to social concerns at both the local and global level

B3.2 identify and describe a wide variety of ways in which drama and theatre make or have made contributions to social, cultural, and economic life in a variety of times and places

#### **Grade 9:**

A1.1 use a variety of print and non-print sources to generate and focus ideas for drama activities and presentations

A1.3 use role play to explore, develop, and represent themes, ideas, characters, feelings, and beliefs in producing drama works

B2.1 identify and explain the various purposes that drama serves or has served in diverse communities and cultures from the present and past

B3.2 identify specific social skills and personal characteristics they have acquired or strengthened through drama work that can help them succeed in other areas of life

**Grade 10:**

A2.2 use a variety of conventions to create a distinct voice that reflects a particular global, social, or personal perspective (e.g., use voices in the head, role on the wall, and hot seating to create a complex character from another region or country)

B1.2 analyse a variety of drama works to compare and assess how they explore universal themes and issues

B2.1 identify different types of drama and explain their function in diverse communities and cultures from the past and present

B3.2 identify skills they have developed through drama activities and explain how they can be useful in work and other social contexts

C2.2 describe how drama is used for various purposes in a range of social contexts



(Cast members of Towards Youth: L-R Jessica Greenberg, Loretta Yu, Amaka Umeh, Zorana Sadiq, Stephen Jackman-Torkoff, Tim Dowler-Coltman, Aldrin Bundoc, Emilio Vieira  
Photo credit Aleksander Antonijevic)

**Grade 11 (ADA3M):**

B1.2 analyse drama works to determine how they communicate ideas about issues, culture, and society

B2.2 identify ways in which drama can influence personal growth, relationships with others, and aesthetic judgement

B2.4 explain how different types of theatre mirror cultural diversity and local or regional concerns in Canadian and global societies from the past and present

B3.2 analyse their use of the creative process in drama activities, and explain what they learned from it and how that learning can be applied in work and other social contexts

**Grade 11 (ADA3O):**

B2.1 identify different purposes for drama and the forms used to achieve these purposes in diverse communities and cultures from the past and present

B2.2 identify ways in which drama can promote self- and social awareness

B2.3 identify ways in which drama works can promote social improvement and good citizenship

**Grade 12 (ADA4M):**

B2.1 demonstrate an understanding of how drama questions social and cultural conditions in a variety of Canadian and global drama sources and traditions

B2.2 describe ways in which their personal experiences in drama have influenced their attitudes to others and their own world view

B2.3 describe ways in which drama can support or influence school and/or local community goals

B2.4 describe different approaches used to explore universal concepts and themes in the drama of diverse cultures

B3.2 identify skills they have acquired through drama activities and explain how they can contribute to success beyond the classroom

**Grade 12 (ADA4E):**

B2.1 demonstrate an understanding of how knowledge and skills developed through drama can be used in social and workplace contexts

B2.2 identify ways in which drama activities strengthen their social and employability skills

C1.2 use correct terminology for the styles, components, processes, and techniques of drama in creating and responding to drama works

C2.1 describe how social and cultural patterns influence the forms and subject matter of drama



(Students rehearsing in Coventry, England)

**Pre-Viewing Activities:**

**Activity #1: The Drama Classroom**

In small discussion groups, ask students to brainstorm: “What does learning in Drama look like? How is it the same as, or different from, learning in other subject areas?” If you are teaching virtually, students can brainstorm in breakout groups and report back to the class, or use interactive technology such as Google docs or [Padlet](#) to record their ideas. As a whole class, discuss the findings from each group's brainstorm. Come to a collective, multi-faceted understanding of what learning in Drama looks like.

**Activity #2 Drama is...**

On the blackboard (or on chart paper), create the following chart:

Drama is....	Drama can...	Drama has...

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Invite students to come up and share their response to one or more of the prompts. If you are teaching virtually you could do this activity using 3 separate pages on [Jamboard](#).

After reviewing the film, return to these prompts and see if students have additional ideas to add. Ask them to discuss the responses with an elbow partner or 'virtual neighbour'.

### Activity #3 Context building

Depending on students' level of readiness, they may need additional background information about the five research sites and the existing social and political issues presented in the documentary (See additional resources).



(Map of the research sites)

### *Post-Viewing Discussion Questions*

1. How did the documentary use a variety of elements to convey the message (e.g. music, still images, video clips, text over etc.)?
2. Compare and contrast the experiences and concerns of students around the world.
3. How was drama used in the variety of contexts to explore the students' issues and interests?
4. In what ways is drama making a difference in the lives of these students and their communities?
5. Why use verbatim theatre?
6. What is the value of meeting real people through a play?
7. What is the power of hope?
8. How was drama used in the 5 sites around the world? How does that compare to your experiences with drama?



## ***Post-Viewing Activity***

### **Activity #1: Snowball**

Ask students to sit in a circle and write a brief response to the documentary film on a piece of scrap paper. When students are finished, ask them to scrunch up their papers into a “snowball” and throw it into the centre of the circle. Invite students to retrieve a snowball (not their own) from the circle and return to their seats. Give students a moment to read what was written on their snowball and then go around the circle and have students share the reflections on the paper they retrieved.

If you are teaching virtually, students can create their snowball on [Padlet](#). Students can then comment with their name on the snowball they wish to “retrieve”. NOTE: In the Padlet settings there is an option to allow users to post anonymously and to allow other users to comment. You will need to enable these options when creating the Padlet.

Discussion prompts:

*What were the common ideas or themes that emerged from the responses?*

*What resonated with you?*

*What surprised you or challenged your own response to the film?*

### **Activity #2: Graffiti Response**

Place 5 chart papers around the room, each with one of the research sites (Taipei, Lucknow, Coventry, Toronto and Athens) in the centre. Divide students into groups and assign each group to one of the chart papers. Using the [Graffiti strategy](#), set a timer for 2 minutes and ask students to brainstorm about the research site they have been given. They may draw on the previous class discussion, or other thoughts, ideas and questions that have not yet been discussed. When the timer goes, ask groups to rotate clockwise to the next paper. Repeat the process until groups have had the opportunity to visit each paper. When groups return to their original paper, give them an additional two minutes to re-read their paper, make connections between the ideas and draw out any key ideas or themes. Invite one member of each group to share key ideas from their paper with the class. If you are teaching virtually, this can be done using five separate pages on [Jamboard](#).

### ***Extension: Writing in Role***

Ask students to select one moment depicted in the documentary that they wish to explore further. They may need to do some additional research to gain further information (see additional resources). Invite students to write in role to further explore their chosen moment. They may choose to write in role as a person who appeared in the documentary film or someone who did not, but is somehow connected to the scene.

This writing in role could become the starting point for further drama exploration. Whether teaching virtually or in person, students may write in role in their notebooks or Microsoft Word or Google docs.



(Drama class/Corridor of Voices in Toronto, Canada)

### Activity #3: **Marking the Moment**

Divide students into groups and ask them to discuss one moment in the documentary that resonated with them. Invite each group to “mark the moment” they have selected. Give groups time to rehearse and then ask them to share.

If you are teaching virtually, accommodations will vary based on the strategy students select to mark the moment. Suggestions include:

- Creating a tableau in breakout rooms and taking a screenshot to share
- Creating a soundscape with “found sounds” that students can create with objects in their home
- Using [Jamboard](#) to create thought-tracking for a character
- Using the record function to create a slow motion scene

#### Activity #4: 24 Hour Clock

Invite students to select one character from the documentary whose life they would like to explore further. Note: students may also wish to draw on the interview responses from Towards Youth (see Appendix A) to inform their choices. Using the strategy 24 hour clock, students mime a day in the life of their chosen character. Depending on student readiness, you may wish to prompt students by calling out the time in one hour increments (e.g. it is now 6am, what is your character doing? etc.). After students have mimed the day, debrief the activity.

Sample discussion questions:

What events or activities did you imagine your character doing in a day?

In what ways were they the same or different from other characters being explored?

In what ways were they the same or different from a day in your own life?

If you are teaching virtually, the 24 hour clock can be done in the main session and the student debrief may happen in breakout rooms or the main session, depending on student need.



(Students doing warm-up activities in Tainan, Taiwan)

#### Activity #5: Exploring in Role

Divide the class into small groups and ask students to select one moment in the film they wish to explore further. Depending on the students' level of readiness, select one of the following options:

- a) **Teacher in Role:** Using the teacher in role strategy, invite students to pose questions to you in role as one of the people from the documentary film. If you are teaching virtually, students can unmute to ask questions or pose questions in the chat function.
- b) **Hot Seating:** Divide students into groups of 4-5. Each group selects one person to be in the "hot seat" and responds to questions about the film in role. Allow

multiple students to experience being in the hot seat as time allows. If you are teaching virtually, Hot Seating can take place in breakout rooms and students can report back about their experiences in the main session.

#### Activity #6: Student Voice in Towards Youth

Select several quotes from the student audience members who were interviewed after viewing the play *Towards Youth* and post them around the room (See Appendix A). Invite students to wander around and select the quote that resonates with them and stand by their chosen quote. Ask students to discuss why they selected the quote with those who selected the same quote they did.

If you are teaching virtually, quotes can be shared via screen share, or Google docs and students can be assigned to a breakout room based on their chosen quote.

#### Activity #7: Interviews

Divide students into pairs and ask them to label themselves A and B. Student A will be in role as the interviewer and Student B will be in role as the interviewee. Student A will interview Student B about their response to the documentary and the role of Drama in their life. Student B will respond. Switch roles as time allows.

Depending on student readiness, pairs may plan the questions that Student A will ask in advance, or the questions may be brainstormed as a whole class.

If you are teaching virtually, pairs can conduct interviews in the breakout rooms

#### Activity #8: Improvised Intergenerational Dialogue

Have students read the conversation between mother and daughter in Appendix B (below). Invite the students to talk about the different intergenerational perspectives apparent in the conversation. Invite the students to read the lines and improvise further the discussion between the pair, exploring their different worldviews and trying out ways to hear each other better.

If you are teaching virtually, pairs can carry out the improvised dialogue in the breakout rooms.

#### Activity #9: **Verbatim Theatre**

*Finding Radical Hope* could be used as the stimulus for a unit on verbatim theatre. See, for example, the **Verbatim Theatre unit** from the Council of Ontario Drama and Dance Educators (see also additional resources)



(Cast members of Towards Youth: Back row L-R Stephen Jackman-Torkoff, Amaka Umeh, Emilio Vieira  
 Front row L-R Aldrin Bundoc, Zorana Sadiq, Loretta Yu, Tim Dowler-Coltman  
 Photo credit Aleksander Antonijevic)

**Advocacy Materials:**

The following resources can be a starting point for discussion with students, parents, teachers of other subject areas and administrators on the importance of Drama in education.

1. Student Quotes (see Appendix A)

The quotes are from students who were interviewed after viewing the play **Towards Youth**. These quotes speak to the power of drama and the value it holds in students' lives. Activity #6 may be used here to engage in conversation about the value of drama in the lives of students.

2. **Youth, Theatre, Radical Hope and the Ethical Imaginary:  
 An intercultural investigation of drama pedagogy, performance and civic engagement**

**FINDINGS Across Sites (Toronto, Tainan, Coventry, Athens, Lucknow):**

· **To see and be seen as a fundamental right:** Young people learn best in and from the worlds they inhabit. Curriculum and pedagogies that centre the everyday experiences of young people are most powerful.

· **Creative practices to dream more connected lives:** the process of imagining community (facilitated through drama) is critical to fostering hope and care for the self and others. This understanding is powerfully corroborated by the multi-site survey – the drama space is appreciated for its ability to address certain deficits that young people may experience in other relationships.

· Given the impact of the current world order on the social inheritance of young people, **hope is, on one hand, a shared political alternative but can also be a deep source of divide.** Perceived minority/majority identifications (e.g. ethnic, religious, gender, caste in Lucknow; socioeconomic class in Coventry, Toronto, and Athens, Indigeneity and race in Toronto; Indigeneity and family-based stigmatization in Tainan) fundamentally shape the experience and orientation of hope in young lives. Notably, students who believe they are in the majority (50% of those surveyed) tend to find hope by positioning themselves toward the future and by exploring collective artistic engagement, while those who understand themselves to be in the minority benefit from safe and authentic reflection on their present experiences and dramatic opportunities for self-expression.

· **The trifecta of care:** Students, regardless of site, shared that their early sense of hope is dominated by their relationship with their school peers, school teachers, and their parents. These relationships foster hope by providing them opportunities to both listen and assert, to care and be cared for. This important foundation later becomes a point of anxiety as youth age and naturally pull away from these three primary relationships that are replaced by other types of relationships, especially romantic ones. Students report that this transition makes them feel less optimistic about their personal future.

· **Care as responsibility to others:** the ‘ensemble’ or collective process of theatre-making, underscores how struggle and disagreement, difference and solidarity are valued skills in an increasingly fractured world. In response to the increased anxiety students develop with age, the collaborative engagement offered by the drama classroom/club provides important reassurances for youth. They grow in the confident belief that they will find (and help provide for others) agency within a caring community.

3. **CODE Conversations Episode 1:** An interview with Andrew Kushnir and Zorana Sadiq.
4. Council of Ontario Drama and Dance Educators **Brochure** on the value of Drama



(Students and researchers in Athens, Greece)

*Additional Resources:*

Dr. Kathleen Gallagher's [Drama Research](#) website

National Drama: [An Introduction to Verbatim Theatre](#) (video)

National Drama: [The Ethics of Verbatim Theatre](#) (video)

[Reclaiming The Radical: Drama In Dangerous Times – An Evening of Exploration](#)

Towards Youth and Radical Hope: [A Teacher Resource Guide](#)

[Council of Ontario Drama and Dance Educators \(CODE\)](#)

[CODE: Verbatim Theatre Unit](#)

Ministry of Education (Ontario) [Edugains website](#) on Student Voice

## **Appendix A: Audience Interview Quotes from Towards Youth**

After viewing the play Towards Youth, students had the following things to say:

Kyritsis (female, Grade 9, Greek, middle class): “For me, it was in India, the teacher, she said she didn’t have much education and she didn’t have much, but she still created a school for young girls, and then expanded it to boys, and I thought that was really

powerful. Like she didn't have a lot of experience, but she became more knowledgeable, I guess."

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Queen (black, straight, Christian, 18 years old): Some of the struggles they had, minorities, it's kind of the same thing as a Black woman, being Black, and specifically being a woman, it's all real. The struggles are real.

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John Doe: The economic issues, that's the thing that caught me the most, because when I was living in Greece, there was the economic crisis, and so we had to move to Canada, and the issues were almost worse here because the euro costs way less than Canadian dollars, and it was a really tough experience. Like, I lived in the shelter system for 4 years, so that sucks. So, like, the economics, that was actually the hardest hitting one for me because I knew the feeling. It's all past me, who cares?

Kyritsis: Same. My family lives there.

Tazqueen: I haven't experienced anything personally, but just because I watch Indian news and stuff. I see what they're talking about in their news a lot, so I can make a personal connection there, especially that part, I was really endorsed in it just because, oh, I know what they're talking about. I can use my background knowledge to extend on what they're speaking about.

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"I'd say the one when it had the young people how they were talking about, the woman in India was talking about how they were suffering in different places, like from domesticated [sic] violence, sexual violence, and all that stuff, because it was really real. I've heard a lot of that stuff from that region, the South Asian region, because I am from there."

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Abigail: I think that the teacher character stayed with me. The Indian teacher. Like, she was, uh, very powerful, she was very bold, and she knew what she was saying, she was confident in herself. And like, um, it's not like, like the Greek teacher. She was, like, she wanted everything to go her way, but this teacher, like, tried listening to other people.



And she tried combining other peoples' ideas to make their school a better place...  
Abigail: Oh, one issue that I felt is that I, actually, studied in India for like, one year. So, I've like actually experienced – like, I could relate to that part. And like, it's how girls were treated there, um, there were treated less and they were basically treated like... you know, they were... less, you know what I... Like, not as important as men. Right? So, um, I think the part that was very powerful to me was that, how she got an idea that she should educate boys, too, and she should teach them, like, how to behave and how to – uh, to be more mature. That's actually (inaudible) and that's a good idea.

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Queen (black, straight, Christian, 18 years old): I'll remember the beginning with the Middleview school. It was most relatable, and it's the one that I understood the most, and I found it the most interesting and entertaining. I liked it because a lot of the students that were in that class, I notice are in my drama class.

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Christian: I thought it was really authentic. Going, like, the culture and how they grew up, different ages that were explained. And especially the group, um, in the starting scenes, like tend to be the Toronto students? I've been in that class before, and I was just like, this is spot-on. And then like looking at how they were acting, at younger ages, or like, (inaudible) when they were acting with each other, I thought it was really authentic.

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Male student: It felt really real. You could've seen that happen- all of them, especially that first scene, you could have seen that happen in our school. It's something that, the personalities, everything that was happening, the actions of the teacher, it was like so realistic. It was the first time that a performance left me taken aback. I've never seen a performance that was that riveting.

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Queen: it did give a lot of information that was important and useful... In Greece specifically, they were really open about their struggles and the issues that were going on in their lives and also the fact that, Coventry, where they were going to cut the program. I think was a really important struggle as well.

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Female Student: I have to say that beyond watching school and student theatre, I've never seen a cast like that before, and I think it definitely is a good turning point in theatre because I think that it gave a clear viewing of the different- it wasn't an all-white cast, and a bunch of plays that you go to see, it's an all-white cast. And the other voices are not shown, and I feel like with Towards Youth and bringing in other voices in the world, it helped with bringing it all together, and I loved the fact that there were actors were playing characters of a race that they wouldn't go and get cast in for an audition. It was phenomenal.

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Female Student: That was a thing that I was noticing, too. We had to do a project focusing on a specific theatre company and the main thing that they focus on. One of them was like Asian Canadians, and I'm mixed, so I was like, oh, that's cool. So, when I saw that there was a strong Asian Canadian character, I thought that was amazing, and I feel like with every different ethnicity that they tried to portray, they handled it with definite respect, and it's not like they were doing stereotypes or trying to make fun of different cultures. I think they did it in a very respectful way and it turned out very well.

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"I thought it was really cool. Um, when it was first being explained to us in the first verbatim like, interview, um, I like, I remember finding out that it was the voices of the youth, like, our peers, like talking, and the play would just speak with that, and I was like, wow, the voices of the actual youth get to, like, get the word out. And like, with plays, we tend to be stereotyped a lot. And I just thought it was really cool to like, to actually see the authentic, and like, the real words of us and what we're going through."

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"And then the ending was just such a way to bring everything together. And the last part was really like hit really hard because it was just such a nice way to tie everything together to show that school and everything shapes us and molds us to be just this one thing, and because we're all high school students we feel that, something that expresses our thoughts, at least my thoughts, it was like, yes! Finally, someone that understands. And it was just so beautiful to take all of these things from all over the world and show that something that I feel so- I don't know about you guys but- it was so

nice to bring it all together and talk about like something that we all feel and we know- at least to me, it stresses me out. Like, I don't like this at all. Something that talks about it in such a beautiful, human way was just amazing.”

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“I think it was cool how, when these things happen around the world, we only know from what we hear in the news and to see kids that are actually in that situation, to see what their mindset is and to see what their attitude is when that stuff's actually happening to them, it gives a different perspective.”

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“I guess hearing verbatim is like, I don't know what the word is to describe it, but I guess it's reassuring. You can see these adults care what kids are thinking about and it can be expressed in theatre because theatre can express all points of views.”

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“... there's no better way of hearing what the child said and hear what they're speaking from their heart than from a child themselves.”

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“It felt real. I was able to relate to some of the people. It feels more real knowing those are all real kids. It's some things I would think to myself. To see the play, I could see myself, and to see that other people thought the same things as me, that was really cool.”

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“To add on to his attitude, I think adults need to consider asking youth where their future is, what the future of the world is, and I think hold value onto our opinions and stuff because we're going to be adults and stuff, and then the adults have to pass on a torch, like an imaginary torch to our youth. That's what I look at.”

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“Drama, every other class, it's sort of like you have to give the correct answer for all of the questions, but here, it's sort of create your own kind of thing, your own scenario. Ask your own question. It's kind of fun.”

## **Appendix B: Generation Gaps**

Melanie (daughter): It's from going from having no say to having a say, and at the same time, it's weird passing the threshold and having an opinion that matters because, as a youth, you don't think your opinion matters, but then you turn 18 or you turn 21, your opinion matters, and nobody tells you that essentially. So, you don't go through a phase of knowing your opinion doesn't matter to knowing it matters.

Patricia (mother, exasperated): Young people don't vote!

Melanie (with rising irritation): Absolutely, because nobody talks to them about the value that they have and the effect that they can have! So many people who can vote don't vote because they don't think that their opinion matters or they think that their political system is corrupt and they don't talk about that, so they just don't vote.