above

between

below

BY

RAMÓN ESQUIVEL

(CLICK ON THE TITLE TO LINK TO ARTICLE)

INSPIRING HEALTH IN
YOUNG PEOPLE

"The role of theater is to shine a light on subjects that are difficult," Dr. Chapman says. "If they are difficult, those are the topics we should be talking about with young people."

We already know that the arts can touch, amuse and inspire us. They also can reach us, and teach us, at a deep level.

That's the premise behind the new collaboration between Seattle Children's Theatre and Kaiser Permanente. "We want to inspire children, teens and adults to make healthy choices and build stronger communities," says Victoria García, manager of Community Health and Benefit for Kaiser Permanente in Seattle. "Educational theater is one way of supporting mental health and wellness in a way that resonates with young people."

As a result, Washington students will get to see plays on relevant health topics right in their schools. *Above Between Below* is the first play in the series.

This exciting new venture brings together one of the top theaters for young audiences in the country with the expertise of the Kaiser Permanente Educational Theatre Program, which has been delighting and teaching young people across the U. S. since the 1980s.

"Theater has been part of Kaiser Permanente's mission for so long," says Karen Sharp, managing director of Seattle Children's Theatre. "It's become a proven strategy for communicating these subjects effectively to students."

Wellesley Chapman, MD, is a member of the Washington Educational Theatre advisory board as well as a Kaiser Permanente primary care physician—and a former actor. "The role of theater is to shine a light on subjects that are difficult," Dr. Chapman says. "If they are difficult, those are the topics we should be talking about with young people."

And this is where a play like *Above Between Below* can be especially powerful. The play shows the ways bullying, aggression and shaming on social media can hurt others. "This play shows how vulnerable we all are," Dr. Chapman says. "We can identify with all of the characters in this play—the bullied person, the one who is bullying, the onlooker—which makes its message really hit home."

"My own daughter, who is in middle school, attended a reading of *Above Between Below*," Victoria García says. "After it was over, she said she was going to take down some of her social media sites. I am hopeful the play will inspire her and other kids to look at how they can use social media simply as a communication tool, while not letting it drive their relationships."

This fall the play will be performed in 21 schools in King, Pierce and Snohomish counties. In the spring, it will run in 10 schools in Spokane and Whitman counties. About 18,000 students will see it. Each performance will be followed by a discussion with the students, the actors and a trained facilitator.

"As artists, we are always looking for ways to connect with the community," says Courtney Sale, artistic director of Seattle Children's Theatre. "This is one of those opportunities to reach people we might not have been able to otherwise."

Karen Sharp (Seattle Children's Theatre), Victoria García (Kaiser Permanente) and Courtney Sale (Seattle Children's Theatre)

Learn more about Kaiser Permanente's Educational Theatre Program by contacting Victoria García at garcia.v@ghc.org.

SYNOPSIS
Be warned: This synopsis contains spoilers.

In the hallway of her middle school, Rayna is using her phone to video chat with an Other, a person we never see or hear. Rayna trusts this person, though we later learn that she has never met or even seen the face of this Internet friend. Practicing her presentation for class, Rayna displays a confidence that vanishes the moment her locker neighbor Hattie appears. Hattie teases Rayna for memorizing her presentation, pressuring her to not make her classmates look bad. Rayna apologizes before heading to class early to meet with their teacher.

Hattie takes out the huge stack of note cards she made for her presentation and clumsily films herself reading the cards. Sneaking up behind her is Zumi, a well-known prankster. Zumi smacks the cards out of Hattie's hands, and posts the video of her angry reaction on his Instagram account. Zumi sweet-talks Hattie into forgiving him, and he even gets Hattie to agree to a favor he had planned to ask his cousin, Rayna: stashing a beloved pair of shoes in her locker. Antony, who has a crush on Hattie, sees the hug and teases her about the video he just saw. Hattie demands Zumi take down the video, which he promises to do. When Hattie checks in with her friends in a group chat, she sees that they are already laughing at her video, too.

Rayna shares the video with the Other she was chatting with before, and she also directs them to Antony's channel on YouTube, *Bacon Tacos*. Via text, Rayna compliments Antony on his channel, and Antony encourages her to share it with everyone she knows.

We see Antony in his element, confidently juggling multiple conversations with his channel followers via video chats and text messages. In the flurry of chats, Antony makes an off-hand remark to Rayna's online friend that she is one of his "stalkers."

At the lockers, Rayna catches Zumi opening Hattie's locker to retrieve his shoes. She also stops him from playing a prank on Antony. Antony thanks her for recommending his channel to her friend. Hattie arrives, still fuming about her morning embarrassment, and Rayna makes Zumi apologize for making the video. Hattie uses a strategy she learned in a peer facilitation workshop that Hattie

also attended but promptly forgot about. We learn that Rayna and Hattie used to be closer friends, until Hattie and the crew froze out Rayna. When Hattie defends Rayna to the same friends in their group chat, they freeze out Hattie.

In the locker room, Zumi strikes up a conversation with Antony and suggests they make a viral video together showing off his shoe collection. Antony refuses because he thinks the idea is lame, and Zumi physically intimidates him until he agrees. But Antony has something else in mind.

Rayna's Other shares that Antony called her a stalker, and also says that Rayna only talks to the Other because she has no real friends. This strikes a nerve, and Rayna cuts off the Other for good. Seeing Rayna in tears, Hattie asks what's wrong, but she inadvertently makes matters worse. Rayna snaps at Hattie, who has no idea why. Antony tells Hattie that he wants to "avenge her" for the embarrassing video, and he suggests they work together on a plan to get back at Zumi. Hattie agrees. On his YouTube channel, Antony makes a private video for his special followers with the request that they send him photos of their nastiest shoes. He is putting the plan in motion.

Zumi sees that Rayna is hurt by Antony's words, but suggests she forgive him because he and Antony are planning to make a video later. However, Zumi offers to talk to Antony, an offer Rayna immediately shuts down.

The next day, we see the video Zumi and Antony made. Zumi talks about all his different shoes, but Antony has edited the video to show pictures of nasty shoes that his followers sent. Antony's narration suggests

Zumi's family is too poor to afford the one nice pair he shows, so Zumi must have stolen those. Hattie thinks the video is hilarious, but Rayna sees its cruelty. Zumi asks if Rayna will film him beating up Antony.

Zumi tracks down Antony and a chase ensues, streamed live by both Hattie and Rayna. Rayna realizes Hattie is in on the prank, and she teases her for getting frozen out by her friends, the same way they froze out Rayna the year before. Antony threatens to spray paint Zumi's shoes that Hattie brought. Feeling betrayed by Hattie, Zumi takes his anger out on Antony, physically restraining him. Rayna stops filming and tries to stop him from doing worse. She encourages Zumi to tell Hattie's camera (and everyone watching live) the truth about how he got the shoes. She tells the story of her good friend Zumi, and about how annoying but caring he really is. Zumi takes over, and tells the story of his grandfather, a shoemaker who passed away last year. In his will, his grandfather left enough money for Zumi to go to college and also to buy a new pair of shoes every four months, insisting Zumi buy the best. Hattie turns off the camera.

The following Monday, all four kids are in the vice principal's office to begin their In-School Suspension for their various actions the week before. They each apologize for the specific wrongs they did to each other. Though the hurt feelings are still there, they arrive at a sense of closure and a wish to move on from there. They are not allowed to use their phones, and soon boredom sets in. In the end, Rayna asks everyone a simple question: "What if we just keep talking to each other?"

STATE LEARNING
STANDARDS

We believe that seeing the show and using our Active Audience Guide can help you meet the following **State Standards** (exact standards depend on specific grade level) and address these **21st-Century Skills:**

- **Growth Mindset**
(belief that your intelligence and ability can increase with effort)
- **Perseverance**
- **Creative Thinking**
- **Critical Thinking**
- **Communication**
- **Collaboration**

GRADE	WA STATE 6-8 HEALTH STANDARDS: SOCIAL EMOTIONAL HEALTH (HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, BULLYING)	WA STATE 6-8 ARTS STANDARDS: THEATRE
6	**H1.So5.6a** *Describe different types of harassment, intimidation, and bullying.* **H1.So5.6b** *Analyze harmful effects of harassment, intimidation, and bullying.*	**Anchor Standard 10 (CONNECTING)** *Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.* **Performance Standard (TH:Cn10.1.6) a.** *Explain how the actions and motivations of characters in a drama/theatre work impact perspectives of a community or culture.*
7	**H1.So5.7** *Explain how harassment, intimidation, and bullying affect individuals, families, and communities.* **H5.So5.7** *Determine strategies for responding to harassment, intimidation, and bullying.*	**Anchor Standard 2 (CREATING)** *Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.* **Performance Standard (TH:Cr2.1.II) b.** *Cooperate as a creative team to make interpretive choices for a drama/theatre work.*
8	**H1.So5.8a** *Describe possible consequences of harassment, intimidation, and bullying.* **H1.So5.8c** *Understand connection between bullying and harmful behaviors including suicide.* **H8.So5.8** *Advocate for a bully-free school and community environment.*	**Anchor Standard 10 (CONNECTING)** *Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.* **Performance Standard (TH:Cn10.1.III) a.** *Collaborate on a drama/theatre work that examines a critical global issue using multiple personal, community, and cultural perspectives.*

FROM W, PLAYWRIGHT

The word *playwright* looks funny, doesn't it? It annoyed me when I first had to learn it for a spelling test back in the day. I wondered, why don't they just spell it *playwrite*? Why not call someone who writes plays a *playwriter*? Now that I do the work of a playwright, I see why the spelling makes sense. A *wright* is a person who applies skill and craft to build something functional and lasting. A *wheelwright* makes wheels, a *cartwright* constructs carts, a *shipwright* builds ships and a *playwright* crafts a play. In place of iron or wood, the playwright works with words, adding some, removing others, rearranging phrases and maybe even inventing a few in hopes of getting the play just right. A play is not written. A play is wrought.

Writing *Above Between Below*, I began with two questions: Why do young people bully other young people? Also, what can young people do to stop bullying? I read helpful articles from specialists at Seattle Children's Hospital, Kaiser Permanente and StopBullying. gov, but these articles were aimed at adults. I agree that adults must be proactive in creating safe environments for all students, but I wanted this play to explore the ways young people can intervene themselves when bullying occurs.

Having been a middle-school teacher for fifteen years, I understood that conflicts and bullying often flared up in spaces where there was little or no adult supervision. It made sense, then, to begin writing *Above Between Below* from the story element of setting, the where and when a story unfolds. School was a logical setting because all four characters could meet and interact there. Classrooms and even the cafeteria have too much adult supervision, so I set scenes in a hallway, locker room and student commons where students just hang out. The story takes place mostly in one day because bullying situations flare up that quickly, especially when the Internet is involved.

Though I started with setting for *Above Between Below*, my favorite element of story is character. This was especially important because it seems the most hurtful bullying occurs between people who know each other, and maybe even consider themselves friends. I wanted the four characters to know each other, so I first wrote a series of two-person scenes between them. Many of these scenes never made it into the play, but reading all of them together allowed their relationships to bubble to the surface. The status of characters changed depending on their scene partners. At different times, each person's status was above, between or below the others. (Title alert!) That realization addressed my first question: Young people bully other young people when they are desperately trying to avoid being on the bottom of the social

Photograph by Darrah Parker

pile. With that in mind, couldn't anyone be a bully?

Take the character of Rayna, for example. We first see her confidently practicing her class presentation with an online friend. She is playful, even flirty with this person. When Hattie shows up, though, Rayna closes up to protect herself, still hurting from being frozen out last year by Hattie and her crew. When Rayna engages with her more popular cousin, Zumi, she is authoritative and even motherly. Finally, Rayna pines for Antony, and she misreads their one-sided text communication as something deeper than it is. Writing Rayna made me want to underscore a truth about bullying: depending on the circumstances, a person can be a bully in one moment, a victim in another and a bystander in a third.

On to my second question: What can young people do to stop bullying? The power to intervene often lies with people in the *between* position. If a bully (above)

What can young people do to intervene often lies with people in the between position.

is forcing the victim (below) into lower status, the bystander (between) can affect the balance of power. I embedded brief but critical moments where this occurs in the play. Zumi intervenes in the Hattie-Rayna dispute by cutting off Hattie's gossip before she can really start. Rayna intervenes in the Zumi-Hattie dispute by compelling Zumi to apologize specifically for creating a humiliating video. Hattie intervenes for Rayna when her group chat friends make fun of her. Rayna intervenes when Zumi plans to embarrass Antony by knocking down his Cheetos. These moments when the *between* person intervenes are small and, as the play shows, sometimes fleeting, but they do add up to make a difference in changing the status and power dynamics between characters.

If all these characters learn to make good choices, why does conflict still blow up? This happens because the characters are human and flawed: while they do learn and grow from their mistakes, they still

make mistakes, especially when trying to avoid that *below* status. Sometimes, as Hattie learns when she defends Rayna to her group chat friends, doing the right thing puts you in that *below* status. Young people are remarkably savvy. They realize that defending a victim may mean the bully turns on them next. There is relative safety in the *between*. It always takes courage for a *between* to intervene because that person recognizes the danger of being cast into the *below* position. Having allies to back you up makes that less likely to happen, but sometimes you need to act alone knowing you could very well end up staying alone. Remember that your courageous action may just earn you allies who will intervene for you should the need arise.

Ramón and actors in a script workshop session for *Above Between Below.* From left: Sherif Amin, Mikko Juan, Ana Maria Campoy, Ramón, and Jocelyn Maher.

EDUCATION OUTREACH MANAGER

What is a particularly interesting or unusual challenge of this job and how do you set out to handle it?

It's easy to feel overwhelmed while in the midst of coordinating a new residency or workshop. SCT Education Outreach reaches about 4,000 students a year, with the majority of the busy season during the school year. Naturally, during the "back-to-school" months, I receive an increase in calls and requests for outreach programming and I begin coordinating several workshops or residencies simultaneously. Teaching artists work multiple teaching jobs, not all through SCT. So, it is possible that I'll go through several rounds of contacting teaching artists before I find one who is available. Sometimes it feels like having a bunch of spinning plates on sticks and not having enough hands to make sure the plates don't fall. It's important to stay organized when these moments happen. Usually, I make to-do lists—hundreds and hundreds of to-do lists! (In fact, I'll probably write a new to-do list after I finish this interview.) Ultimately, when times get stressful it is important for me to take a breath, list out what needs to get done, and if I need it, to be brave to ask for help. Asking for help is not always easy. I like to think I'm Wonder Woman and can do everything, but sometimes, I need to take a step back and remind myself that I have a great support team within the Education Department. If ever I need it, I know I can ask them for assistance.

Please tell us about your working process as Education Outreach manager.

I oversee programs where teaching artists go into schools, museums and other locations to teach theater workshops or residencies. It's a lot of coordinating! I connect with principals or program leaders and find out what kind of theater topic they would like students to learn about during the workshop. Then I look through our "database" of teaching artists (a staff of about 85) and try to match the workshop with, 1) a teaching artist who excels at the topic and, 2) a teaching artist who has availability to teach that day and time. Once I've found a teaching artist, I do my best to make sure they are supported with any materials or information they may need. It's all about making sure every workshop or residency is a success for all involved.

I have been a teaching artist for many years and as Education Outreach manager that experience allows me to write and create lesson plans for new workshops. Currently, I am developing a workshop for Theatre for the Very Young, a fun and immersive experience for students ages two and three. This has been a great opportunity to collaborate with other teaching artists and early education specialists in hopes of producing a quality experience for these young theater-learners. I also have the opportunity to cultivate new program partnerships with local businesses that want to have a theater education program at their location.

What in your childhood got you involved in theater and to where you are today?

There are several moments in my childhood that led me to theater. My mom likes to say I was born dramatic (to which I lovingly remind her the acorn doesn't fall far from the tree, ha ha!). When I was young I would watch musicals on video and reenact them in the living room. I would belt songs from *Hello, Dolly!* in my off-key seven-year-old voice. I was also the kid who would put on my mother's red heels, some black stirrup pants and a leotard to dance around like Sandy and Danny in a one-woman reenactment of *You're the One That I Want* from *Grease*. I would even make my parents' friends watch me sing Disney songs. So needless to say, it was fairly apparent that I had a flair for theater. A few years later, a children's theater started in my hometown and my parents took me to see my first play. I was completely enamored with what I was seeing on stage. I can still remember thinking, "I want to do THAT!" while I watched play after play. (And, spoiler alert, I eventually was able to work at the company that inspired me to be in theater, which is pretty cool.)

Perhaps one of the most defining moments for me was realizing theater was my safe haven. Flash forward to awkward-high-school Tiffany. Sophomore year of high school, I attended a magnet program that focused on college preparation. Students who were considered general population would often assume that magnet students thought

higher of themselves and there was this whole "us vs. them" mentality. The extracurricular classes and clubs I was in had a mixed group of magnet and general population students, and I was often the subject of mean-spirited jokes and comments about being a magnet student. To further that, I didn't have a slender body-type as a "typical" person might have. I was curvier and that made how I looked an easy target to point out. In addition to this, some of my middle-school bullies also attended the same high school, a few of them in the magnet program as well, and it felt like they were doing their best to make sure I was miserable. There were snide comments in class, mean things said in the hallways and successful attempts to isolate me in group projects or social events. I was indeed miserable.

It came to a crescendo when I was making my debut in my first high-school play. I had the lead role, and I would get to miss my regular classes to perform during certain periods of the day. I had just left on lunch break and was making my way to the cafeteria to eat with a small group of friends. All of the sophomores ate on the same side of the cafeteria and they all went dead quiet when I walked in. I thought it was because I was still dressed in costume, but that wasn't the case. I kept an online diary, kind of like a Tumblr. In it, I would write about typical stuff, like what happened that day, who I had a crush on, what I thought about the girls that would bully me and my opinions about the latest couples in my grade. Since I didn't have a cell phone yet, I used my online diary as a way to communicate with my best friend who went to a different high school. I didn't realize this, but someone overheard me talking about it to a close friend, found my page, and printed out every entry and passed it out to everyone in my classes. Everything was out in the open. I felt completely vulnerable and had no idea how I could come back from that. I remember I went back to the theater, completely raw. I was shaking from crying so hard. I knew that I now had some close friends upset at me for having unpopular opinions of their relationships, I knew that all of my secret thoughts were exposed, and I knew that this would add fuel to the already burning fire these bullies had created.

I went and talked to my drama teacher and a few theater friends. They were empathic to how I was feeling. They said that no matter how others may have seen me or made fun of me, I was a good person. My theater friends consoled me and told me that eventually, this will fade. High school is like celebrity news, there will be a new headline tomorrow and the day after that, and the day after that. Though it was hard to believe them, I have to admit they were right. This is an often-used cliché in the theater but there is truth in it: "The show must go on." Life moved on. My theater friends lifted me up and I made amends with close friends that were affected by the words in my journal. As the people in my classes began to mature, a few began to realize that they were bullying me for no real reason, and some even apologized to me and went on to become my best friends.

As the people in my classes began to mature, a few began to realize that they were bullying me for no real reason...

After high school, I went to college where I could truly do what I love: learn about and make theater. College was amazing. I met great friends who inspired me to be my true self. I had wonderful professors who made sure I could expand my knowledge in theater and take creative risks, and who helped me refine my career path. Because I knew theater could make such an impact on children and adolescents, I decided to study theater education and look for internships and jobs that had an education component to it. My career had carried me all over the world—from Maine, to Texas, to Washington, and even internationally, as I spent time in Scotland to learn about theater education in the UK. (Pretty cool, huh?)

Theater has always been that place I can go to when I need to get away from the trials of life for just a moment. I can go see a show and get wrapped up in the world on stage. I can listen to a musical soundtrack and take a break from whatever is troubling me. I can dive into the creative process with my work and come out feeling accomplished with what I developed. As I reflect on all that I experienced growing up, I'm grateful that I've found theater as my passion and that I was able to turn it into a career. So as you continue through life, navigating the ups and downs, find your passion and look for opportunities where you can connect with it as much as possible. You never know where that can lead you.

Tiffany getting to know Sasquatch at the Pike Place Market

Tiffany Maltos moonlights as a professional Netflix-watcher. She hails from San Antonio, TX and loves cooking for friends to help them see the light of what real Mexican and TexMex food tastes like. Though she's new to Washington, she loves all the waterfalls she's seen and looks forward to learning what life in Seattle is like.
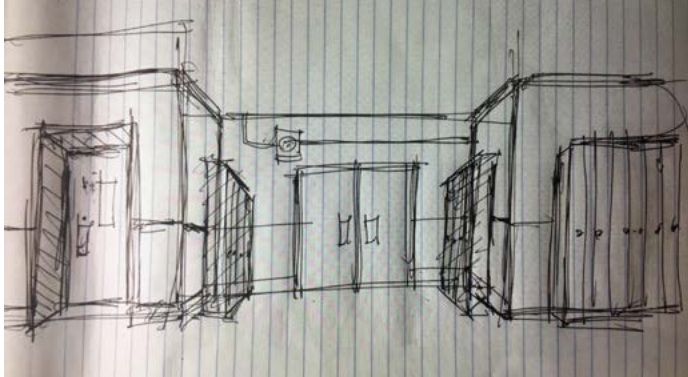

Tiffany (on the left) in her senior year in high school, in costume as La Llorona, the weeping woman, in *Bocón* by Lisa Loomer
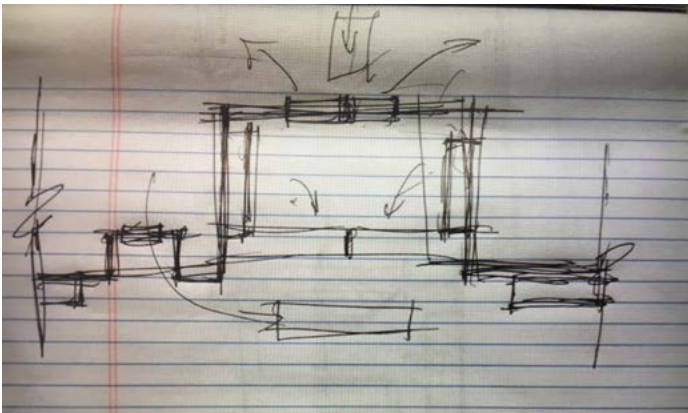
ABOUT THE SET
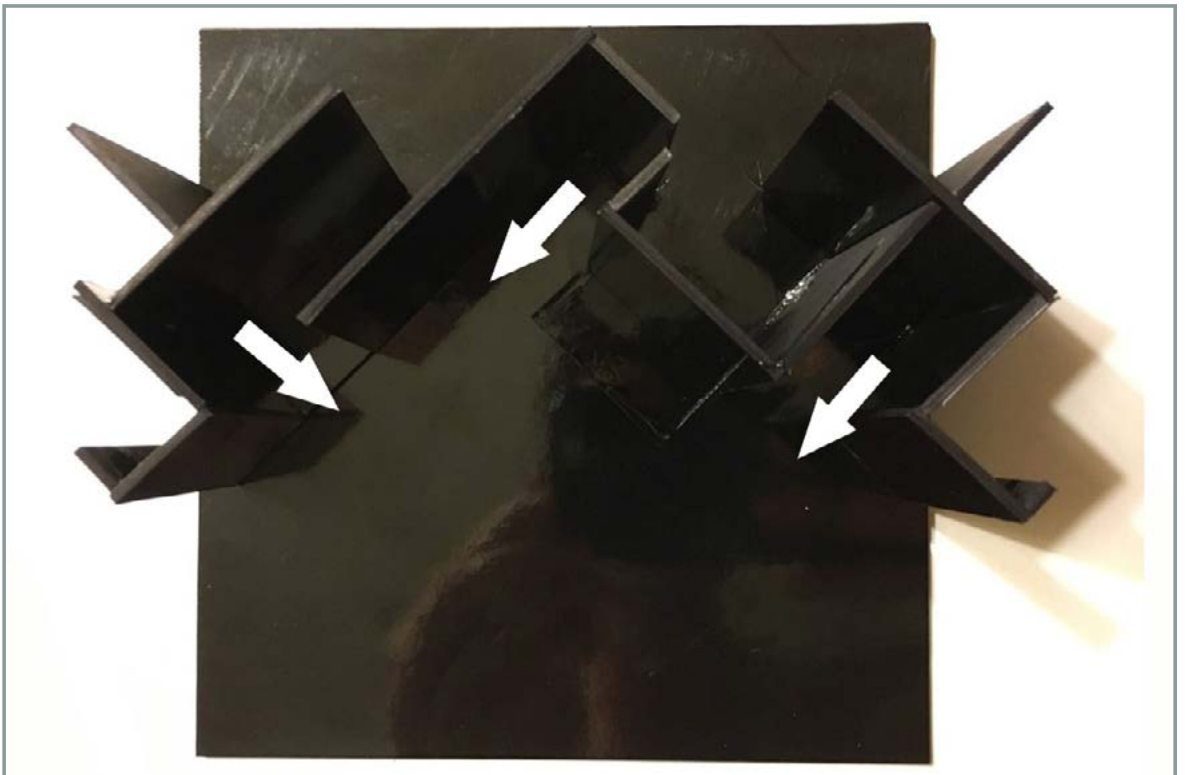## FROM SHAWN KETCHUM JOHNSON, SET DESIGNER

Rough sketch from an early design meeting of a possible layout for the set

Overhead view of the layout with arrows indicating entrances and moving set pieces

In approaching the scenic design for *Above Between Below*, I was struck right away by the idea that through their phones, the characters are never just in one place at a time. They are always in multiple places at once, their phones acting as gateways to other locations in a way that we can understand from our own experience, but that becomes a challenge to render with an actor standing on stage, clearly only in one place.

We knew that this production would be touring to many different schools, so it was important from the start that students not feel that the play was taking place in a fake version of their school, or in a generic school set that could seem like every school but would never, we feared, really feel like any school. Students would be coming in from the real hallway, from their real lockers, so there was a level of authenticity we wanted to maintain while they watched actors interact with lockers in imaginary hallways.

Overhead view of the set model. Arrows show entrances onto the stage. As you can see, the final design is very different from the early sketches.
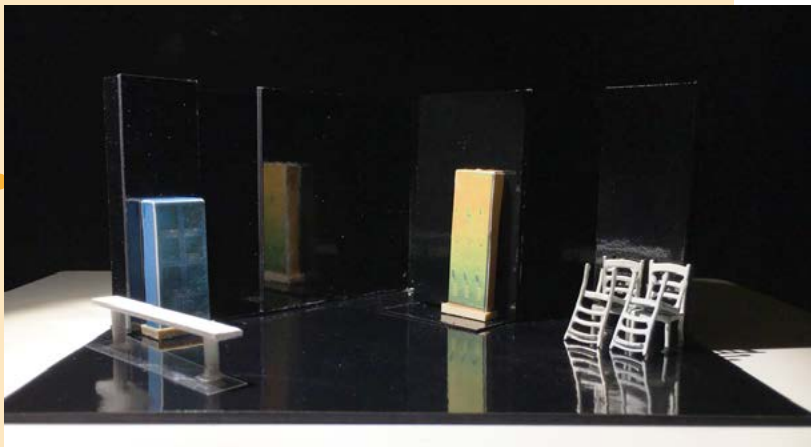
Set model showing planned locations for different scenes. The idea is to have all of the set pieces onstage from the beginning and define locations by centering the action around those pieces. We start with the locker room bench and lockers on the left, a small bank of lockers for the hallway at center, and chairs to represent the student commons on the right. The goal is to have changes from one location to another happen as quickly and fluidly as possible, while making them clear to the audience. During rehearsal there may be changes in the original setup to accomplish that.

A scene centered around the hallway lockers

Locker room scene

In the student commons. Chairs will be moved into different positions as needed.

Between these two primary concerns, we found our conceptual path through the design. What emerged is essentially an architecture of their phone-space: a maze of sleek, reflective black walls resembling the screens of cellphones or computers, that is about the place the characters fall into when they focus on their phones. It's a space that lets us question what and where the characters' "reality" might be—or at least what reality matters most to them.

With just a few completely authentic scenic elements and pieces of furniture to ground the characters in their locations within the school, the actors can inhabit the real world and their various online ones with complete fluidity, moving in and out of places and interactions in a way that serves one of the play's major inquiries: Where do we go when we are inside our phones? And what happens "here" when we are there?

To go from concept to reality, after drawing some rough sketches, I built a scale model of our space—a very small model, where one inch equals four feet in the real world. Working this small allowed us to quickly move through big changes to the idea, while getting a sense of how the space would work once we built the full-size version and put actors into it.

It's also important, in a highly conceptual design like this one, to be able to get a sense of what our idea actually looks like. In this case, for instance, I had to make the model out of reflective black material so that we could see how our phone-screen world would look with people in it (using miniature figures to represent the characters), how it would represent different locations and whether or not we wanted to move forward with the idea. After a couple different versions of the model, the design was finalized and then meticulously drafted so that the carpenters and technicians could build it exactly as it appeared in the model.

Shawn's technical
drawing of the
ground plan and
walls, with notes
that the technical
director needs to
plan how to build
the set and give
information to the
scenic carpenters

ABOUT THE COSTUMES
FROM MELANIE BURGESS, COSTUME DESIGNER

To begin work on the costume designs for *Above Between Below*, I first did research on current middle-school students. Because this is a play that represents contemporary students that are very much a part of the technological world and its consequences, both productive and destructive, it was important to me that the characters looked like the students that potentially would be watching the play.

Many times, my job as a costume designer is to create visual pictures on stage by playing with color and silhouette (the shape of clothing pieces). To greater and lesser degrees, I control what an audience may feel and think about characters by deliberately controlling these elements of design. When designing a play that is representing people in the audience more directly, I look to photos that are true representations of that group of people. What I learn from analyzing those photos is how people being represented in the play choose to identify themselves through clothing and hair styles, as well as the bigger picture of that group in terms of a broad color palette.

For *Above Between Below*, I tried to put myself in the circumstances of each of the characters by defining where they might shop for their clothes. I then looked at what was being sold for the fall of 2017. I chose to shop online for the costumes at Sears, JC Penney and Nordstrom, to name a few. I then assembled a collection of color choices that would blend well with the scenery. I also considered the actors that were cast and how I might help them convey the appropriate age of their characters.

I very much enjoy the challenge of making actors appear to be as much a part of the real world as possible.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...

Research images

ABOVE BETWEEN BELOW
SCT DIRECTION: RITA GIOMI DESIGN: MELANIE BURGESS

JORDON 13'S

Royal

6's

True Flight

ZUMI

ABOVE BETWEEN BELOW
SCT DIRECTION: RITA GIOMI DESIGN: MELANIE BURGESS

RAYNA

Costume collages for Zumi and Rayna. Since the costumes are all being purchased instead of built, it makes sense for Melanie to use images from her online shopping research instead of drawing sketches. She includes the actors' headshots on the collages to give the whole picture.

ABOVE BETWEEN BELOW
SCT DIRECTION: RITA GIOMI DESIGN: MELANIE BURGESS

HATTIE

ABOVE BETWEEN BELOW
SCT DIRECTION: RITA GIOMI DESIGN: MELANIE BURGESS

Sherif Amin

Khaki's or jeans

ANTONY

Costume collages for Hattie and Antony

ABOUT THE SOUND
FROM CHRIS R. WALKER, SOUND DESIGNER

Usually when I make music for a play, I have a pretty good idea of what kind of music I'm going to make. During meetings with the director and other designers, I'll come up with plans for tunes and motifs (themes that are repeated throughout the design), and I'll think of what instruments I might use to orchestrate the pieces. Of course, this all might change, but at least I'll start to come up with some ideas, just from the visuals and the ideas that are being discussed.

Sometimes, though, the play will be set in another country, or in the distant past, or in a very specific cultural environment… something that I'm not familiar with. Or at least, not familiar enough that I feel that I can do justice to the musical style that the play wants. At that point, it's research time. I'll go get some CDs of music from that country, or I'll watch YouTube videos with music from the area, or I might even rent a movie set in that time—anything that will help put me in the right musical context. I'll immerse myself in that kind of music for a day or two, and then when it's really in my ears, I can start to compose music that will be right for the play.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE…

Ghaita, a Moroccan instrument Chris needed to use for a special project. It uses a double reed, like an oboe or a bassoon, but instead of having two separate reeds that are tied together, it uses just one reed pulled from a river, in other words, a tube. It's soaked until pliable and then squashed flat.

Chris uses the computer program Cubase to compose music. It allows him to play in melodies using a midi keyboard, then assign those parts to different sounds (instruments) in the program. He can also lay in audio tracks that have been recorded outside of the computer, such as vocals.

Gayageum, a Korean string instrument much like a Japanese Koto or a Chinese Zheng that Chris needed for another project. The biggest difference is that while the Koto and the Zheng use steel strings, the Gayageum uses silk string traditionally, or nylon.

Topaz mixer, a mixing board where Chris routes all sound in order to then hear it out of his speakers. Each channel allows him to change the equalization on an incoming sound (like the high and low or treble and bass controls in an app), add reverb, echo or other effects, and route the sound to different outputs. So, if he's recording three people in three different rooms, he can record their vocals to different tracks in his computer for editing later, while simultaneously playing what's already on the computer into their headphones so that they can all play or sing in sync with the tracks he already has.

Chris' main equipment rack, although a lot of things in it have been superseded by the computer. The two biggest pieces on the left, the Mirage and the Akai, are both sound samplers which he now rarely uses, but occasionally there's still a sound on them he wants. The rest of the gear is mostly interface electronics and a patch bay to electrically connect various pieces of gear and the mixing board, and places in his studio such as the isolation booth.

This is an isolation booth set up to record vocals or instruments. The screen in front of the mic is called a pop screen or pop filter, and is used to keep "plosives" out of the recording. Plosives are what happens when people say the letters P or B or T. The puff of air that comes out with those letters can cause a boom in the mic. The foam on the walls is to cut down on reflections so that there's not a lot of echo in the room, and the white squares are called "diffusers," which help break up sound waves. He uses some diffusers instead of foam on all of the walls, so that the room doesn't sound completely dead, but again, doesn't have echoes.

This play is a little bit like that. I'm not a middle-school student. I haven't been for quite a while, and I don't tend to listen to the type of music that middle schoolers do. So my research this time is asking my children for help. One just graduated high school and one just graduated middle school, so they listen to the right stuff and I'm immersing myself in their recommendations.

Now that I've been listening to the right kinds of music for a while, what's next? Well, in conversations with the director we've already decided what kinds of moods we want to hit (and DON'T want to hit), so I can start layering those ideas onto the musical styles I'm becoming accustomed to. Luckily, I don't need any super tricky instruments from Morocco, Korea or Kenya, countries I've had to get instruments from for shows I've done in the past. I already play keyboard and guitar, so while the musical themes I need are not necessarily easy to come up with, I will be able to play them all in the studio.

This show also gives me an opportunity to have fun with sound effects. There are lots of them! And I get to use them in the way that I like—"audio counterfeiting." The best sound design, in my opinion, disappears into the background. If you've done it right, the audience will instantly buy as truth the idea you're putting across with the sound effect you've chosen, and will go with it.

This play is a perfect example of that. There are so many instances of very specific app and alert sounds. Twitter is referred to—if not by name then by inference—as are Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. All of those sites generate very specific sounds that the audience will recognize, so with a half-second sound effect I can tell a sentence worth of story. Audio counterfeiting—the right sound will completely convince the audience of a truth that we are creating on stage.

Then there will be the specific alerts that I get to make up. Characters get incoming messages from other characters, and if the sound effect is the same every time, then pretty soon the audience will know who the new message is from before the actor says one word. I love that stuff! All in all, should be a fun play to design.

BY KAYA RIDPATH, AGE 14

BE REAL. BE BRAVE.
BE YOU.

Middle school was hard for me, I'm not going to lie. But the hardest part wasn't my classes. It was the pressure to fit in.

Unlike elementary school, middle school felt like one giant social pyramid—with the popular kids at the top. And how popular you were (or not) determined lots of things, like where you sat at lunch and how many likes you got on social media. That made it very clear, just by looking, who was popular and who was not.

But what makes someone popular? At my school, the popular kids tended to be the ones who came from the nicer neighborhoods and whose families had money. They also tended to be quite athletic. In other words, it's not necessarily something you can control. And it has nothing to do with who you really are.

Think about this: If someone were to ask you who you are, how would you answer? Would you say "I'm a (un)popular kid #12?" Probably not. In my case, I would say I'm a singer and a dancer, things that make me unique.

In middle school, I worried a lot about how many friends I had and how many people liked me. But now that I'm in high school, that doesn't seem as important anymore. Now I focus on a few very close friendships with people who don't judge me simply for being me.

Social media still feels important, though, and it has many ups and downs. I don't have as many followers or get as many likes as a lot of people. But when people like my stuff on social media, it does help boost my self-esteem.

The flip side is that it's easy to let social media make you feel bad about yourself. People sometimes say stuff they would never say in person. The most important thing is to never take anyone's insults to heart. If someone says mean stuff about you on social media or behind your back, it doesn't have anything to do with you. It's all on them. If they weren't brave enough to say it to your face, how true could it actually be?

I also know I can go to my mom or one of my friends for support when I need it. And I can ask for their help when I need to figure out how to respond to negative comments. My mom also reminds me to step back from social media sometimes.

Another thing that has helped boost my self-esteem is finding the courage to step out of my comfort zone. It could be anything from stepping up in a game in P.E., to joining a club, to trying out for a part in a play. It's always a good thing to put yourself out there and try new things. When that pays off, it's the best feeling in the world.

TIPS FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Want to help the teens in your life build healthy self-esteem? Here are a few tips from experts who specialize in adolescent health.

Focus on what makes them unique
Everyone has qualities that make them special—whether it's a skill or talent, or an interest in a certain hobby or activity. Talk with your teen to help them identify a quality that makes them unique. This will help them start to recognize it in themselves. When your teen appreciates their unique qualities, it can help them start to value what makes them different from their peers.

Make home a place for connection
The school setting can be rough—even for kids who aren't having a hard time socially. Make time and energy for connecting with your teen at home. Let them know that home is a safe space where they can express their emotions and frustrations—and that you will do your best to listen and provide support. When teens know they have a support system at home, it can make tough school days that much easier to get through.

Find places where they can thrive outside of school
It can be hard for teens to remember that school isn't everything. Help your teen find an activity or program where they can have fun and be successful outside of school. It might be a church group, mentoring program or sports club—anything that captures their interest. You can also find activities to do together, such as volunteering, taking a cooking class or joining a book club. This will help you strengthen your relationship with your teen while also helping them identify and value their unique qualities.

Content has been sourced from clinical experts at Kaiser Permanente.

MAKE THE
BEST CONNECTIONS

Technology is neither good nor evil. The most we can say about it is this: It has come.
– Michael Harris, author of *The End of Silence*

Have you ever sent a text or email on a cell phone or a computer? Your answer is probably yes. Maybe you've sent multiple ones to friends and family today alone. Have you ever gotten a text that made you smile? The answer to this is probably yes, too. Funny texts are great.

Now, have you ever received a message that left you confused, or uncomfortable? Where you were unsure whether the person was joking, because it came off as unfriendly? Or you may have sent a text you regret or should've considered more carefully. You might have made an embarrassing typo, or written more information than you intended. Or maybe you've seen this happen on social media—a post, news article or message isn't true, but people believe it and a storm of rumors is spread.

We live in a fast-paced, tech-fueled world where cell phones, tablets and computers are used everywhere every day, instantly connecting us with friends, family and strangers. News, entertainment and communication is at our fingertips. Multiple and ever-increasing social media networks and the World Wide Web make technology an exciting thing. The ability to freely share information, ideas and opinions with a diverse group of people around the world is nothing short of amazing. Unfortunately, the anonymity of the Internet and impersonal quality of a screen make it easy for bad behavior to flourish.

Bullying has existed for generations, but now because technology has changed the way we communicate and interact, it is possible for bullies to be invisible and come from anywhere. And it is easier than ever for mob mentality to overcome good judgment. You know things happen fast on the Internet. We can share opinions faster than we have time to think about what we're saying. Think. That's the key word.

There is a big difference between the way we communicate in writing and in person. Body language, facial expressions and tone of voice are important clues we look for to understand our interactions. None of those things translate to texting. We are far more complex creatures than a string of emojis can represent.

Larry Rosen, author of *Rewired*, a book about technology and your generation, says, "The primary motive that teenagers have when they're screwing around online is to connect with somebody else." Sound familiar? What do you want your connections to be? We all want friends. We want friends who are fun to be with and easy to talk to. We want friends who support us, whom we trust, whom we respect. We should want that no less online than we do in real life. To have those kinds of friends, we must be that kind of friend.

You are not responsible for other people's behavior online, but you are responsible for yours. It's normal to get caught up in the moment when something exciting, unusual or even controversial is happening that everyone is focused on, and to want to be part of it. But remember, that moment will pass. How you respond to it will linger. Before you make yourself part of a conversation online, think. Yes, there's that word again. What are you adding to the conversation? You may have heard this before—ask yourself: Is it True? Is it Helpful? Is it Inspiring? Is it Necessary? Is it Kind? T.H.I.N.K. And add this simple question to the mix, "Would I say it to this person's face?" If the answer is no, why would you say it online?

You don't need to be part of every conversation. Don't get too caught up in the superficiality and false-impressions social media can cause. "Your self-worth can not be calculated by likes and shares and retweets," a BecomingMinimalist.com article reminds us. "The praise of others is a fickle thing upon which to measure our worth. It is a foolish, ever-changing target. It often negatively impacts the decisions we make and the life we choose to live, but it never fully satisfies our hearts or our souls."

The Internet can pose risks and dangers if not navigated safely, responsibly and with common sense. It's important to be knowledgeable about what behavior happens on the web. Your parents and teachers can help protect and guide you, and provide you the tools and decision-making skills that will keep you safe and help you be a good digital citizen. You can be tech savvy, develop digital communication skills and embrace the change technology brings. But always keep in mind, your online behavior affects not only your offline life, but others, too. Think before you hit send, so your actions don't harm others, or your real, in-person relationships with family, friends and all the people in your life.

RESOURCES*:

PopularMechanics.com:
The Generation that Doesn't Remember Life Before Smartphones
NYTimes.com:
When Tech is a Problem Child
BecomingMinimalist.com:
9 Important Strategies for Raising Children in a World of Technology
HealthyChildren.org:
Kids & Tech: Tips for Parents in the Digital Age

*All active links can be found on the interactive AAG, free for download at www.sct.org/For-Educators/Outreach/ Kaiser-Permanente-Theatre-Program

When someone tells you about a person for the first time, you often hear comments like, "She has a great personality! Very outgoing and enthusiastic." Or, "He has an interesting personality. Thoughtful, quiet, and very funny once you get to know him."

Even though we often use the word "personality" to describe someone, personality is actually a group of traits and characteristics, or thoughts, feelings and behaviors that combine to make each person unique. It has an influence on just about everything we do. It determines what interests we pursue, what careers we choose, how we interact with family and friends, and even where we live, what type of music and books we like and how we dress. In other words, it's what makes you *you*!

Since each one of us is a unique and complex individual, we should be careful about judging someone based on just one of their many personality traits. When we say things like, "he's inconsiderate," "she's rude," "he's shy," or "she's conceited," we are really only identifying a few of the many parts of the person that make up his or her complete personality. It's similar to the famous fable about three blind people who are asked to describe an elephant by touching it. The first person touches the elephant's trunk and says, "The elephant is like a snake." The second person touches its leg and says, "The elephant is like a tree stump." And the third person touches its tail and says, "The elephant is like a rope." All three descriptions are correct, in a way, but only for one particular aspect of the elephant, not the whole elephant. In the same way, one aspect of a person's personality might make us think that "she's rude" or "he's shy," but there are many, many unique and subtle factors that combine to make up the whole person, not just the one or two that gave us that initial impression. We should also be aware that people behave in different ways when they are in unusual situations that are outside of their comfort zones. For example, just because someone is rude to another person

they feel is getting too close to them or asking too many questions, that does not mean they are a rude person in the rest of their life.

One of the most accepted theories about personality is called the Big Five personality traits. The Big Five are what researchers generally agree are the five major factors that determine an individual's personality: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism, or OCEAN. Within each Big Five trait are varying degrees of strength and weakness that determine even more specific qualities. These are identified through a series of questions that ask the person how they function naturally in a variety of situations. For instance, someone with high marks on Extraversion would be more outgoing and talkative while someone on the lower scale would be more reserved and thoughtful. But, remember, these are still very general terms. Within each trait are many variations and levels, so the options are not only that someone is extremely extroverted to the point of being domineering and aggressive, or extremely introverted to the point of being completely withdrawn and self-absorbed.

Let's take a look at each of the Big Five and some of the general characteristics that are associated with them.

OPENNESS means that a person is generally open to new experiences, has a strong appreciation for art and creativity, and is naturally inventive and curious. Those who are on the high end of the scale prefer adventure, new ideas and variety, and are frequently imaginative and independent. Those on the lower end of the scale are more consistent, cautious, and prefer to follow a routine in their activities.

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS refers to the individual's self-discipline, responsibility

and the amount of deliberation and thoughtfulness they put into their behavior. Those who are higher on this scale prefer to plan their activities, are organized, hardworking, dependable and efficient. Those on the lower end of the scale are more relaxed, spontaneous or easy-going, and may be more impulsive or carefree.

EXTRAVERSION means that someone is more sociable and energetic. Those who are on the high end of the scale are comfortable in social situations and get energized by being around other people, are usually more assertive and often enjoy being the center of attention. Those on the lower end of this scale are comfortable with solitude or smaller groups, gain energy by spending time alone, are less comfortable with large social activities and usually would rather not draw focus to themselves.

AGREEABLENESS indicates a person's tendency to be cooperative with others and to show compassion. It also measures someone's ability to be trusting, helpful and whether they have a generally good nature. Those high on this scale are usually friendly and caring, and those low on this scale are sometimes considered cold, unkind or uncooperative.

NEUROTICISM refers to the way that a person experiences emotions and their level of emotional stability. Those on the high end of this trait have a tendency to experience negative emotions such as anger, anxiety and vulnerability, and are sometimes considered hostile, impulsive, insensitive or nervous. Those on the low end of the scale are usually considered to be more calm, even-tempered, secure and confident.

Regardless of where you fall on the scale of these traits, each one of these facets can be modified to some extent in a number of different ways. So, for

instance, if you are someone who is naturally less organized and you want to improve your organization and efficiency skills, you can find tips and tactics in books or at the library to adjust that aspect of your personality to serve you better. If you are naturally shy, you can set a goal of introducing

We all have parts of our personality that we should embrace, and parts that might need some work.

yourself to a new person each day, join a club for an activity that you enjoy so you can meet others who enjoy it also, or you can take classes in communication and public speaking to add to your comfort level in social situations. If you are naturally less compassionate or empathetic to others, you can volunteer with a social service agency to increase your awareness of other people's challenges and find ways to develop connections to them, or join a club or a group that focuses on a subject or activity unfamiliar to you so you can start to learn more about people who have different interests than you do. If you have a tendency to procrastinate or put things off, you can set a goal to break down each task or project into a series of smaller jobs so that each one can be completed more easily.

We all have parts of our personality that we should embrace, and parts that might need some work. Honestly examining our own personality traits is how we can continue to develop and become the best and most well-rounded people that we can be. We can be the whole elephant.

EMPATHY
AND THE ARTS

At the center of any successful collaboration or communication is the ability to see the other person's perspective. When we place ourselves outside of our own experience and consider a new way of thinking or feeling, we practice empathy. Described as one of the most critical skills in the 21st century, empathy can be uniquely cultivated through the arts.

In 2013 two psychologists from the New School for Social Research conducted a study to determine if reading opened a person's capacity for empathy. Their findings showed that the literary quality of the content was the key component in expanding empathy. Participants read from three genres: literary fiction, popular fiction and nonfiction. After reading each segment, the participants engaged in five well-measured tests. Across the five tests, the researchers found literary fiction performed better in empathy measures than other types of content.

Science journalist Julianne Chiaet offered this explanation in *Scientific American*

magazine: "Popular fiction tends to portray situations that are otherworldly and follow a formula to take readers on a roller-coaster ride of emotions and exciting experiences. Although the settings and situations are grand, the characters are internally consistent and predictable, which tends to affirm the reader's expectations of others. It stands to reason that popular fiction does not expand the capacity to empathize.

Literary fiction, by contrast, focuses more on the psychology of characters and their relationships. This genre prompts the reader to imagine the characters' introspective dialogues. This psychological awareness carries over into the real world, which is full of complicated individuals whose inner lives are usually difficult to fathom. Although literary fiction tends to be more realistic than popular fiction, the characters disrupt reader expectations, undermining prejudices and stereotypes. They support and teach us values about social behavior, such as the importance of understanding those who are different from ourselves."

Empathy is one of the most powerful forces in the arts. In theater, the ability to understand someone's perspective and experience is a critical skill for an actor. Actors aim to foster connections with the audience that will move, inspire and challenge them. In order to embody a character, an actor must understand their way of thinking, their manner of speech and how they use their body. Theater artists will often refer to these explorations as finding the imagination, voice and physicality of the character. The audience practices empathy by the very nature of attending a live performance. Sitting down, watching attentively and learning from other's actions are all ways empathy is awakened in theater.

Above Between Below reminds us of the dangers of eroding empathy. When one student posts a humiliating video of another, they are not considering the consequences of their actions. A short-term gain for a viral-setting goal turns into a trauma-inducing event for another student. Social pressures to be popular can block abilities to share concern. The play asks the audience to examine the subtle and not-so-subtle acts of aggression. When we empathize with the characters and understand their motivations, we can use those examples to avoid similar types of conflict in our own lives.

Attending theater and participating in arts is a fantastic way to practice empathy. You might also consider an "empathy journal" where at the end of each day you write down who you have empathy for and who you might be overlooking on a day-to-day basis. Empathizing with others and modeling that behavior for your peers will spur others on to the practice. In communicating with others, try active listening wherein you end your internal dialogue on other thoughts and free your mind to give the speaker your attention. Empathy is a muscle that needs to be exercised and whether you find your "gym" in the theater, through literature or in day-to-day activities, the expansion of this quality makes for a kinder society.

Sylvie Davidson and Catherine McCool in SCT's production of *Getting Near to Baby*

RESOURCES*:

HuffingtonPost.com: Bullying Prevention: The Power of Empathy

ScientificAmerican.com: Novel Finding: Reading Literary Fiction Improves Empathy

HuffingtonPost.com: How Theater for Young People Could Save the World

*All active links can be found on the interactive AAG, free for download at www.sct.org/For-Educators/Outreach/Kaiser-Permanente-Theatre-Program

BULLYING RESOURCES
FOR TEENS*

CALLING FOR HELP AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Peer-to-peer teen hotline in Seattle: Between 6pm and 10pm call **1-866-TEENLINK (866-833-6546)** to speak with a teen phone worker. https://866teenlink.org/

National teenline: 6–10pm 1-800-TLC-TEEN teenlineonline.org/

The Trevor Project 24/7 Trevor Lifeline: 1-866-488-7386 www.thetrevorproject.org/pages/get-help-now

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 suicidepreventionlifeline.org/

CYBERBULLYING –
including video of four teens discussing cyberbullying

PacerTeensAgainstBullying.org: Cyberbullying

OVERVIEW OF BULLYING -
including sections on what to do if you are bullied or if you witness bullying, and answers to the question, "Am I bullying?"

PacerTeensAgainstBullying.org: Bullying 101: Guide for Middle and High School Students

A QUIZ ABOUT BULLYING
PacerTeensAgainstBullying.org: Definitely True or No Way?

"DO YOU BULLY" QUIZ, AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT
PacerTeensAgainstBullying.org: Do You Bully?

PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR TEENS
PacerKidsAgainstBullying.org: Targets of Bullying – What Can They Do?
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia: Stopping Bullying

REPORTING CYBERBULLYING, HOW TO RESPOND
StopBullying.gov: Report Cyberbullying

RESOURCES FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
Pacer.org: Bullying and Harassment of Students with Disabilities

LGBTQ YOUTH
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia: What is LGBT Youth-Related Bullying?
TheTrevorProject.org: In School

FOR YOUNG WOMEN
Center for Young Women's Health

FOR YOUNG MEN
Young Men's Health

STORIES FROM REAL KIDS, AND A PLACE WHERE KIDS CAN SHARE THEIR OWN STORIES
PacerTeensAgainstBullying.org: Real Teens Speak Out
NoPlace4Hate.org: Stories from People Like You

UPSTANDER PLEDGE
TylerClementi.org: Upstander Pledge

*All active links can be found on the interactive AAG, free for download at www.sct.org/For-Educators/Outreach/Kaiser-Permanente-Theatre-Program

BULLYING RESOURCES
FOR ADULTS*

WHAT IS BULLYING

Definitions, guidance for parents and teachers and links for further support. English and Spanish, read or listen, and printable.

Kaiser Permanente: Bullying

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia: What is Bullying?

WHAT TO DO

Practical steps to take when witnessing bullying

StopBullying.gov: Stop Bullying on the Spot

Specific guidelines for when to turn to police and other organizations, and phone numbers to call

StopBullying.gov: Get Help Now

For parents – Practical advice, steps to take

Pacer.org: What Parents Should Know About Bullying

Pacer.org: Cyberbullying: What Parents Can Do to Protect Their Children

Reporting cyberbullying

StopBullying.gov: Report Cyberbullying

UPSTANDER PLEDGE

TylerClementi.org: Upstander Pledge

*All active links can be found on the interactive AAG, free for download at www.sct.org/For-Educators/Outreach/Kaiser-Permanente-Theatre-Program

RESOURCES FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Students with disabilities
Pacer.org: Bullying and Harassment of Students with Disabilities

LGBTQ youth
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia: What is LGBT Youth-Related Bullying?

TheTrevorProject.org: In School

FOR TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS AND STUDENT LEADERS:

Resources designed to encourage student engagement and conversation to educate, inspire and support peers
Pacer.org: We Will Generation

Curriculum/discussion starters for middle and high school
Pacer.org: Starting the Discussion Toolkit

Lesson plans for middle-school students
Glsen.org: No Name-Calling Week

Template for student action plan with example scenarios (available in Spanish)
Pacer.org: Student Action Plan Against Bullying!

Overview of bullying in Somali
Pacer.org: Common Views about Bullying

Downloadable 14-page guide designed for middle school
PacerTeensAgainstBullying.org: Bullying 101 Presentation

JUMP START

IDEAS FOR THINGS TO DO, WONDER ABOUT, TALK ABOUT OR WRITE ABOUT BEFORE OR AFTER YOU SEE *ABOVE BETWEEN BELOW*

Why did Zumi's grandfather think it was important for Zumi to have the best new shoes?

Write a letter to the character you feel needs the most encouragement from a friend.

Design a poster for the show.

Try this with a friend. One of you write a letter to the other. Hand it to them, but don't talk to each other about what's in the letter. The next day, whoever got the letter writes back to the other. Still no talking about it. Repeat this back and forth for four days. Besides the time it took, what was different about this communication from texting or talking?

What character did you relate to the most? Why?

Make a video with some friends, talking about what you respect about each other.

Draw up an idea for a game app where players level up by finding ways to help each other.

Are you more like Rayna, Zumi or Hattie when it comes to preparing for your classes?

Design new costumes for the characters.

Write a letter to a friend thanking them for how they support you.

Why does Antony assume Zumi's family is poor?

What do you think happened in the past between Rayna and Hattie and her friends?

Have you ever treated someone less kindly than you should have? What would you do now if you had a chance to live that moment again?

Do you have a friend in your life who is a "cousin" to you the way Rayna and Zumi are? How is that relationship different from ones with other friends?

Whom do you trust most in your life? Have you ever told them how much that means to you? Tell them.

Write a scene where you are communicating with four different people at the same time, in the same way Antony does in the play. Act it out. What's the hardest part of writing it? What's the most fun about performing it?

What do you think about the relationship Rayna has with the person on the Internet she's never met? Why does Rayna talk to them?

What do you think will happen to Hattie now that her friends have turned against her?

What songs or sounds would you use as ringtones for each of the characters? Why?

Why doesn't Hattie stop filming to help Antony?

Make a list of the good qualities of each of the characters in the play. Make a list of things they could work on to become better people.

What do you wish the adults in your life would understand about why social media is important to you? How can you start that conversation with them?

Write a story about what the characters' relationships to each other might be in the future.

DRAMA IN ACTION

This is a customized *Above Between Below* workshop exercise for you to try.

EXERCISE: Who Has the Power?
GRADES: 6th - 8th
TIME: 15 - 30 minutes
SET-UP: Create an open area in the classroom, large enough for several students to stand in a dramatic pose.
SUPPLIES: (optional) A journal or paper and pencils

In Above Between Below, *the status of the characters is constantly shifting. For example, sometimes Zumi is "above" Antony, sometimes "below." At one point, Rayna is "between" Zumi and Antony. In this exercise students will learn to identify and analyze power dynamics and status in a variety of situations.*

INSTRUCTIONS:

Place a chair in the center of an open area in your classroom. Invite a student to come up and make the choice to sit in the chair, or stand or sit next to it. Invite a second student into the space, to sit or stand where they choose.

Ask students, "Who has the most power right now?" Students may disagree! Let them know there is not a right or wrong answer to the question. Ask them to explain their opinion or make up a little story about who these characters are, where they are or what their relationship might be.

Invite two more students into the space, this time focusing on facing towards or away from each other. Ask students to talk to a neighbor about the power/status relationships they see. Which character has more power?

WORKING IN PAIRS: Instruct all students to find a partner. Give them three minutes to come up with a position in which status/power is very clear. Spotlight various duos, asking the class to indicate by a show of hands which character has more power.

THE NEXT STEP: SHIFTING THE POWER DYNAMIC: Research has shown that a very effective way to reduce incidents of bullying is to train students to be "upstanders" rather than bystanders, acting in a way that changes the balance of power. Understanding that every single person is making choices all the time that impact the power dynamics in their community is a great step towards becoming an upstander.

Spotlight a duo that has created a position with a character who is clearly dominant. Ask for a volunteer to come in as a third character. Ask students to describe whether the power balance has now changed. Spotlight a different duo. This time ask for a volunteer to intentionally choose a position that would change the balance of power. Try this several times. Thank the students for their work. Suggest that they pay attention to power dynamics and status in school and around the neighborhood over the next week, and think about how their own positions and choices contribute to the situation.

VARIATIONS: After the students work in pairs, give them the opportunity to work in groups of three or four, or have them focus on facial expressions and body language as well as position and orientation (whether they are facing towards or away from each other).

JOURNAL ENTRY/REFLECTION (OPTIONAL): Ask students to draw a picture of two or more characters in a position with clear power dynamics. Tell them that stick figures are fine! Ask them to write a description of the drawing, including the status and relationships of the characters, the setting and what might happen next.

BOOKLIST

FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS:

FICTION:

The Thing About Jellyfish
Ali Benjamin

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian
Sherman Alexie

Drama
Raina Telgemeier

The Unbeatable Squirrel Girl: Squirrel Meets World
Shannon Hale and Dean Hale

Goodbye Stranger
Rebecca Stead

Mango Delight
Fracaswell Hyman

Better Nate than Ever
Tim Federle

Liar, Liar: The Theory, Practice, and Destructive Properties of Deception
Gary Paulsen

The Crossover
Kwame Alexander

Well, That Was Awkward
Rachel Vail
Gracie likes A.J., but it turns out he likes Gracie's beautiful best friend, Sienna. Obviously Gracie is happy for Sienna. Super happy! She helps Sienna compose the best texts, responding to A.J.'s surprisingly funny and appealing texts, just as if she were Sienna. While she tries to be okay with this, Gracie must deal with the heartache.

Booklist prepared by Amanda Hua, Pierce County Library System

NONFICTION:

The Big Disconnect: Protecting Childhood and Family Relationships in the Digital Age
Catherine Steiner-Adair EdD, and Teresa H. Barker

Screenwise: Helping Kids Thrive (and Survive) in Their Digital World
Devorah Heitner, PhD

Glow Kids: How Screen Addiction Is Hijacking Our Kids—And How to Break the Trance
Nicholas Kardaras, PhD

Bullied: What Every Parent, Teacher, and Kid Needs to Know About Ending the Cycle of Fear
Carrie Goldman
Goldman brings together the expertise of leading authorities with the candid accounts of families dealing firsthand with peer victimization to present proven strategies and concrete tools for teaching children how to speak up and carry themselves with confidence; call each other out on cruelty; resolve conflict; cope with teasing, taunting, physical abuse and cyberbullying; and be smart consumers of technology and media.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

Engaging young people with the arts is what we are all about at Seattle Children's Theatre. We hope that the Active Audience Guide has helped enhance and extend the theater experience for your family or your students beyond seeing the show.

Your input is very valuable to us. If you have thoughts you'd like to share or questions to ask, email us at info@sct.org.
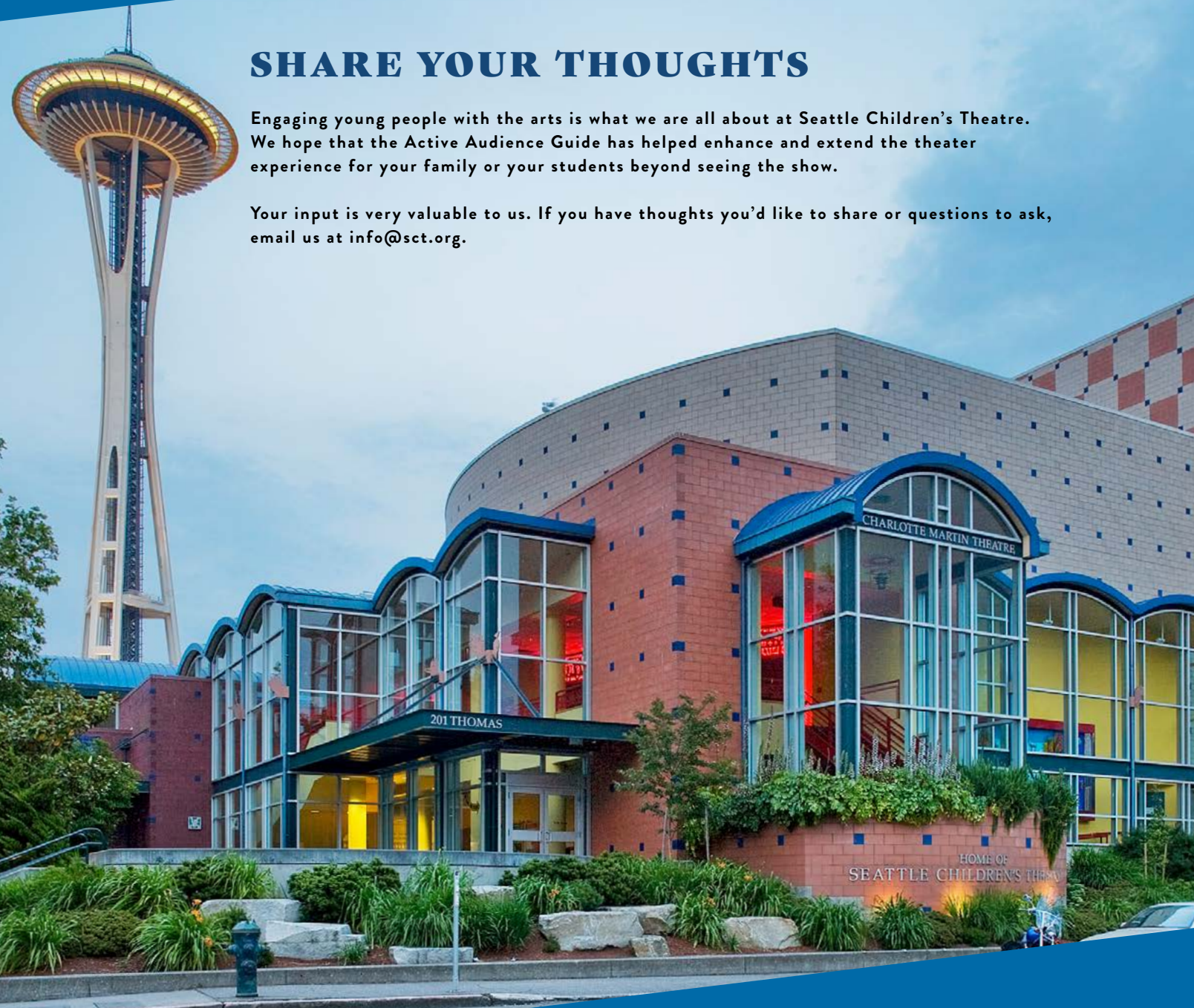
Seattle Children's Theatre is one of the most prominent theatres for young audiences in the United States and the world. SCT's mission is to provide children of all ages access to professional theatre, with a focus on new works, and theatre education.

SCT, which celebrates its 43rd season in 2017-2018, performs September through June in the Charlotte Martin and Eve Alvord Theatres at Seattle Center. It has gained acclaim as a leading producer of professional theatre, educational programs and new scripts for young people. By the end of its 2017-2018 season, SCT will have presented 263 plays, including 113 world premieres, entertaining over four million children.