



Creating Curious, Courageous, and Engaged Citizens

## THE SAMANTHA SMITH CHALLENGE 2019/20

### Social Justice Through the Arts

#### MISSION

The Samantha Smith Challenge (SSC) is a dynamic educational program designed to help Maine middle school students use the arts to build a bridge between the classroom and the world as they become curious, courageous, and engaged citizens. SSC projects teach students that, no matter what age, they can be part of solving the challenges and problems they see around them.

#### PARTNERS

Americans Who Tell the Truth relies on partnerships with MAMLE (the Maine Association for Middle Level Education) and the Center for Innovation in Education at Thomas College to bring the SSC to Maine schools and to honor [Samantha Smith](#) by encouraging students to act in her spirit.

#### WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT THE SSC

Journal of Maine Education (2018) features the SSC in "[The Synergy of Change: Children and Adults Inspiring Each Other](#)," by Beth Schultz. "Imagine a classroom where children are solving real world problems, including those that stump and defy policy makers, politicians, and adults. ... In classrooms throughout Maine, students are selecting issues that resonate with them, engaging in research, becoming experts, identifying reasonable and sustainable solutions, and finally sharing these solutions with others."

"SSC provides students opportunities to participate in genuine learning and create authentic products. It provides them with real reasons to participate in their schooling."  
- Teacher from SSC 2018-19

"Hope is power, power is hope. The Samantha Smith Challenge helped me feel powerful and hopeful." - Carson Brown, SSC 2018-2019

"The Samantha Smith Challenge inspired us to take action on these issues that have been going on for decades and inspired us to not be couch potatoes." – Tristan Green, SSC 2018-19

Watch [Senator Angus King's comments](#) at the first Samantha Smith Challenge Celebration.

## SSC BACKGROUND

*In December 1982, Samantha Smith of Manchester, Maine, asked her mother, “ [Who] would start a war and why.’ She showed me a news magazine with a story about America and Russia, one that had a picture of the new Russian leader, Yuri Andropov, on the cover. We read it together. It seemed that the people in both Russia and America were worried that the other country would start a nuclear war. It all seemed so dumb to me. I had learned about the awful things that had happened during World War II, so I thought that nobody would ever want to have another war. I told Mom that she should write to Mr. Andropov to find out who was causing all the trouble. She said, ‘Why don’t you write to him?’ So I did.”*

*From that one question, a peace-making venture unfolded that brought Russian and American students together to build understanding and appreciation of one another and to focus on building connections instead of armies. Sadly, in August 1985, both Samantha and her father were killed in a plane crash.*

*In 2003, Americans Who Tell the Truth (AWTT) honored Samantha by painting her portrait. In 2014, AWTT partnered with the [Maine Association of Middle Level Education \(MAMLE\)](#) to continue to honor Samantha with the Samantha Smith Challenge. The Samantha Smith Challenge encourages every Maine middle level student and classroom to start making a difference in the world today, just as Samantha Smith did nearly 40 years ago.*

Check out [Samantha’s story](#)

[More about the 2019 Samantha Smith Challenge](#), including videos of speakers Maulian Dana and Chloe Maxim.

## THE 2018-19 SSC CALENDAR

**OCTOBER 1, 2019:** SSC Guidelines Available; The 6th Annual SSC Registration Opens

**OCTOBER 1, 2019 - FEBRUARY 14, 2020:** Complete “Get to Know AWTT” activity and submit SSC registration form

**MARCH/APRIL 2020:** SSC workshops/school visits.

**MAY 15, 2020:** SSC project reports submitted to AWTT

**JUNE 1, 2019:** Everyone attends the Samantha Smith Day celebration

## YOU’LL FIND THE FOLLOWING IN THIS DOCUMENT:

- Samantha Smith’s story
- Starting points and activities for exploring identity, race, class, gender, and age



- *Connecting with Changemakers* Activity to become familiar with Americans Who Tell the Truth website
- Link to online SSC registration form (complete by Feb. 14, 2020)
- Steps for completing the SSC
- Resources for the SSC: Social Justice through the Arts

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE SAMANTHA SMITH CHALLENGE:**

1. Share Samantha Smith's story with students.
2. Read and discuss IDENTITY information.
3. Complete the *Connecting with Changemakers* activity.
4. Register for the SSC by Feb. 14, 2020 [Go here to register](#).
5. Complete the steps for the Samantha Smith Challenge
  - a. Identify issue/s
  - b. Research the issue/s
  - c. Create your action plan and message about your issue/s – inform, inspire, get a response
  - d. Describe as an individual or as a group how/if this project has turned you into an activist and what your next steps as an activist might be
  - e. Attend the SSC Celebration on June 1, 2020 and share your work

### **MORE ABOUT SAMANTHA SMITH**

From Samantha's one question -- "who would start a war and why?" -- a peacemaking venture unfolded that brought Russian and American students together to discover understanding and appreciation of one another, to build connections instead of armies and bombs. This eleven year old from Maine had become a teacher, telling her story to adults and children about how the world could be a more peaceful place. She said, "If we could be friends by just getting to know each other better, then what are our countries really arguing about? Nothing could be more important than not having a war if a war could kill everything." Sadly, in August 1985, both Samantha and her father were killed in a plane crash. But Samantha's memory lives on in her example. Her progress from concern to courageous engagement began with a series of small steps and decisions—something each of us can do! That is our challenge!

[Watch brief documentary of Samantha's journey here](#)

[Watch the Samantha Smith interview with Ted Koppel here](#)

## **IDENTITY...THE STARTING POINT FOR THE SAMANTHA SMITH CHALLENGE**

The idea of the American Dream is founded in the presumption that passion and persistence endow anyone of any race, class, gender, or age an equal shot at success. Access to the American Dream, however, often depends on identity. For example, poor people and people of color – especially poor people of color – have a harder time living out their dreams, living up to their potential, or simply living, than their more well-to-do white fellow citizens. Class rigidity, racial, gender, and age prejudice are still woven tightly – both consciously and unconsciously – into the educational, legal, economic, social, and environmental fabrics that govern our lives.

Maine is often described as the one of the most racially homogeneous states in the country, making people think that racism doesn't need to be addressed here. Census figures indicate that the Pine Tree State is slowly becoming more racially and culturally diverse. Ethnic populations increased in all 16 counties between 2000 and 2010. The demographics of Maine are changing. Maine also continues to have some of the most uncompromising poverty in the country with a poverty rate of nearly 13%. (16% of Mainers and 20% of Maine children experience food insecurity.)

This year we ask you, the SSC students, to think first about your own identity. **Who are you?** Consider your identity in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and age. Also think about those aspects of your identity that are easier to experiment with, such as beliefs, clothing styles, groups you join, issues you engage, etc. How do these identities influence your expectations for yourself? How do they influence others' expectations for you? As you look around, in your community or across the state, nation, and world, think about how these identities and expectations affect others.

How does this combination of identity and expectation connect to the justice and equity issues you see?

This is not meant to be a limiting component of the SSC, but rather a piece that will help students personally connect to social justice issues. As they think about the factors that make up their own identities, we hope they will make connections between those factors and the world's issues that concern them and better understand the motivations and concerns of others. If they struggle seeing this, we believe that, at the very least, spending time thinking about who they are in the world will help them develop as citizens and give them understandings about their roles in the world and about expectations they may not have realized. It helps us all to start with the question, "Who am I?"



As you contemplate social justice concerns, consider the following guiding questions:

- How do parts of your identity (race, class, gender, age etc.) help or hinder your life?
- What are some expectations that occur based on and race, class, gender/age?

### **GET TO KNOW AMERICANS WHO TELL THE TRUTH – CONNECT WITH PORTRAIT SUBJECTS:**

**Before registering for the SSC, we ask that you and your students complete this “Connect with Changemakers” activity.**

Becoming familiar with the Americans Who Tell the Truth portrait subjects is an important step in the Samantha Smith Challenge. The following *models of courageous citizenship* serve as motivational guides for students as they begin to explore how race, class, gender and age shape identity and expectations and influence social justice and equity issues in their communities and the world.

We suggest exploring the stories and social justice work of **at least two** of the following people:

Samantha Smith  
Michelle Alexander  
Will Allen  
Esther Attean  
Ella Baker  
Dr. Rev. William Barber II  
Judy Bonds  
Betty Burkes  
Claudette Colvin  
Maulian Dana  
Larry Gibson  
Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha  
John Hunter  
LeAlan Jones  
Kelsey Juliana  
Nicole and Jonas Maines  
Chloe Maxmin  
Camilo Mejia  
Sherri Mitchell  
Bree Newsome



Ai-Jen Poo  
Sister Lucy Poulin  
Florence Reed  
Lateefah Simon  
Diane Wilson

### **CONNECTING WITH TRUTH TELLERS (worksheet)**

*You'll be ready to register for the SSC when you complete this activity!*

**We have designed this worksheet for your students to help them learn about the AWTT portrait subjects. You may complete this as a class or small groups or individuals. When you are done, please include the list of themes and portraits that your students have explored as part of your registration.**

1. Go to <https://www.americanswhotellthetruth.org>  
Click on the Portrait Galleries tab and explore until you find two portrait subjects you have chosen to study.
2. Complete the following sentence for each portrait...
  - A. We/I have chosen this portrait subject because...
  - B. We/I have chosen this portrait subject because...
3. For each portrait subject complete the following:

#### **First portrait**

- Portrait subject name:
- Issue addressed:
- Look at the portrait. Answer the following questions:
  - A. How does the painting make you feel?
  - B. Why/How do you think the art makes you feel that way?
- List three ways this person might identify him/herself, e.g. race, economic level, gender, ethnicity, age, profession, etc.
  - A.
  - B.
  - C.



- List three things this person did to address his/her issue:
  - A.
  - B.
  - C.
- In a short paragraph, say what motivated this person to commit time and energy to this issue.

**Second portrait:**

- Portrait subject name:
- Issue addressed:
- Look at the portrait. Answer the following questions:
  - A. How does the portrait make you feel?
  - B. Why/how do you think art makes you feel that way?
- List three ways this person might identify him/herself, e.g. race, economic level, gender, ethnicity, age, profession, etc.
  - A.
  - B.
  - C.
- List three things this person did to address his/her issue:
  - A.
  - B.
  - C.
- In a short paragraph, say what motivated this person to commit time and energy to this issue/

Now that you have completed this activity with your class, you can [register your class for the 2019/2020 Samantha Smith Challenge!](#) List the themes and portraits you studied on the registration form. You are ready to go....

Start now (see Four Steps beginning on the next page), or we strongly encourage you to expand your work using the [RESOURCES](#) section below.



## The Samantha Smith Challenge Guidelines

### Social Justice through the Arts

**YOUR MISSION IS TO ACT AND GET A RESPONSE!**  
Collaboration between classes and disciplines is encouraged!

#### Four Simple Steps to this year's Samantha Smith Challenge

1. Consider the impact race, class, gender, and/or age have on social justice and equity and choose an issue that reflects this influence.
2. Discuss the following questions...
  - How do your personal experiences, your identities, and the expectations that come with those identities shape your concerns for your chosen social justice issue/s?
  - How have you been lied to about your issue/s?
  - [Sherri Mitchell](#) says, "Rights and responsibilities cannot be separated. Every right that we stand upon must be balanced by a set of corresponding responsibilities. We cannot legitimately make a demand unless we are willing to take responsibility for creating a world where that demand can be met."  
What rights and responsibilities are part of your issue/s? For more thoughts on this [go to this article](#).
  - How/why can creative arts and writing inspire action on your issue/s?
  - What strategies and actions/ in addition to your creative message, can be used to provoke a response from your intended audience?
3. Do research.
4. Create and communicate a message that provokes response to your issue.

#### STEP ONE

##### EXPRESS CONCERNS; IDENTIFY ISSUES

Students write **questions and concerns** they have about race, class, gender, and/or age in their lives, their community, nation, or world.

- **Identify common themes** among the concerns students have expressed. Select one or more social, environmental, or economic issues related to race, class, and/or age to address as a class or in groups. Be as specific as possible. Having a clear focus will make a difference.
- **Get inspired** by listening to at least two AWTT Activist podcasts! (Watch for these links in late October)
- **Check out the AWTT website** for examples of people who have addressed similar issues and concerns. We suggest you start with the list created under "Connect with Portrait Subjects" or go to **Portrait Galleries**, click on **Themes**, find related theme and select it.
  - How did race, class, gender, and/or age influence this person's issue?



- What did the person do to get a response? (e.g. write to stakeholders, create music, gather others to support the cause, etc.)
- What response did the person get? Was it the response expected?
- ***Need help finding portraits related to your theme? Get in touch with us! [connie@americanswhotellthetruth.org](mailto:connie@americanswhotellthetruth.org)***
- Why is this issue important – [check out this video](#) to understand the importance of WHY.  
Why does this issue matter to you?  
How/Why does your identity connect you to this issue?
- **Invite a panel of community members** to talk with your class about the community concerns/issues/themes the students have identified **or** connect via Skype, e-mail, or in person with an AWTT portrait subject who is involved with these issues. (AWTT can help connect you with people.)
- **Select your issue/s**, one or more social, environmental, or economic issues related to race, class, gender, and/or age to address as a class or in groups. Be as specific as possible. This will help students focus on making a difference.
- **Ask each student:** Why does this issue matter to you? How/Why does your identity connect you to this issue?

## **STEP TWO**

### **DO RESEARCH**

1. **Students generate a list of questions** about all the things they don't know or understand about their chosen topics.
2. Individually or in teams, **students find answers to the questions** and become fact-gathering machines!
  - a. Go back to the Portrait Galleries on the [AWTT website](#). There they can learn about change makers who addressed their issues (or related ones).
  - b. Pay special attention to what the people **DID** to make a difference and get a response about their issue. Explore the resources listed beside the portraits.
3. **Invite a panel of community members** to talk with your class about the community concerns/issues/themes students have identified or connect via Skype, e-mail, or in person with an AWTT portrait subject who is involved with these issues. (Contact [connie@americanswhotellthetruth.org](mailto:connie@americanswhotellthetruth.org) if you want to be connected to a live portrait subject to talk about your issues.)
4. **Interview local stakeholders** (people concerned about the issue).
  - a. Why is this issue important to them?
  - b. What connection does this issue have to their identity?
  - c. What are they doing to address the issue?
  - d. What is their strategy/plan for making a long-term difference?
  - e. What are the obstacles to improving this issue?
  - f. What else needs to be done?



- g. How can we help?
5. **Decide who you want to respond to your message.** Who is your audience? Parents? Teachers? Lawmakers? Other students? People in your community?

### STEP THREE

## CREATE A POWERFUL MESSAGE: INFORM, INSPIRE, GET A RESPONSE!

1. Discuss not only *what* students want to say, but *how* they want to say it.

**KEY QUESTION:** *Who is the most appropriate audience/s for this message?*

Some options to help determine what you want to say:

- a. Help people in their communities to re-imagine where they live.
- b. Provoke local authorities by calling out an injustice in the community.
- c. Inspire people to join the fight against climate change, homelessness, inequality, etc.
- d. Shed light on a practice or event most people don't know or don't understand.
- e. Encourage or challenge people in power who are doing good/not good work.

**2. Use the arts! Remember...**The arts create a context for conversation. The creative arts cause people to ask questions that need to be asked. Read more under [RESOURCES: CREATIVE ARTS](#)

Check out this [TED Radio Hour](#) to hear how the arts inspire us to make a difference.

Listen and watch this powerful social justice and education message from three [Brave New Voices](#).

Review "[Why Social Justice Through the Arts?](#)" section.

Make paintings, original musical compositions, essays, theater skits or any other form of creative expression that communicates the identified concern and responds to the academic needs of your classroom. (*Some students may choose their medium while others may be working in a specific class that teaches drawing or painting, theater or film-making where the medium will be defined by the teacher.*)

\* See below for a list of possible [creative art forms](#)

**3. Get a response!!** Contact the target audience/s and schedule an exhibit, performance, forum or other method of presentation, connection, march, or happening. **Think about how to present the message to provoke the desired response.**



## STEP FOUR

### ATTEND THE SSC CELEBRATION & SHARE THE STORY OF YOUR JOURNEY

Reflect on the following:

- What did you learn about your chosen issue?
- How do race, class, gender, and/or age impact your issue?
- What did you learn about your own identity and the expectations that come with that?
- Why do you think using the arts to get a response to a concern works?
- What was the most challenging part of the SSC?
- What was the most rewarding part of the SSC?

**Please answer the following question and bring your response to the SSC Celebration:**

Now that you are an activist, how has this changed the way you see yourself and what will your next steps as an activist be?

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## SSC AND STANDARDS

The SSC is applicable to a wide range of academic standards, including the following:

The Common Core

CASEL's social and emotional literacy standards

21st Century Learning Standards

Educator Nancy Doda, PhD, compiled a list of the "Power Standards" most relevant to the SSC. [You can see her list and comments in this PDF](#)

## SSC RESOURCES

### GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR MAINE TOPICS:

- What are the similarities and differences between how people in Maine are treated when they are poor; when they are of color; when they are young; when they are wealthy; when they are disabled; when they are LGBTQ? What happens when more than one of these identities applies to one person?
- Where do you see racism in Maine?  
[Immigrant students learn hard lessons about racism in historically white high school in Maine](#) (Boston Globe)  
[All schools have a duty to confront racism](#) (Sun Journal editorial)
- Where do you see discrimination in Maine?  
[Maine Civil Rights Laws](#) (Find Law)



- How do we work towards racial justice and equity? Check out some of these organizations:
  - [Capital Area New Mainers Project](#)
  - [Maine Community Integration](#)
  - [Sustainable Livelihoods Relief Organization](#)
  - [Homeless Voices of Justice](#)
  - [Operation Breaking Stereotypes](#)
  - [Portland Outright](#)
- Where do we see economic and gender inequality in our state and nation?  
[Fast Facts: Economic Security for Women and Families in Maine](#) (Center for American Progress)
- How do we work towards economic and gender justice and equity?
- Who needs to be part of the conversation as you address these issues?
- What is meant by “the two Maines”? How do we address this division? (Maine Wire)
- How is difference defined in different parts of Maine? Think about class and geography.
- How do we welcome and embrace the talents and challenges of Maine’s immigrant community?
- What is environmental racism? How do we address it?  
[What is environmental racism? Definition & ethics](#) (Study.com)

## **IDENTITY: RACE, CLASS, GENDER, AND AGE**

### **IDEAS TO CONSIDER**

"Lost Voices" (Button Poetry video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpPASWlnZIA>

“Why is Maine so white? And why does it matter?”

<http://bangordailynews.com/2012/09/14/politics/understanding-why-maine-is-so-white/>

Maine Public Health Data Reports

Healthy Maine 2010: Race and Ethnicity

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/healthy-maine/documents/oppforall/b04raeth.pdf>



“What else do we need to believe racism exists?”

<https://bangordailynews.com/2018/03/27/opinion/contributors/what-else-do-we-need-to-believe-racism-exists/>From The Telling Room (Portland) *The Whole World is Waiting*

<https://vimeo.com/56031166>

### **A children’s book for everyone!**

*The Day You Begin* by Jacqueline Woodson

Tells the story of the bravery it takes to be who you are.

### **For those who might be inspired by music:**

*One Person* by Monte Selby and the 2017 SSC Participants

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcBuwzSH4sY>

*You Be You* by Monte Selby and Clear Creek Amana Middle School, Tiffin, Iowa, 2018.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBQyotXpvKg>

*This is the New Year* by A Great Big World

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=27R\\_goWiAAU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=27R_goWiAAU)

*Naughty* from *Matilda*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iKm1h0X6CB0>

*Hope* by Jason Robert Brown

<http://jasonrobertbrown.com/2016/11/09/hope/>

Interview with [Nicole Maines](#) (from Maine and AWTT) on *Being a (trans) Superhero*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/12/arts/television/nicole-maines-supergirl-transgender-interview.html>

## **EXAMPLES OF IDENTITY WRITING**

### **MODELS TO MOTIVATE**

The following three short pieces are written by students who are actively exploring and deepening their sense of identity. All of these examples are from young people who have participated in Operation Breaking Stereotypes (OBS) exchanges. OBS is a partner organization to Americans Who Tell the Truth and run by AWTT’s Education Director, Connie Carter.

For me white always meant pale. White just never really meant “Caucasian” to me until I went on my first OBS trip in the summer before my eighth grade year. I remember arriving at the bus station and being shuffled onto the subway where I didn’t really stand out at first. As we took more and more stops on the way to St. Anne’s church all of the white people were getting off. Living in Maine I had never been in a situation where I had stood out because of my race. Here I was sitting on a subway with a group of Maine kids, and we were all sticking out like a bunch of sore thumbs. I think someone even asked us where we were going because we clearly looked like we didn’t belong. I remember thinking...I mean really thinking about my race for the first time. It sort-of dawned on me all at once and I thought, “Whoa...I’m white.”

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I am a 17 year-old girl from a Catholic family. I am compassionate. I believe in a good education and that it helps you in life and your future. Behind my physical appearance, there’s a lot more inside of me that some people don’t see. I may be an outgoing girl or even just a girl who is silent and afraid to talk. But, inside me I am sometimes afraid to speak my thoughts. I am afraid I will be judged because my background isn’t diverse or I am not good enough.

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When I was in Africa, we had our own house; we had animals and a garden of our own. When I moved to the US, it was different. We lived in an apartment and there were things we couldn’t have. Everything was different. That’s when I knew my family was poor. The US is just different for me; everything got harder. Life is just hard in the US. My life as a person was way better in Africa and the more I move the more I lose myself. I used to be a happy person but now I feel like I lost my happiness. I am not a happy person anymore.

## **IDENTITY ACTIVITY: WHO ARE YOU?**

Read or listen to the essay: “Little Things are Big.”  
<https://www.commonlit.org/texts/little-things-are-big>

Complete the following activity:

- Talk about the “real” and “assigned” identities of Jesus Colon.
  - List adjectives that describe his “real” identity – how he views himself.
  - List adjectives that describe his “assigned” identity – how others view him.
  - Talk about the differences and why those may exist.
  
- Ask students to do the same for themselves:
  - List adjectives that they would use to describe themselves



- List adjectives others might use to describe them.
- Ask if one or two students are willing to share their lists.
- Talk again about what makes these two lists different and how the two lists may cause their opportunities and expectations to differ.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND THOUGHTS

### WHY SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH THE ARTS?

It is clear that the AWTT version of art-as-activism gives students the chance to consider seemingly disparate issues and find commonalities. As we like to say, building the big tent and breaking down the silos. It forces people to understand the importance of dissent and disagreement in our society and how, sometimes, what seemed out of step with our culture becomes the accepted norm.

Samantha was a *narrative activist*. By telling *HER story* she changed *THE story* – definitely a creative art! The power of the arts to deliver a message or to invoke action is indisputable.

Americans Who Tell the Truth (AWTT) combines art and other media to inspire a new generation of engaged Americans who will act for the common good, our communities, and the Earth. Over thirty of the AWTT portrait subjects have used the creative arts to inspire action.

We share here just a few examples:

- An international program entitled [Barefoot Artists](#), founded by artist [Lily Yeh](#) in 2002, trains and empowers local residents, organizes communities around communal art projects, and takes action for a more compassionate, just and sustainable future in countries such as Rwanda, Kenya, Ghana, Ecuador, and China. This program is an offshoot of the non-profit organization Yeh founded in 1986 called *The Village of Arts and Humanities* in Philadelphia, which was developed to build communities through art, learning, land transformation, and economic development.
- Musician [David Rovics](#) believes music can connect people in ways nothing else can: “Keep writing. Keep earning. Be open to criticism from ourselves or others on music or politics. Never delude yourself into thinking you're original. Keep listening to music and learning songs other people wrote. Keep your heart open. See the world. Put yourself in other people's shoes regularly...”
- An education professor at Syracuse University, [Mara Sapon Shevin](#) says, “I am very interested in continuing my work in community building and teaching for social justice through the arts. I give workshops on using music, dance and movement to teach about oppression and liberation and I hope to continue this work with more people of all ages and backgrounds.”

## INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS

While we are emphasizing creative expression – storytelling, art making, drama, music – as effective means of communicating about social justice, we do not expect the SSC to take place only – or even primarily – in art classes. This is about identifying important community and world issues, understanding them, and making a compelling argument in an effective medium.

Think about it as combining any subject discipline with debate, service learning, and creative expression. Each group involved in this year’s SSC will use art, drama, music, spoken word, storytelling, media arts, dance, and other forms of creative expression to deliver a message about their chosen topic or issue.

Paint a portrait of a truth teller in your community.

Create a dramatic production or tell a compelling story about your issue.

Write music that makes us feel braver and less alone.

Write an essay that makes the most compelling argument you know for why we should all join you in your effort to make the world a better place.

## THE CREATIVE ARTS:

### RESOURCES FOR CREATING YOUR SSC MESSAGE

#### CREATIVE ARTS FORMATS (a few possibilities)

- **A short story.** Pick one incident or critical moment and tell it as a first person story as though you were Barbara Johns, Samantha Smith, Abraham Lincoln, or another change maker.
- **A letter.** Write to the stakeholders and others in positions of responsibility with respect to the chosen issue. Explain what you do or don’t understand about his/her work.
- **A rap.** Add movement or beat boxing to animate your story.
- **Slam poetry.** Think spoken word, powerful emotions, smiles, & tears.
- **A collage, a drawing or painting, a poem, sculpture, a song or piece of music, a video.**
- **You are creative, you decide!!**



## TIPS FOR MAKING A COMPELLING CREATIVE PIECE

- **Make it personal.** Why is this important to you?
- **Be real and brief.**
- **Highlight adversity.** If focusing on another person's story, highlight moments when they were tested or challenged.
- **Show why you care.** Include what you admire about a person affected by or working for your issue.
- **Be specific.**
- **Play to your strengths.** Use a creative art medium that is comfortable for you.
- **Be descriptive!** Use the descriptive power of your medium -- color, harmonies, graphics, tone of voice, vocabulary.
- **Don't tell, but show.** Don't tell about anger or truth or justice; show what made you angry, sad, happy, or committed to your subject.

*\*The storytelling suggestions are based on **This I Believe** in association with National Public Radio and **Bird by Bird** by Anne Lamott.*

## CHANGEMAKERS: Examples to view with students

- [Robert Shetterly](#) talks about [truth and courage](#) in a democracy at the 2017 Thrivals 10.0 conference in Louisville, Kentucky (begins at 52:45)
- [Kelsey Juliana](#), a powerful activist and educator, [tells her story](#) about her activism, her long walk to Washington, D.C. and the filing of the lawsuit Youth v. Gov.
- As a teenager, [LeAlan Jones](#) galvanized a nation about what it was like [growing up in his Chicago neighborhood](#).
- [Jonathan Kozol](#) talks about the [inequalities of education](#).
- [Claudette Colvin](#) explains why, when she was just 15, [she didn't get up from her bus seat in 1951](#) in Montgomery, Alabama.
- [Diane Wilson](#) tells a group of students what it was like when she decided to [protect the bay she relied on for her livelihood](#).

## SOME OF THE AWTT CHANGEMAKERS WHO USE THE CREATIVE ARTS TO GET A RESPONSE:

<a href="#">James Baldwin</a>	Fiction writer, essayist
<a href="#">Peter Davis</a>	Filmmaker, writer
<a href="#">Ossie Davis</a>	Actor
<a href="#">James Douglass</a>	Writer
<a href="#">Ralph Ellison</a>	Novelist
<a href="#">Eve Ensler</a>	Playwright, performer



**AMERICANS WHO TELL THE TRUTH**  
Models of Courageous Citizenship

Denise Giardina	Writer
Nikki Giovanni	Poet
Woody Guthrie	Folksinger, writer
Jim Harney	Photojournalist
Reggie Harris	Musician, storyteller
Kim Harris	Musician, storyteller
Langston Hughes	Poet, novelist, playwright
Pat Humphries	Singer, songwriter
Zora Neale Hurston	Author Folklorist
Becci Ingram	Dramatist
Jonathan Kozol	Writer
Dorothea Lange	Photographer
Frances Moore Lappe	Writer
Natasha Mayers	Artist
Arthur Miller	Playwright
Janice Mirikitani	Poet
Sandy O	Singer/songwriter
Bruce Utah Phillips	Songwriter, storyteller, humorist
Michael Pollan	Journalist
Bernice Johnson Reagon	Singer, composer
Paul Robeson	Singer, writer
David Rovics	Singer, songwriter
Pete Seeger	Singer, songwriter
Mara Sapon-Shevin	Writer, singer
Alice Walker	Novelist, essayist, poet



Walt Whitman                      Poet

Terry Tempest Williams        Writer

Tilly Woodward                  Artist

Lily Yeh                             Artist

**GET INSPIRED BY PREVIOUS SSC CELEBRATIONS!**

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