



**2015-16**  
SEASON  
— *for* —  
YOUNG  
PEOPLE

# Teacher Guidebook



Photo by Warren Westcott



## STAND

presented by WRITER'S STAGE

Sponsored by  **REGIONS**

# From our Season Sponsor



For over 130 years Regions has been proud to be a part of the Middle Tennessee community, growing and thriving as our area has. From the opening of our doors on September 1, 1883, we have committed to this community and our customers.

One area that we are strongly committed to is the education of our students. We are proud to support TPAC's Humanities Outreach in Tennessee Program. What an important sponsorship this is – reaching over 25,000 students and teachers – some students would never see a performing arts production without this program. Regions continues to reinforce its commitment to the communities it serves and in addition to supporting programs such as HOT, we have close to 200 associates teaching financial literacy in classrooms this year.

**Thank you, teachers,** for giving your students this wonderful opportunity. They will certainly enjoy the experience. You are creating memories of a lifetime, and Regions is proud to be able to help make this opportunity possible.

**Jim Schmitz**

Executive Vice President, Area Executive  
Middle Tennessee Area



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## ...A note from the Playwright

Dear Teachers:

When I first met John Ellis he was standing at the back corner of the church we attended, The Cathedral of the Incarnation. He was using a worn paper cup and the front side of a trash can to support himself. Years of drug abuse had stolen his mind and his body, but not his heart. We saw each other most every day after that, first becoming acquainted, and then friends. We traveled, drove each other crazy, shared a hundred double cheese burgers (no pickle) and then we hugged goodbye.



STAND was written to give us all a better understanding of addiction, the part it plays in the problem of homelessness, and how it all starts long before you see someone standing on a street corner. I consider it a great blessing in my life that I was in a position to help Johnny. Was he ever going to live up to our expectations? Probably not. Does that mean the effort put into trying to help someone like John is wasted? Absolutely not! It's true; we'll always have the poor. The question is, how many?

It's very important that your students are here today. To understand the importance of eliminating homelessness will be a great gift as they progress through life.

Youth are the future of change.

Peace,  
Jim Reyland

...STAND Nashville

– together we can end homelessness.

STAND will also be performed on stage at TPAC for the public on Sept 25th and 26th to benefit **Room in the Inn, The Nashville Rescue Mission and Salvation Army**. For tickets call the TPAC Box Office. Sponsored by HCA Tri-Star Health.

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Written and Compiled by Carolyn German and Alice Large  
Edited by Cassie LaFevor

## ...Cast and Crew Bios

**DAVID COMPTON (Director)** Recent professional credits include: Jamie/Zolton Karpathy, *MY FAIR LADY* (Studio Tenn), Cassius, *JULIUS CAESAR* (Nashville Shakespeare Festival), the Cat, *THE CAT IN THE HAT*, (Nashville Children's Theatre), Roger, *ROGER'S VERSION*, (Blackbird Theatre), Charlie, *DEATH OF A SALESMAN*, The Old Man, *A CHRISTMAS STORY* (NASHVILLE REP). He was named Best Actor by the Nashville Scene "Best Of 2011" and The Tennessean "Toast of Music City 2012" & "...2014". Other favorite roles include: *ARCADIA*, The Conjuror, *MAGIC*, Luther Flynn, *SUPERIOR DONUTS*, The Old Man, *A CHRISTMAS STORY*, Bob Ewell, *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*, Moss, *GLENGARRY GLENN ROSS*.

**BARRY SCOTT ("JJ")** is widely known for his successes as an actor, writer, producer, director, motivational speaker and voice over artist. Based in Nashville, Scott is the founder and Producing Artistic Director of the American Negro Playwright Theatre. He has performed for the Tennessee Repertory Theatre in many productions including *FENCES*, *MACBETH*, *OTHELLO*, *TAMING OF THE SHREW*, *BLOOD KNOT*, *MAN OF LA MANCHA*, *CAMELOT*, *JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR*, *PIRATES OF PENZANCE*, *EVITA*, *AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'* and *BIG RIVER*. Mr. Scott has done voice work for organizations such as **ESPN** (the **NFL**, the **NBA**, the **NHL**, and the **PGA**), **CBS**, **ABC**, **NBC**, **Disney**, **SPIKE TV**, **The Discovery Channel**, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Burger King, McDonald's, and The American Heart Association.

**CHIP ARNOLD ("Mark")** Since 1970, Mr. Arnold has been a professional actor, writer, director, and producer in theatre, film, television, literature, and recordings. His regional theatre credits include the roles of Scrooge in *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*, Shylock in *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*, John Dickinson in *1776*, Sir Edward Clarke in *GROSS INDECENCY*, Governor Danforth in *THE CRUCIBLE*, Atticus Finch in *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*, Joe Keller in *ALL MY SONS*, and March in *LA BELLE ET LA BETE*. He was awarded Best Actor by *The Tennessean* in 2011. He wrote 156 episodes of the children's show "Backyard Time" produced and distributed by the United Methodist Publishing House. He co-produced and wrote the screenplay for "The Next Door," a documentary short and winner of the Portraits of Compassion National Film Festival Award, given by the White House Faith-based Community Initiative Project. His novel, *Hometown Favorite*, (Revell) and his nonfiction book, *KABUL24* (Thomas Nelson) are available where books and E-books are sold.

**JIM REYLAND (Playwright)** studied English in North Carolina, hosted a national radio talk show, and for the past twenty-five years has owned Audio Productions on Music Row. Jim's playwright portfolio includes the production of *STUFF*, called by *The Tennessean* "Entertaining, fast-paced and emotionally fearless!", a musical with Addison Gore *21 Baker Road* voted best of Nashville, *SHELTER* produced by ANPT at TSU in 2006, *A*

*Terrible Lie* "Reyland's best script yet" said *The Scene*, *Article IV*, *Further* and *STAND*, Jim's twelfth play. Mr. Reyland is currently developing a new musical; *I'll Take the Crowd* and a new comedy, *Used Cows for Sale*, a finalist in the 2011 O'Neill National Playwright's Conference. He's a theatre writer for *Nashville Arts Magazine* and working on his second novel, *Straightening the Angels*.



## ...A note from the Director

*Working on STAND with this group of artists was incredibly fulfilling. Each rehearsal was filled with blood, sweat, and tears. It was challenging and rewarding. It was our hope that our efforts in creating and presenting this story would inspire the audience into action. Something that I personally feel is one of the main goals of theatre.....David Compton, Director*

...lesson plan one:

## *"Artistic Expression and Intention to Communicate"*

**Overview:** Non-verbal communication is powerful. Creative Directors give the audience a great deal of information through their design choices for Set, Lighting, and Costumes. What meaning can you extract from the costume choices made for STAND?

**Materials:** Pencil and Paper for each student.  
Production photo from STAND and Character Descriptions for each group (provided on the next page)

**Class Connections:** **LIFETIME WELLNESS:** Mental, Emotional & Social Health  
**THEATRE:** Analysis  
**GUIDANCE:** Personal & Social Development

### **Introduction/Discussion**

- Show the students the photograph of the characters Johnny and Mark from STAND (provided on the next page). What can they gather about the character from just looking at the picture?
- Share the playwright's character descriptions with the class:
  - **Johnny** is sly, charming, and subject to fits of rage. Seemingly intelligent statements are followed by an inability to remember what day it is. He is a paranoid-schizophrenic who is happy one minute, totally emotional the next. He is continually hitting Mark up for money.
  - **Mark** Has a touch of the "aristocrat" that he tries to hide. He wears a suit and tie as a prop. He has a touch of OCD, pulling out a handkerchief to wipe his chair. He is an obsessive "text-er".
- How do the costumes reflect/reinforce the characters as they are described? Discuss some of the examples in which the costumer had an "intention to communicate". Encourage all verbal descriptions, but also phrases, colors, feelings, or stereotypes that come to mind, and have them explain why they interpreted the costume that way.

### **Instructional Procedures**

- Share with students that each theatrical production has a team of creative designers that work to augment the look, sound, and overall "feeling" of any show, so that it matches the Director's vision for the play as a whole. STAND director David Compton had this to say regarding choices for scenic elements and lighting:

*"Too many times I feel productions are over designed. At its core, this is a story about people, about humanity. Therefore, what is important are the characters and their words and actions - not a pretty background. (When making lighting decisions, I thought how) both characters are isolated in their worlds. Therefore the lighting was designed to be minimal, in the hopes that it would ... pull the audiences' focus into the colliding worlds of these two men."*

- Students will now become "design teams" hired to costume a new play. In groups of 4, students will come up with the design ideas for costume (color, style, fabric, accessories, etc.) for the play based on the character descriptions they will be given. (provided on the adjacent page)
- Design teams will then share their ideas in a "pitch" to the class, who may then act as the director and ask questions so they can "accept" the design idea.

**Reflection/Closure** - Do we always notice when advertisers/art directors are using non-verbal communication in the way they use clothing in marketing materials? How do designers use this "communication" to their benefit? What messages do we send when we wear Flip-flops? A Tuxedo? A school uniform?



...lesson one materials:  
"Artistic Expression and Intention to Communicate"

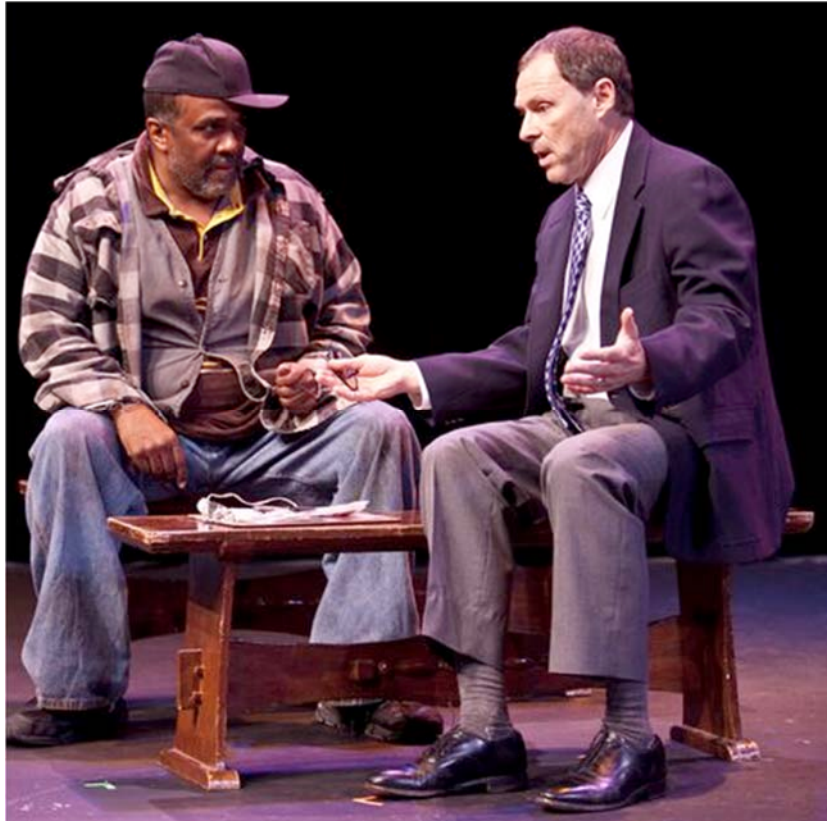


Photo by Nashville Scene

## *New Play Character Descriptions*

**Jenny and Kevin:** These twins are bakers who specialize in creating pastries, cakes, and pies. (They do not make ice creams or candies). They work at a very expensive culinary school. All staff must cover their heads at all times in the kitchen for Health Department compliance.

**Sarne:** 16 years old. A graphic-novel-loving teen who is devoted to max-ing out drawing skills (both computer and hand drawn). Knows all the history of comic books. Always carries lots of art supplies.

**Space Ship Security Guard:** Agent Bornell takes his/her job very seriously. Agent Bornell has two different "looks" for different aspects of the job, office-type and space-station type. He/she is very discreet, and most people who use Agent Bornell's services don't even know he/she is there. Trust-worthy, and very smart.

**Plim:** Plim studies at a salon school which focuses on whole-body well-being. Plim makes sure that products are all natural, and never tested on animals. Plim keeps from being "one of the crowd" whenever possible, and loves wearing interesting/one-of-a-kind aprons.

## ...lesson plan two:

# "Poetry, Understanding, and Communication"

**Overview:** Communication is agreed meaning between two parties. How often do we have to "work" to make ourselves understood? Are we willing to explore a person's words to ensure that we actually understand what they wish to communicate? How much do we all value "being understood"?

**Materials:** Pencil and Paper for each student.  
Dialogue selection from STAND (found on Page 6)  
Shakespeare's Sonnet 94 (found on Page 6)

**Class Connections:** **ENGLISH:** Poetry, Speaking & Writing, Language  
**LIFETIME WELLNESS:** Mental, Emotional & Social Health

**Teacher Note:** The two texts used in this lesson should NOT be seen by the students ahead of time. It would be best if they are "revealed" on the board at the appropriate point, so all have the first look at the same time.

### Introduction/Discussion:

- Ask students to think of a time when they had difficulty being understood. What was the general situation? (Examples may include things like "explaining something to a parent" or "making sure an essay response was clear")
- Ask students to reflect on a time when they could not understand someone else. What were the circumstances? Encourage a range of responses, both "high stakes" and "low stakes". (Prompt if necessary to help them find "high stakes" scenarios that include medical emergencies, legal issues, etc.)
- Share: One of the most basic human needs is to be "understood". This goes for everyone.
- Ask students: Imagine you want to tell someone about some incident that happened in your life. What are some of the elements of writing that are going to make it easier to understand? Encourage them to think about things such as: clarity, using the same language, organization of ideas, legibility and punctuation.

### Analyzing a Shakespearean Sonnet:

- Share: Playwrights, novelists, songwriters, poets, all of these word-smiths write so that they will be understood in their own way.
- Now you will look at a poem together, and students will be reading for "understanding". As the teacher reads the poem aloud, the students are to raise their hand the first time they feel like they don't understand what is being said, or the first time there is something you don't quite grasp. When the meaning is vague, or lost, raise your hand. Remind them it is not a contest. Just looking for an honest question for themselves: "At what point do I not completely understand".
- Begin reading William Shakespeare's Sonnet 94 aloud to the class. Do not stop for clarifying when students raise their hands. Stop reading aloud when about half of the class has their hands up.
- Ask students to briefly share their reactions to text and where they got lost.
- Discuss: Shakespeare's Sonnet 94 is considered to be one of his most difficult sonnets. Remind them that the author knows what he is saying. He just wants to say it in his way.
- Now go through the Sonnet again, asking students to share what they understand the poem to mean, line by line. Encourage any differing interpretations.

### Creating Prose:

- Tell students that for the activity today, they will write a short paragraph (about 5 sentences) describing a funny, or weird, or adventurous incident that has happened to them. Ask students to write as descriptively as possible, with lots of details, with the goal being that anyone who read it could understand exactly what that moment was like. Remind them that the goal is "clear and descriptive", not necessarily "important", or "clever".
- Once everyone has finished writing, discuss the concept of poetry as an art form that is created to be thought about, re-read, discussed, and discovered.

- Ask students what the difference is between their descriptive prose, and poems....Encourage thinking about “confines” and “specific structures” that dictate rhyme schemes, number of lines, and number of syllables. Ask how those can have an effect on ease of understanding.
- Return students’ attention to the paragraph they wrote, with its specific mission to be “understood”. Ask them to review their prose silently, for clarity, and then allow 1 minute for “clarifying” corrections.
- Share with them that they just had the liberty of correcting their written work, AND that, if we want, we can re-read poetry. But in real life we do not always get a second chance to explain our selves.
- Ask students to provide situations where you would not get a second chance to communicate clearly.
- Finally, ask them to number the sentences in their story. Then, turn the paper over on their desks, to come back to later.

#### “Understanding” and persons with Mental Illness-

- Share: STAND reminds us that one of the key factors in homelessness is Mental Illness. During the play, the character of Johnny has a sudden opportunity. Mark has dialed the number of Johnny’s foster parents, and Johnny has not seen them for 20 years. The moment Johnny realizes who Mark is dialing, Johnny grabs the phone. Show on board, and read aloud the dialogue from STAND (provided on the following page).
- Is this character is easy to understand? Why, or why not? Encourage recall of the “clarity”, “organization of ideas”, etc., that they discussed at the top of lesson. Ask students if they think this is a “high stakes” scenario. Ask students if they think Johnny will get another chance to explain his emotions/thoughts.



#### Confining Your Communication-

- Ask the students to go back to their paragraph. Explain that they are going to intentionally “restrict” the language in a specific way, and then share their stories. The class will again work to understand.
- Student will choose one of the following “restrictions” and apply it to their writing.
  - Circle every 5th word. Read only those words aloud.
  - Choose the 2nd and 4th sentences. Read only those sentences aloud.
- Now, working with a partner, ask students to read their “restricted” writings out loud to their partner. Can they interpret each other’s truncated texts? What meanings can they decipher? Can they determine what the important incident in the piece was? Can they determine the emotions or mood that the original content intended?

#### Wrap-up Questions

- Which was easier/more enjoyable: trying to understand the Shakespeare sonnet, or trying to understand your classmates’ stories? Why?
- Can you think of a time when you could have worked a little harder to try to understand someone?

**Optional Home assignment:** Take your paragraph, and choose 12 words to use to create a free form poem. Your goal is to capture the emotions, circumstance, and meaning of your paragraph, with just 12 words.

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*“... individuals with mental illness wanted someone to listen to them, and.... be active in the interaction... (Even though they are) often stereotyped, labeled, and categorized, psychiatric patients express a particular value to the experience of being understood.”*

*~ Mona Shattell, (UNC Greensboro School of Nursing) as published in Archives of Psychiatric Nursing, Vol. 20, No. 5 (October), 2006: pp 234–241*



*...lesson two materials*  
*When “understanding” is a challenge*

## William Shakespeare, Sonnet 94

They that have power to hurt and will do none,  
That do not do the thing they most do show,  
Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,  
Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow,  
They rightly do inherit heaven's graces  
And husband nature's riches from expense;  
They are the lords and owners of their faces,  
Others but stewards of their excellence.  
The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,  
Though to itself it only live and die,  
But if that flower with base infection meet,  
The basest weed outbraves his dignity:  
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;  
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

## Johnny (JJ) from STAND by Jim Reyland-

“.... Give me the phone. Hello momma, it's me Johnny. How's daddy? Remember how grandma had all that stuff in her attic and a guy offered her money for it? She had stuff back to the civil war; furniture and the first mirrors ever made.... She had quilts and those dishes were antique. She had original pearls and a chariot with a horse. Momma, everything was very first American. Billy Boy wanted to sell it but Grandma said, “Billy Boy you got enough money.” ... The couches upstairs got horse hairs in them. I love you. It's Johnny. Do you remember me? Momma's not at home right now. I left her a message.” *(he gives phone back to Mark)*

## *some factors of successful communication*

Pronunciation / Enunciation  
Shared Meaning of Words  
Shared Meaning of Concepts  
Word Order / Syntax  
Tone / Inflection  
Intention and Circumstance

*...lesson plan three:*

## *"Mock Mayoral Advisory Board"*

**Overview:** STAND highlights that living in our complex social systems means that societal problems and their solutions will also be complex and multi-layered. What are the elements that make "Homelessness" a "complex" issue? How do we learn to find solutions to challenging problems? How do we use critical thinking skills to assess what we know, and what we don't know?

**Materials:** Pencil and Paper for each student.  
4 reference articles/texts (included on the following pages) copied, 1 article per student

**Class Connections:** **SOCIAL STUDIES:** Civics, Sociology, Contemporary Issues  
**LIFETIME WELLNESS:** Mental, Emotional & Social Health; Nutrition

**Teacher note:** In a best-case example, for Part One, students would be divided into 4 groups with an equal number of students in each group. If your class size does not permit equal division, make sure that the group that has the largest number of students is named the "Conference of Mayors".

### **Part One: 10 minutes**

- Divide students into 4 groups of "Experts", and assign the articles as listed below. Students should keep their group information private, and not know what the other groups are working on.
  - Expert Group 1 - Conference of Mayors - article about a city whose finances are not in good shape
  - Expert Group 2 - Practical Citizens - ID requirements laws, and funding article
  - Expert Group 3 - Business leaders - Tourism article
  - Expert Group 4 - Trend spotters - Homeless solutions in another city article
- Each group will use the article they are given to become an "Expert" on that topic. Each person in the group will read the article, make notes, and be able to speak about their topic. Within their group, students should discuss the topic, share their own opinions, and note facts and opinions that support BOTH sides of the issue.

### **Part Two: 20 minutes**

- Re-Group the class to create a "Mayor's Advisory Board" - one Expert from each group will join a Mayor to create a Board. Each Advisory Board has 15 minutes to address concerns and issues in their town. (Each Board will represent a different town, so they can and should all have different solutions.)
- Discuss the following issues, and prepare notes to present findings to the class in a report that answers the following:
  - Most pressing need that will be attended to first
  - Two year plan for addressing the problems
  - Clarification of the inherent challenges with the Plan
  - Whose voice needs to be added to any future Mayor's Advisory Board Meetings?

### **Presentation of Findings: 15 minutes**

- Call on each "city" to present their report to the class.

### **Reflection/Closure:**

- How smoothly did the Board's discussions go? What were some of the common goals?
- Whose voices were most noticeably missed at the Board level? Why? Did all experts contribute?



## *...lesson three materials – article handouts (page 1 of 2)*

These “mock newspaper articles” are **based on true scenarios & research** and have been adapted for this activity.

### Expert Group 1- Conference of Mayors

The city of Oaktree is on a path to financial ruin and must enact major reforms to stave off bankruptcy, according to a 10-year forecast the city commissioned from an outside firm. The forecast, shows that the city will accumulate \$745 million in budget deficits over the next decade because of a widening gap between projected revenues and expenditures.

The city has dealt with budget deficits for the past several years, closing a \$121 million gap in 2010. But those deficits have been addressed with one-time fixes that haven't addressed the long-term structural imbalance. "When you have budget after budget and you know that there are systemic problems, we knew we had an obligation to do more than what we have done in the past," the vice-mayor told the AP. If the city chose to use its reserve fund to cover the deficits, the fund would be empty in three years, the report found.

In Oaktree, the erosion of the tax base is easy to see. The city's population has dropped from a peak of 950,000 in 1950 to 619,000 today, with 22 percent of the city's residents live in poverty, according to Census data. The city also has 16,000 vacant properties. Several corporations were in talks with the city about moving headquarters to Oaktree, but talks have stagnated.

In Rockville, 38 miles to the south, in 1995 after the city reported a budget deficit of \$700 million, they created a financial control board that instituted tight spending controls and ultimately took over all hiring and firing in nine city agencies. The spending cuts, combined with a robust regional and national economy, drove the city's capital back into the black.

### Expert Group 2- Practical Citizens

If you are in need of government services that serve the poor, you will also need government-issued identification as a prerequisite for service. Businesses are required by law to see identification before you can be hired, before you can rent or procure lodging, or before you can acquire financial services like cashing checks and establishing bank accounts. Now consider how costly it is just to get these documents, even if you do have the correct paperwork, which for the homeless, is unlikely. According to Barry Cleggett, of Welcome Ministry ID project, these are some of the issues with the procedure:

- In order to get state-issued ID, you are required to have your birth certificate. In order to get your birth certificate, you need a copy of your state-issued ID.
- In order to get a copy of your Social Security card you must have a copy of both your birth certificate and your state-issued ID. Additionally, the Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 states that you may only request a copy of your Social Security card five times in your lifetime.
- Ordering a birth certificate costs \$15 to \$75; it can take up to a month to arrive.
- Many states require that a notary witness your signature when you request a birth certificate, but without proper identification a notary cannot witness a signature unless they personally know the individual.
- You must have a mailing address to receive your state-issued ID, birth certificate or Social Security card. Often when you order a birth certificate, the address it is mailed to must match the address on the credit card that is paying for it.
- And for all this, you must pay by credit card or check, with the same address where the ID will be mailed.

Many citizens are trying to find a solution and to help set up a system to get IDs to the homeless, including looking for funding sources. One program they are looking into is The ESG program. Although it must be applied for by a government entity, citizens are hoping IDs would qualify as one of the eligible services mentioned in the Essential Services category (*ESG Program Category 3 - Essential Services, including case management, child care, education services, employment assistance and job training, outpatient health services, legal services, life skills training, mental health services, substance abuse treatment services, transportation, and services for special populations.*).

## ...lesson three materials – article handouts (page 2 of 2)

These “mock newspaper articles” are **based on true scenarios & research** and have been adapted for this activity.

### Expert Group 3- Business Owners

A census taken earlier this year showed there were more than 4,000 homeless people in the town of Grassmore. Officials now report that homeless encampments on the beach have completely destroyed tourism, with significant downturns each of the last 5 years. Hotels are closing, and restaurants are empty. Officials are weighing several proposals that they say would help the homeless, while moving them from public view. That movement might at least help solve another issue - teens taking selfies with homeless persons. One homeless advocate noted “The selfie-craze is demeaning and despicable, and not part of an empathetic society.” But some say it’s the solutions themselves that lack empathy.

The proposals include offering plane tickets to some other city, creating a “tent city” on less visible state land and providing more affordable housing uptown in a “questionable” part of town. “Shouldn’t we figure out how to help these homeless people? We can’t just hide them.” said Jarnell Mitchell, who runs a non-profit with two homeless shelters, which are always full to capacity.

The option getting the most traction is the idea to use state money to fly homeless people back to wherever they came from, provided they have family there to take them in. Proponents say the program would cost far less than current monies spent on food stamps and welfare payments. But others are concerned. “It’s basically a callous, ‘let’s turn our back on the problem’ approach to expect other cities to pick up and assume the responsibilities,” said a concerned citizen.

### Expert Group 4- Trend Spotters

*Highlights of article by Sam P.K. Collins*

<http://thinkprogress.org/health/2015/08/07/3689358/nyc-safe-initiative/>

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio has announced the rollout of a \$22 million initiative under which mental health experts will aggressively canvass the city in search of the mentally ill — particularly those with a propensity for violence — and connect them with services. The project, called Safe NYC, will unite various city agencies in strengthening the security at homeless shelters, connecting mentally ill returning citizens with care via “intensive mobile treatment teams,” and sharing information about treatment regimen.

This recent announcement comes months after the murder of a director of a Bronx-based homeless shelter by a former resident, a case that prompted calls for tighter security in the city’s homeless shelters. In the month of April, four people with mental illnesses killed people or had their lives taken by police officers. Mayor de Blasio has attempted to act swiftly in addressing safety concerns while avoiding stigmatizing the mentally ill. Though researchers linked less than 8 percent of violent offenses to symptoms of mental illness, many people believe the link to be much more significant, due in part to the advent of headline-making crimes often involving the mentally ill. Such stereotypes have marginalized members of this population, precluding them from achieving employment, social, and educational opportunities. For some people with developmental disorders, this issue begins at a young age when authority figures misinterpret their outbursts as acts of violence. These violent interactions between special-needs students and authority figures have, in part, fueled the school-to-prison pipeline — defined as policies that push children with learning disabilities, history of poverty, abuse, and neglect out of the classroom and into the juvenile and criminal justice system. Across the country, children with disabilities become incarcerated at a rate five times that of their counterparts.

The new proposal counts as part of the mayor’s long-term goal to destigmatize mental illness, which also includes his wife’s previous announcement of a \$30 million plan to provide low-income residents with mental health services. “The bottom line here is that treatment saves lives. The absence of treatment puts lives in danger. ”

## ...Close to Home

According to a 2011 study on the state of homelessness in America by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, *Nashville* is ranked **40th out of the 100 highest populated** metro areas in America in terms of their homeless population, and 59th in terms of rate of homelessness. On any given night the *homeless population in metropolitan Nashville can range from 3,000 to 4,000*, as can best be determined by the Metropolitan Homeless Commission. This number is assumed to be an underestimation.

## ...Conversation Starters

- According to HUD's 2014 Point-in-Time Report, 34% of the total homeless population is under 24.
- It is often necessary for homeless people to remain “unseen” when they sleep, so although those shiny aluminum emergency blankets seem like a good solution, many homeless people will not use them, for fear of being too “obvious”.
- Myths About Homelessness - Homelessness, despite its often very visible presence in urban areas, remains a commonly misunderstood social issue. A few common stereotypes include:
  - homeless people are all elderly men
  - homeless people are lazy/bums/drunks/sick
  - people choose to be homeless
  - homeless people don't want housing/jobs/education
  - homeless youth just don't like the rules at home
- People with mental illness remain homeless for longer periods of time and have less contact with family and friends. 30-35 percent of the homeless, in general, and up to 75 percent of homeless women specifically, have a mental illness. 20-25 percent of homeless people suffer from concurrent disorders (severe mental illness and addictions).
- It is far less expensive to house a person than to pay to “manage” homelessness. Nashville spends an estimated \$35,000 per year in costs of jail, medical and other service expenses. It costs around \$17,000 annually to provide adequate housing and wrap-around services for a person who is homeless

## ...when we think about it

- Actor Chip Arnold (Mark, in STAND) was asked to comment about anything that surprised him about the issues the play raises. He replied: “I was surprised by 1) the chronic nature of homelessness and poverty and how it debilitates the heart, mind, and soul; and 2) that all the good efforts from individuals to non-profits to government programs cannot always fix it. However, that should not keep us from making that effort.”



## *...what one person can do*

Taken from "How you can help end homelessness by simply CAREing": National Coalition for Homelessness, NCH, [http://nationalhomeless.org/want\\_to\\_help/index.html](http://nationalhomeless.org/want_to_help/index.html) ( 8/15)

### **C - Contribute**

- Donate - food, clothing, supplies, time
- Create and distribute Homeless Survival Kits - travel size toiletries (soap, toothpaste and toothbrush, washcloth) and warm items in the winter (hat, glove, socks, blanket, coat)
- Raise funds for a program
- SMILE - smiling, making eye contact, or speaking a few words can make an impact whether or not you choose to give to a person experiencing homelessness

### **A - Advocate**

- Connect with a coalition - volunteer, support financially
- Sponsor a Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week (tools on the NCH website)
- Organize an event at a shelter

### **R - Reach Out**

- Contact local churches, synagogues, and charities, or use the Directory of Local Homeless Service Organizations found on the above link
- Work at a shelter - serve food, entertain children , clean or organize clothing closets
- Help build, repair, and clean shelters (contact Habitat for Humanity, or local shelters)
- Involve others - encourage classmates, club members, or family to join you in your efforts

### **E - Educate**

- Learn about root causes of homelessness and teach others - utilize the NCH web site, [nationalhomeless.org](http://nationalhomeless.org) to find Facts Sheets, follow NCH social media on Facebook and Twitter, or visit other websites listed in Resources of the Teacher's Guidebook
- Participate in or host a Hunger Banquet
- Follow your local news concerning homelessness, your city's policies, and needs

## *...Additional Resources*

- ✓ National Coalition for the Homeless - <http://nationalhomeless.org>
- ✓ Faces of Homelessness: The eCourse - a five module examination of social, political, legal and personal aspects of homelessness for high school and college students sponsored by AMERICORP\*VISTA project.
- ✓ Annual U.S. Conference of Mayors Report on Hunger and Homelessness: <http://usmayors.org/publications>
- ✓ The National Alliance to End Homelessness: <http://www.endhomelessness.org>
- ✓ The National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness: <http://www.studentsagainsthunger.org/>
- ✓ The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty: <http://www.nlchp.org>
- ✓ Homes for the Homeless/Institute for Children and Poverty: <http://www.homesforthehomeless.com/>
- ✓ National Health Care for the Homeless Council (Formerly The Better Homes Fund): <http://www.nhchc.org/>
- ✓ Habitat for Humanity: <http://www.habitat.org>
- ✓ Nashville Homeless Organizing Coalition <http://nashvillehomelessorganizing.com/pages/faq/>
- ✓ Homeless Hub "Research Matters; Finding Solutions to Homelessness" <http://www.homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/topics>



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