



DIVING DOWN BELOW

*An Exciting Exploration Inspired by
First Stage's Production of ANTARCTICA, WI*

ANTARCTICA, WI

A First Stage production
Written by Finegan Kruckemeyer
with input from the citizens of Milwaukee



Illustration by Sophia Barbour, student
of the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design

Set in the present day, *ANTARCTICA, WI* is a contemporary folktale about seven teenagers living in Milwaukee. They all see that there is much to love about Milwaukee, but are also aware of the significant challenges they face growing up in this city. One of them, Lenny, sees things more deeply than others — maybe because he looks harder.

Why is a play about Milwaukee called *ANTARCTICA, WI*?

Playwright Finegan Kruckemeyer shares his thoughts on the title: "Antarctica is the place Lenny imagines, and Milwaukee is the place he lives. In each case he's viewing a landscape of seismic shifts and things in motion — huge objects (neighborhoods, icebergs) reshaping themselves, splitting apart or moving together. And he's also viewing objects in those environments (Antarctic icebergs and Milwaukee citizens) which each show a small part of themselves, but also have a lot going on beneath."

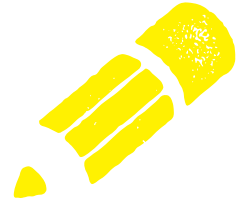
"Ultimately, what's important about this play is to know that there are no more or less simple lives, and to realize that every person we'll ever encounter is thinking giant thoughts, and making giant decisions, while living out their regular-looking lives."

With this booklet we encourage you to:

- Engage in the fascinating journey of getting to know who you are. As you learn to see yourself more clearly, it may also help you to understand others and the world around you better.
- Think deeper, use your creative powers and take risks.
- See yourself as author of your own life.
- Recognize that your voice matters. What you have to say deserves to be heard — and your community deserves to hear it. You are capable of bringing healing, serving as inspiration for your community.

RULES FOR EXPLORATION

The first rule is that there are no rules.



If you like rules, then we have a few for you:

1. Express your uniqueness: Why you're YOU and not someone else.
2. Along with your imagination, use a pencil and eraser, and color pencils if you want to add color. Which brings us to the next rule...
3. Write or draw or both. Whatever moves you! *If these pages don't provide enough space to write or draw, get more paper and keep going.*

A note about drawing- Even if you think you can't draw a stick figure, go for it! Challenge yourself. Create new ways of drawing. Use straight lines and curved lines and scribbles and shapes. These are your tools. Be playful — like Picasso. (If you want to know more about this artist, look him up online.)

4. This booklet is a tool for you to find out about yourself, to embark on the adventure of getting to know YOU. Get real!

A word of encouragement- Being in front of a blank piece of paper can be really inspiring at times and a bit scary at other times. Regardless, take a deep breath and then dive in. Let yourself go. Express yourself from the inside out. Be spontaneous, be funny, be serious, be goofy, be dramatic. Anything goes!

** There are no wrong answers. There are no mistakes. **

5. This booklet is for you — like a journal — so don't think about what others will say and don't worry about the result. Of course, you can always share it with the people you trust.

*Always
remember this...*

Your Voice Matters!

AUTHOR'S NAME:

(Write your name or sign it.)



WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

Every story has a hero. In ANTARCTICA, WI, the hero is not a superhero, which is what we normally imagine heroes to be. This play shows us that a hero can be anyone, a normal person, anyone you go to school with, anyone you pass on the street. They become your hero when you discover how special they are.

Do you have a hero in your life? Why is that person your hero? What does your hero do that is important to you?

Here are words that come to mind when we think of values: respect, trust, honesty, fairness, kindness, responsibility, generosity. Think of a few more...

What are your hero's values that are important to you?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Draw your hero



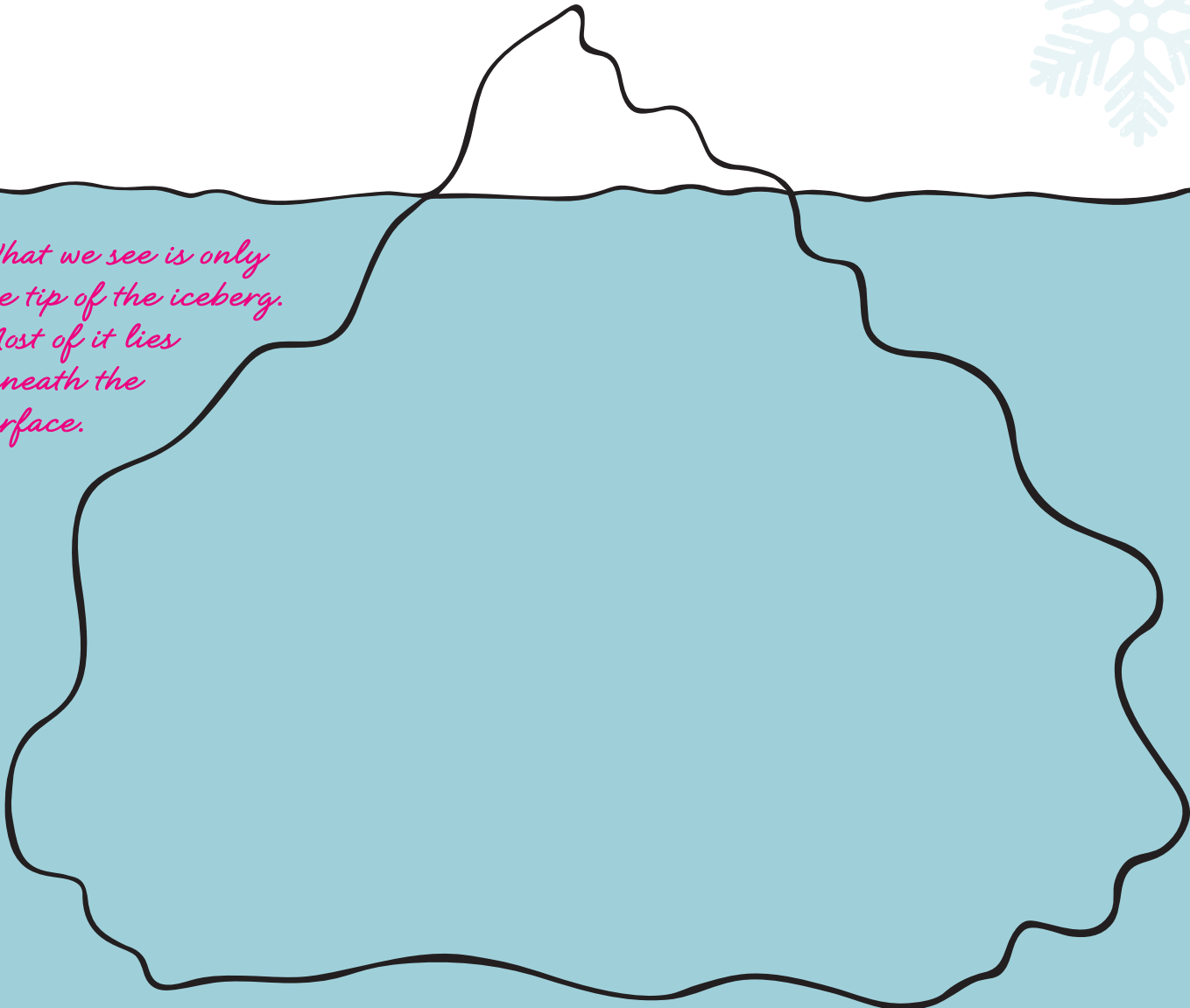


DIVING DOWN BELOW...

Are you still wondering why the play that inspired this booklet is called ANTARCTICA, WI? In the real Antarctica, located in the southernmost part of planet Earth, it's very cold and there are icebergs — large pieces of ice that have broken away from a glacier — floating in the ocean. One of the reasons for this title is that people can be like icebergs.

In fact, Lenny, one of the kids from the play, has a very active mind and imagines people around him as icebergs:

"Looking at them, I realize...all I'm seeing are the very tops, the small bits on the surface of the water... But if I dive down below..."



*What we see is only
the tip of the iceberg.
Most of it lies
beneath the
surface.*

Here's a drawing of an iceberg. At the top, write words people use to describe you. At the bottom, write what they don't see, the really important stuff like what you like and dislike, what scares you, what makes you happy, what you want to be when you grow up, etc.

What Makes You Who You Are

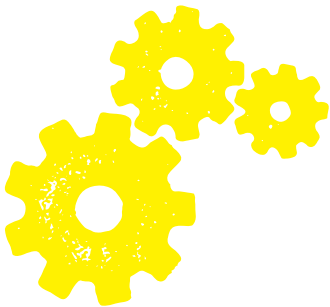


Because of the kind of brain he has, Lenny notices things in people that others don't.

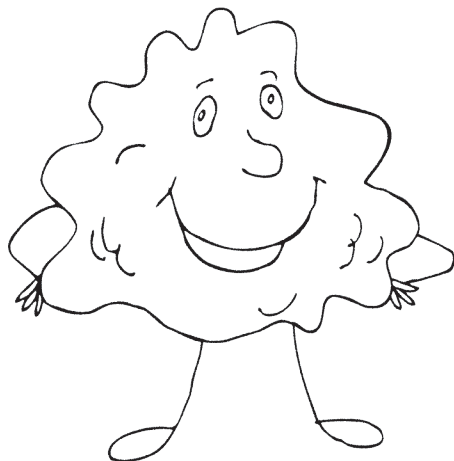
Are you like Lenny? YES NO

Captain describes Lenny as having a "weird, figure-things-out brain" and Michelle as having a "don't-have-to-figure-out-'cause-you-can-just-do-it brain." Captain herself has a practical brain. She feels good doing something until it's done.

How do you describe your brain?



If your brain were a cartoon character, what would it look like? Go ahead and draw your brain in action...



(Use me as a model.)

WeirD iS Normal

Lenny: "We're fifteen, Michelle. We're all weird — or we all think we are. And everyone feeling weird together, that's...kinda nice."

In what ways are you like most kids your age?

In what ways are you different from most kids your age? What is your weird?

What You Feel & How You Act

Sometimes, when you look within, you realize you have feelings that aren't all that comfortable. For example, you may feel angry about something. In the play, Janelle and Marvin have something to say about feeling angry:

Janelle: "People get angry when...when they need solutions."

Marvin: "Kids getting angry about injustice, that's right. Kids knowing things need to change, that this city's great...but that it could be better. That's right."

Do you think it's OK to feel angry?

YES

NO

What are the things that make you angry?



What do you do when you feel angry? Does it make things better or worse afterwards?

If what you do makes things worse, is there something about your behavior that you would like to change?

When you act,
act wise. Act calm
- that's what
changes things.

In the play, Terry, a young police officer, shares his thoughts with Marvin when he sees Marvin getting upset and ready to fight:

"When you act (and you *should* act), act wise. Act calm. 'Cause...that's what changes things. Otherwise, [others] just see the anger and ignore the reason for it."



YOUR COMMUNITY

The kids in ANTARCTICA, WI live in Milwaukee and play baseball in the same vacant lot, but they live in different neighborhoods and go to different schools. They belong to different communities. List your communities:

Neighborhood _____

City (or town) and county _____

School groups and/or sports teams you belong to _____

Any other community you belong to _____

Why do you like your communities?

What values do you think are necessary to live in community?

Let's talk more about your city. Like with icebergs, many people only see what's above the surface. What words do they use to describe your city? (These words can be good or bad.)

What would you like them to know about your city?

ABOUT FIRST STAGE AND THE FOUNDRY



Since 1987, First Stage has grown to become the national leader in Theater for Young Audiences and the second largest theater company in Milwaukee.

First Stage touches hearts and transforms lives through:

- **Professional theater productions** that engage, enlighten and entertain. Committed to new play development, First Stage has presented over sixty world premieres and collaborated with renowned artists including Harry Connick Jr., Stephen Schwartz, and award-winning authors Lois Lowry, Cornelia Funke, Lois Elhert and Barbara Joosse.
- **Theater Academy**, the largest children's theater training program in the nation, teaches life skills through stage skills.
- **Theater in Education**, Wisconsin's leader in arts-in-education programming, promotes active learning in our schools and our community, serving over 20,000 children each year.

FIRST STAGE
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The Foundry is First Stage's initiative for new play development, forging the next generation of plays, programming, artists and audiences, while fostering community and empathy. *ANTARCTICA, WI* is one of the Foundry's new plays.

We all have our own perceptions of Milwaukee, which are colored by our experiences and our history. While conceiving a play about Milwaukee, we wondered what it was that we weren't seeing. What would we discover if we asked a playwright from the other side of the world to look into our city? And so, we asked Finnegan Kruckemeyer, who lives in Tasmania, to take on the challenge.

Having worked with Finnegan before, we knew his gift for story and allegory would allow him to craft a play that would offer insight, provoke thought and spur conversations about what it means to grow up in our community today.

In Milwaukee, Finnegan learned about the concerns, hopes and dreams young people have for themselves and for their city by engaging in conversations with students from First Stage's Academy programs and from our Community Learning Center at Kluge Elementary School. He then sent a survey that was distributed to many in our community. With this input, Finnegan created a first draft. Feedback from two script readings open to the public helped him reshape the final script. We would like to acknowledge the citizens of Milwaukee for their contribution to *ANTARCTICA, WI*.

Visual arts project sponsored by:



Greater Milwaukee
FOUNDATION
greater together

Mary L. Nohl Fund