

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AROUND

ANTARCTICA,  WI



ANTARCTICA, WI

APRIL 6 – APRIL 22

at the Todd Wehr Theater [Directions](#)

In Milwaukee there lives a very special young man. One who sees more deeply than others. He sees so much that he loves in his city, but he also sees the fractures. And when this special boy begins to see icebergs floating into Milwaukee, he alone must find a way to help his community navigate through the dangerous waters. From internationally recognized playwright Finegan Kruckemeyer comes a contemporary folk tale inspired by conversations with our community. *Suggested for families with young people ages 10 – 17+*

MARY NOHL GRANT - PORTRAITS & STORIES PROJECT

First Stage partnered with renown local photographer Paul Calhoun, to create photographic **portraits** of approximately 32 youth from area middle and high schools. Portraits were accompanied by students' **personal stories**.

The **Portraits and Stories exhibit** was displayed at the Todd Wehr Theater and at the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center during the run of ANTARCTICA, WI.

Participating schools:

- Maryland Montessori
- Milwaukee High School of the Arts
- Parkside Middle School
- Reagan High School
- University School of Milwaukee

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



MARYLAND MONTESSORI

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



PARKSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Portraits & Stories Project

Our community is filled with so many different people, each with a rich and complex story beyond the face we see. We invite you to take a deeper look at some local teens who graciously shared a bit of their personal stories. These teenagers live in all different corners of our Greater Milwaukee community. Some were born in Milwaukee and have always lived here. Others have made Milwaukee their home away from home. Milwaukee is as diverse as what you'll see on these walls.

Listen to the voices of our teenagers. In sharing their stories, these young people are teaching us about our own lives through their honesty, their courage and their hopes for the future.

We are deeply grateful to photographer Paul Calhoun for giving us a glimpse into the souls of each of the participants. We also want to acknowledge the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Mary L. Nohl Fund, for their generous support of this exhibit.



MARY NOHL GRANT – ANTARCTICA, WI MURAL

Local artist and muralist James Tomasello worked with eight **TrueSkool** students to create a mural inspired by ANTARCTICA, WI. The mural was installed in the lobby of the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



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This mural was inspired by First Stage's 2018 production of ANTARCTICA, WI.

These teenagers, and thousands more in every part of our city... they come next. They'll find a better way to hold onto what everyone here shares. Memories - of what this city is. And hopes - for what it will be.

-Eneasz Kruczek: ANTARCTICA, WI playwright

Muralist James Tomassello worked with TRUE Skool participants to create this mural celebrating the young people of Milwaukee.

TRUE SKOOL PARTICIPANTS:

Robi R. Susanek, Ellen, Hailey T. Susana S. Jakob S. Jordan M. Justin T. L. Loc Jack L. Jennifer M. Skipton A. Susana S.

Visual arts project sponsored by: **GMF** Greater Milwaukee FOUNDATION
greater together
Mary L. Nohl Fund

MARY NOHL GRANT – SELF-EXPLORATION BOOKLET

Filled with narrative prompts connected to the play's themes, the booklet gave young people the opportunity to:

- Take a fascinating journey of self-exploration; As they learn to see themselves more clearly, they will understand others and the world around them better;
- Think deeper, use their creative powers, and take risks;
- See themselves as authors of their own life;
- Start seeing themselves as change agents in their community to help bring healing and serve as inspiration for their communities

This booklet was distributed to ANTARCTICA, WI youth audience members and was also used in our Theater in Education programming.



DIVING DOWN BELOW

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

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.)



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.



DIVING DOWN BELOW

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

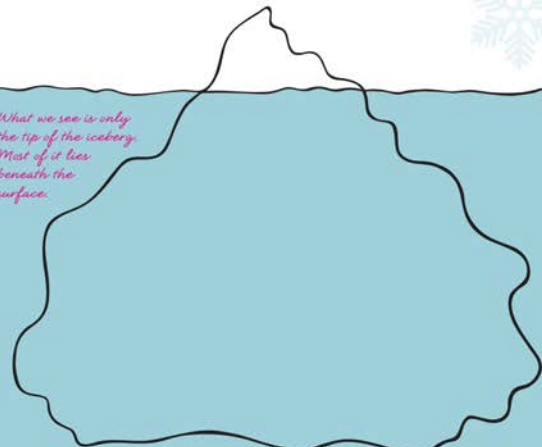
DIVING DOWN BELOW...

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.

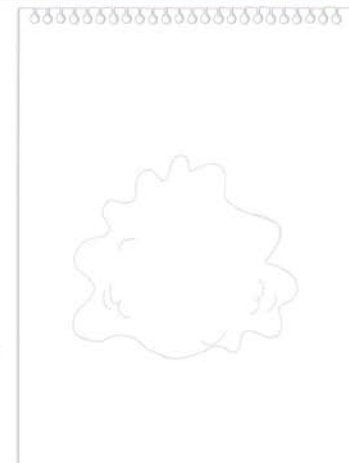
How do you describe your brain?



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.)





DIVING DOWN BELOW

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

➔ 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."



DIVING DOWN BELOW

An Exciting Exploration Inspired by
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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?

Early in the play, Lenny compares Milwaukee to Antarctica:

"What worries me is I read about Antarctica, that strange ghost of a place at the bottom of the globe and...it's coming apart. Each day more breaks off in more directions, one section deciding it's meant to be in one place, another deciding it's better off somewhere else. And it'll just keep going on until...Antarctica forgets what Antarctica is. You keep dividing up a thing, keep isolating pieces of it — berg by berg, block by block — and eventually, it only remembers how to be separated. It forgets it was all one place once."

Lenny doesn't like the division he sees in Milwaukee. Are there situations in Milwaukee that you don't like?

But Lenny has hope:

(...) "These teenagers, these seven kids, and tens of thousands more in every part of this city with its right and wrong...they come next. They'll find [...] a better logic, a better way of holding onto what everyone here shares — something deep, something you feel in your bones. A belief — in what this city is. And a hope...for what it can be."

If you could talk to Milwaukee's leaders, what would you ask them to do? What are your hopes for Milwaukee?

What can you do, big or small, to help bring the change that you want to see?

BRICO FUND GRANT – LISTENING CIRCLES

First Stage will partner with the **Zeidler Center for Public Discussion** to bring youth together to continue the conversations around ANTARCTICA, WI., providing an opportunity to share personal experiences and **deeply listen to each other** while building **trust** and **empathy**.

First Stage used the Listening Circles to:

- Foster understanding
- Provoke discussion
- Inspire healing

BRICO FUND GRANT – LISTENING CIRCLES

Listening Circles with schools

School pairings:

- Parkside Middle School and Wisconsin Hills Middle School in Brookfield
- Trowbridge School in Milwaukee and Lakeshore Middle School in Mequon
- Carmen Middle School in Milwaukee and Maple Dale Elementary in Fox Point

Listening Circles around LGBT theme

Partners and allies:

- LGBT Center of Milwaukee
- Diverse & Resilient
- The Rep Youth Council
- First Stage (Young Company, Touring Company, and Student Advisory Board)

ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS AROUND ANTARCTICA, WI

- Opening night reception to celebrate the play and the opening of Portraits & Stories project exhibit
- Gathering and celebration for all Mary Nohl Grant projects participants at Vogel Hall. *April 5, 2018.*
- Extended Talkbacks

Saturday, April 14, following the 3:30 pm performance: Artistic Director Jeff Frank shared the story of how and why a playwright from the other side of the world wound up crafting this play inspired by the citizens of Milwaukee.

Saturday, April 21, following the 3:30 pm performance: Behind-the-scenes information with Technical Director Emily Adams and Design Supervisor Brandon Kirkham, who shared the story of the scenic design and creation for ANTARCTICA, WI and the magic of bringing it to life.