



**CHARITABLE
CONTRIBUTIONS**

8802 27th Ave NE
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TulalipCares.org

Funds Distribution Report

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Pickford Film Center

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Organization's General Goals:

The Pickford Film Center's mission is to serve its community by providing an authentic and rich independent and foreign film experience that strengthens community through education, dialogue, and the celebration of film.

Date of Award:	Level:
2024 Q2	\$500 to \$2,500

For more information, please read the attached report from
Pickford Film Center.

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Marilyn Sheldon, Director
Tulalip Tribes Charitable Contributions
TULALIP TRIBES CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS
8802 27th Avenue NE
Tulalip, WA 98271-9694

October 30, 2025

Dear Ms. Sheldon,

Thank you for accepting this final report in all its tardiness. We have been grateful for the support of the Tulalip Tribes for our Doc-Ed program and I'm sorry this is arriving late. A few months ago, the Pickford Film Center opened the Grand, our second theater in downtown Bellingham and I became so consumed with everything that involved and several important tasks fell by the wayside, including this report. Please accept my apologies.

Doc-ED Final Report: Code number 02 2024 14.2

Pickford Film Center URL: <https://www.pickfordfilmcenter.org/home>

Happily, Doc-ED 2024 was a huge success. The Pickford Film Center brought 3,108 students to our theater from ten separate schools to see documentaries. The schools could choose from two features or a shorts program. All tickets and transportation to Doc-ED was free to schools and covered by private donations, such as support from the Tulalip Tribes. Every teacher received a guide written by a professional educator to aid in leading discussion after the film. All classes and teachers were surveyed as well. Discussion guides are attached. Because Fish War was relevant to high school curriculum goals, several high school classes participated.

Here are the schools that came.

- Cascades Montessori
- Fairhaven Middle School
- Kendall Middle School
- Kulshan Middle School
- Meridian Middle School
- Nooksack Middle School
- Options High School
- Shuksan Middle School
- Squalicum High School
- Whatcom Middle School

Here are the films that were offered.

Fish War, 2024, Directed by : Charles Atkinson, Jeff Ostenson & Skylar Wagner
trailer - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OnePV28ivrw>

Salmon are more than just a food source to Washington tribes; they're a cultural touchstone and way of life. When the Washington State government violated the 1855 Point Elliott Treaty by cutting off access to tribal fisheries, it touched off the decades-long Fish War that extended into the 1970s. This was an often violent struggle by Northwest Tribes that were facing the power of the state as well as the commercial and sport fishing interests to secure their sovereign rights. Led by Billy Frank Jr., who was awarded a posthumous Presidential Medal of Freedom for his environmental advocacy and tribal leadership, the Fish Wars culminated in the 1974 Boldt Decision, which continues to protect tribal fisheries in Washington to this day. This lively doc explores a hugely impactful chapter in PNW civil rights history through the lens of those who lived and fished it.

Call Me Dancer, 2023, Leslie Shampaine & Jacob Krupnick
Trailer - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrgqaXfqsPc>

Making it in the elite and highly selective world of dance is challenging for anyone—for a street dancer from Mumbai, it is next to impossible. However, 21-year-old Manish is determined to not only make it as a dancer, but to also continue to help support his family by doing so. When he accidentally walks into an inner-city dance studio and meets Yehuda, a curmudgeonly 70-year-old Israeli dance master, Manish realizes that there may be a path to a future in dance, and the unlikely duo embark on a journey that will change the lives of both student and teacher in this vibrant, dynamic documentary.

Shorts Program,
The Last Repair Shop, 2023, Ben Proudfoot, Kris Bowers, 30 minutes,
Trailer - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HSLeqTWasO8>

Since 1959, Los Angeles has been one of the few United States cities to offer and fix musical instruments for its public school students at no cost. Those instruments, numbering around 80,000, are maintained at a Los Angeles downtown warehouse by a handful of craftspeople. This Academy Award winning film profiles four of them, each specializing in an orchestra section, as well as students whose lives have been enriched by the repair shop's work. The film concludes with a performance by district alumni.

In The Dirt, 2023, T.C. Johnstone,
trailer - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62fDyBtNkW0>

A group of passionate Native cyclists attempt to bring the sport of mountain biking to the Navajo Nation, where no bike shops exist.

In 2018, retired pro cyclist Scott Nydam and his family moved to Gallup, New Mexico to pursue a healthcare job for his wife. Soon after their arrival, Scott began meeting passionate mountain bikers across the 28,000-mile expanse of the Navajo Nation who loved to ride and wanted to bring the sport to their communities. The only problem was no bike shops existed. Through a grassroots native-led effort, this group of dedicated

cyclists and their families have built a cycling culture that today has become the fastest-growing recreational sport on the Navajo Nation.

Please see the following attached, a discussion guide for each film and pdfs students attending Doc-ED.

Thank you once again for your support and the support of the Tulalip Tribes. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

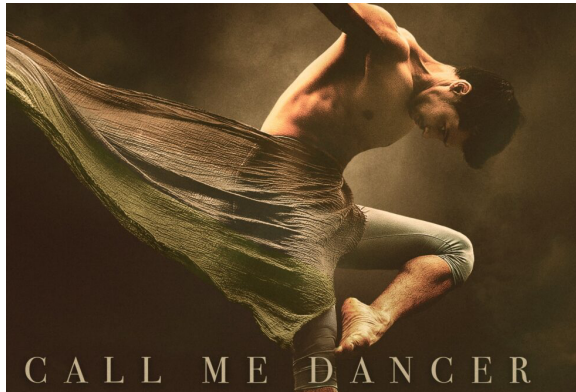
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Susie Purves". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a long, sweeping underline.

Susie Purves
Executive Director

Call Me Dancer

Directed by Leslie Shampaine and Pip Gilmour

DOC-ED Grade 6-8 Additional Discussion Guide & Classroom Connection Activity



Synopsis

Call Me Dancer is a story of hope, heartache, and hard work. Manish is a street dancer from India whose parents want him to study business, but he knows he's a dancer at heart. Together, Manish and his ballet teacher Yehuda transform each other's lives, searching to uncover who and what they are. Yehuda seeks a purpose and a place to call home. Manish dreams of dancing on the world-stage, but struggles to break free from the confines of his own economic and social circumstances.

Opening Questions for Reflection

** Note: This is helpful to do right after viewing the films.*

Close your eyes and take note of what you are feeling after watching this documentary.

- What emotions do you feel in your body?
- Did anything make you feel hopeful? Excited? Worried? Upset? Inspired?
- Did anything make you want to take action?
- Do you have any questions after watching the film?

Take a couple of minutes to write down the emotions you're feeling and any questions you have or actions you want to take. If you like, you can draw images that stayed with you from the film. This is just for you, to center your thoughts.

Some of the Main People in the Film

- **Manish Chauhan**, dancer
- **Reeta**, Manish's mother
- **Milap**, Manish's father
- **Yehuda Ma'or**, ballet teacher and former professional dancer from Israel
- **Ashley Lobo**, owner and artistic director of The Danceworx studio in Mumbai, India
- **Amiruddin (Amir) Shah**, another talented dancer studying with Yehuda
- **Igal Perry**, choreographer and artistic director of Peridance in New York City
- **Maria Ram**, patron of the arts and Manish's sponsor

"Dance films are typically created by looking into our world from the outside. They convey the difficulty of the profession, but what is often lost is the passion and inner joy that pushes dancers past the pain. I knew, as a dancer, I could offer an insider's sensitivity and perspective. I gathered a talented international team made up of Indian film professionals with insights into the culture and socio-economic reality of Mumbai. This is a story that I hope inspires people across the globe." — Leslie Shampaine, Director and former professional dancer from New York City

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Manish teaches himself how to dance on the street, learning b-boy style of breakdancing, along with acrobatic tricks that he incorporated into his dance. When he started studying ballet, other students looked down on him and called him an acrobat. About that, Manish said, “I didn’t want to be an acrobat. I wanted to be a dancer. Call me ‘Dancer.’”

- How do you think Manish’s strong sense of self and self-esteem helped him persevere when he first got to Danceworx and encountered the attitude from the other students?
- Have you ever had an experience where someone discounted you or looked down on you, acting as if you didn’t belong or didn’t have a right to participate? How did that feel? What did that make you want to do?
- Has there ever been a time when you’ve stood up for yourself when others are against you? How did you go about it? What happened after you refused to quit?

Yehuda saw Manish for what he was: raw talent. He said, “In Manish, I could spot a good instrument, a unique instrument.”

- What do you think Yehuda means by “a unique instrument?”
- What is the difference between someone with skills in an art form and a true artist?
- Someone can be a technically perfect dancer, but boring to watch. What makes a dancer exciting to watch? Is it the skill? The talent? The artistry? The creativity they bring?
- What do you think makes a dancer – or any performer, including an athlete – a true artist?

Manish’s parents, Reeta and Milap, are often focused on Manish needing to start earning a living and so he can contribute financially to the family. There are very real consequences for the family if he doesn’t make a living. His ability to earn money is his parents’ entire retirement plan. Because they spent their life savings on their children’s education and training, they also need Manish to pay for his sister’s wedding. If he can’t, she has to wait to get married.

- How is this different from our culture here in the United States? Are young adults expected to start paying for their parents’ food, rent, and retirement after college?
- How do you think cultural system changes the amount of pressure on Manish to succeed?
- Is there something you love and want to pursue that other people say is impossible? What are you willing to do to make it happen?

Manish’s father tells him, “Dance is a hobby for wealthy people. Not for us.” When he gets to Danceworx Studio in Mumbai to study ballet, he’s not allowed inside because he doesn’t have a pair of expensive dance shoes. Luckily, another student gives him an old pair of broken ballet slippers and his mom is able to fix them so he can attend class.

- Do you think it’s fair that, to learn certain elite sports or arts like playing musical instruments, dancing ballet, playing golf, or downhill skiing, you have to be able to afford it? What happens if the most talented person in the world at something doesn’t have money and never gets to find out how good they are at that thing? What do we lose?

In another documentary the Pickford is showing – *The Last Repair Shop* – the Los Angeles Public School District provides free instruments to students and fixes them for no cost, allowing all kids to experience playing an instrument. In the documentary *In the Dirt*, a non-profit called Silver Stallion fixes kids bikes for free and teaches them about mountain biking. In both those films and in *Call Me Dancer*, we see that incredible talent can come from ANYWHERE... how much money a person has doesn't matter... until it's time for expensive lesson or equipment.

- How can we make opportunities to learn and try out new things possible for all students and not just the ones whose parents can afford to pay for lessons or equipment?
- What do we gain as a society by allowing everyone to have an opportunity to experience things and see if they have a natural talent or passion for that thing?

While his parents are often portrayed as worrying about money, but they take great delight in Manish's talent as a dancer. His father even says, "Money is not required for dreaming."

- How do you think this softer side of his parents and grandmother influenced Manish?
- How does it feel when your parents or grandparents truly see you and take time to listen and care about the things that matter to you?
- What is the difference between the kind of love that holds on tight and says, "stay" vs. the kind of love that says, "go... learn!"

Manish shows his grandmother a video of him dancing and she says, "Your grandfather would have been so proud." She promises to talk to his father and tells him, "Do whatever feels right."

- Why do you think Manish's grandmother wants him to follow his dream?
- Why do you think his father listens to his mother (Manish's grandmother)?
- Do you think Manish would have given up dancing if his dad didn't change his mind?

In the United States, we still have what we call "The American Dream" – the idea that no matter where you come from, you can make it if you work hard and excel. India has a fairly rigid caste system that separates social classes and makes it difficult to move upwards socially or financially. Both Manish and Amir come from working class or poor backgrounds, but their talent and dedication to excellence allows them to leap across barriers that others can't cross.

- Do you think achieving the American Dream is still possible here in the United States?
- Is it as easy to make the American Dream come true now as it was when your parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents were starting out in life? Why do you think that?

Many people tell their kids to have a "back-up plan" in case their dream doesn't work out, but Manish doesn't have a safety net if dance doesn't work out.

- How do you think refusing to fail continues to push Manish forward?
- Should you have a back-up plan if you want to excel at something? Or should you be like Manish and put everything you have into succeeding and go back to school later if it doesn't work out?
- Do you think a back-up plan is helpful? Or does it divert energy away from your goal?

Yehuda Ma'or, Manish's ballet teacher at Danceworx in Mumbai, is 75 years old at the time of filming. When he wanted to leave India, he realized that he wouldn't be able to find work as a teacher anywhere else because of his age, but in India, there is a tradition of looking up to someone older and wiser as a spiritual teacher or guide, called a *guru*.

- What do we lose when we discount the value of older people in our culture?
- Is there an older person in your life that you look up to and can learn from? What is special about them? What do they bring to your life that you can't get anywhere else?

When Manish discovers contemporary dance, he finds a new way of moving and expressing himself that celebrates his skills and experience as a street dancer, but also uses the skills he learned in ballet. He is allowed to become fully integrated as an artist, instead of having to hide part of himself away.

- Why is it important to welcome every part of someone and allow them to be their full self? What do we gain by allowing people to be their full selves? What do we lose when we ask people to wall off parts of themselves?
- How do you feel when you are accepted and celebrated for being exactly who you are?
- How does it feel when someone tries to shut a part of you down?
- What changes for Manish when he is allowed to share all of his skills, training, and experience as a dancer? How does that change him as a person?

When Manish leaves the Kibbutz International Dance Village to star in a movie inspired by his own life story, he puts his dancing career on hold... but afterwards, he walks away from opportunities to be in more movies, to dance in movies, and to become famous in India.

- Why do you think Manish decided to keep training instead of becoming a movie star?
- A dancer's professional dancing career is usually over by the time they're in their 30s, but a film career can last a lifetime. Do you think Manish made a good decision? Or do you think he should've made more movies? What are your reasons for thinking that?
- During the making of the film, Manish was pushed very hard physically and injured his shoulder, which required surgery. Do you think that played a part in him wanting to do something else?

One of the directors, Leslie Shampaine, is a former professional dancer from New York City.

- How do you think being a dancer herself and having lived in that world might have helped Shampaine on this film? How might it help her related to her subjects?
- How might being a former dancer change how she films the dancing in the movie or the questions she asks people?
- Do you think being a former dancer might have biased her in any way or given her predisposed beliefs that colored how she made the film?
- What is the role of a storyteller who is making a documentary? How much of it is telling someone else's story and how much of it is the filmmaker's own point of view?
- Do you think it's possible to tell a story and be completely unbiased? Does it matter? Does it matter more in some types of storytelling, like reporting the news, than others?

CALL ME DANCER – Call Me Famous

Classroom Connection Activities

Imagine that you just got a phone call from a director telling you that they're making a movie inspired by your life... and they want you to star in it, playing yourself.

In this activity, you'll write a synopsis of your life story, then write a one-page

- What do you want to make sure gets into the movie?
- What details of your life would you like to change?
- What people from your life will be in the movie? Will you portray them as they are in real life, or modify them, like they did with Manish's father, making him more of an antagonist?

OPTION 1: Storyboard / Graphic Novel

Take one scene from the movie of your life and illustrate it in the style of a storyboard or graphic novel.

1. Think of a title for your movie.
2. Decide if you will go by your same name or if you'll have a new name in the movie.
3. Draw at least 8 frames. (If you'd like to do more, go for it!)
4. Include dialog and at least one sound effect. (For example, "Ziiiiip!" "Pow!" "CRASH!")
5. Make sure the scene has a beginning, a middle, and an end... even if it's a cliff-hanger.

QUOTES from *Call Me Dancer*

TAKE IT FURTHER

If you'd like to learn more about the organizations mentioned in this documentary, here are some links!

Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company, Ga'aton, Israel

Learn more about where Manish studied at the International Dance Village in Ga'aton, Israel before leaving to star in the movie back in India.

<https://www.kcdc.co.il/en/>

Oregon Ballet Theatre School, Portland, Oregon

Learn more about where Manish studied, right here in the Pacific Northwest!

<https://school.obt.org/>

Royal Ballet School, London, United Kingdom

Learn more about where Amir went to study and what auditions are like there.

<https://www.royalballetschool.org.uk/>

Peridance Center, New York City, New York

Learn more about the dance classes offered at Peridance, where Manish studied in NYC.

<https://www.peridance.com/>

Peridance Contemporary Dance Company, New York City, New York

Explore the company where Manish is currently a professional dancer.

<https://www.peridancecontemporary.org/>

See Manish's profile as one of the company dancers at Peridance

<https://www.peridancecontemporary.org/dancers?pgid=jz4airbo-6e71b8da-b606-4309-8c6d-bb12169ba29f>

Watch Yeh Ballet on Netflix

Watch Manish star in a movie inspired by his own life!

<https://www.netflix.com/title/81101795>

Watch the trailer for the movie here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpeOrmjRK90>

A short video celebrating Yehuda Ma'or's 80th birthday

See photos and videos from Yehuda's career as a dancer and teacher.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aI5f6N3oNyo>

Article in *Pointe* - "Call Me Dancer Documentary Sheds Light on Manish Chauhan's Unlikely Path to the Professional Stage"

by Kyra Laubacher (December 8, 2023)

<https://pointemagazine.com/call-me-dancer-documentary/#gsc.tab=0>

Article in *Bachtrack* - "Call Me Dancer: A Word with Manish Chauhan"

by Carla Escoda (February 19, 2024)

<https://bachtrack.com/interview-manish-chauhan-call-me-dancer-new-york-february-2024>

Fish War

Directed by Jeff Ostenson, Charles Atkinson (North 40), Skylar Wagner (North 40)
DOC-ED Grade 6-8 Additional Discussion Guide & Classroom Connection Activity



Synopsis

When the State of Washington broke the Treaty they had made with the Northwest tribes and began arresting Indigenous fishers, confiscating their equipment, and preventing them from fishing their territorial waters, the Fish War began. Fifty years later, the fight for the salmon, the health of our region, and for the fair enforcement of Native Treaty rights continues.

Opening Questions for Reflection

** Note: This is helpful to do right after viewing the films.*

Close your eyes and take note of what you are feeling after watching this documentary.

- What emotions do you feel in your body?
- Did anything make you feel hopeful? Excited? Worried? Upset? Inspired?
- Did anything make you want to take action?
- Do you have any questions after watching the film?

Take a couple of minutes to write down the emotions you're feeling and any questions you have or actions you want to take. If you like, you can draw images that stayed with you from the film. This is just for you, to center your thoughts.

Some of the People in the Film

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Willie Frank III (Nisqually)• Tobin James Frank (Nisqually)• Billy Frank, Jr. (Nisqually)• Willie Frank, Sr. (Nisqually)• Jay Julius (Lummi)• Tim Ballew (Lummi)• Althea Wilson (Lummi)• Doreen Maloney (Upper Skagit)• Scott Schuyler (Upper Skagit)• Lorraine Loomis (Swinomish)• Ramona Bennett (Puyallap)• Rodney Sisson (Puyallap)• George Chad Bowechop (Makah)• Dave Sones (Makah)• Cal Peters (Squaxin Island)• Joseph Peters (Squaxin Island)• Ron Charles (Port Gamble S'Klallam)• W. Ron Allen (Tribal Chairman of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe)• Russ Hepfer (Lower Elwha Klallam)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kadi Bizyayeva (Stillaguamish)• Bill Smith (Skokomish)• Warren King George (Muckleshoot)• Cliff Keene (Muckleshoot)• Carl Bud Moses, Sr. (Muckleshoot)• Guy McMinds (Quinalt)• Ed Jonstone (Quinalt, NW Indian Fisheries Commission)• Helen Keeline (NW Indian Fisheries Commission)• Phil Anderson (President of the State Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessels Owners / Former Charter Boat Fishing Captain)• Crina Hoyer (Former Executive Director, RE Sources)• Kyle Adicks (Fish and Wildlife Biologist for WA State)• Jim Scott (Former Tribal Fisheries Biologist)• Bill Wilkerson (Former Director, WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Judge George H. Boldt• Mason Morriset (Tribal Attorney during UW v. WA)• Alan Stay (Tribal Attorney during US v. WA)• Mike Taylor (Attorney for Quinalt during US v. WA)• Michael Grayum (Fisheries Biologist Consultant, US v. WA)• Slade Gorton (WA State Attorney General from 1969-1981, Republican Senator for WA 1989-2001, son of the founder of one of the largest fish companies in the US, Slade Gorton & Co.)• Phil Hamilton• Randy Johnson• President Barack Obama• Isaac Stevens (First Governor of Washington Territories and signer of the Stevens Treaties)
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About North 40 Productions

“North Forty has been working with the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission for more than a decade helping member tribes share their stories with a non-tribal audience. Our goal has been to show how treaty fishing rights are good for everyone who lives in the Northwest. Early 2023, the Commission wanted to do something significant around the 50th anniversary of the court case you mentioned before, what some people call the “Boldt Decision” of 1974. We all agreed that a feature documentary was the best way to share this important piece of Washington State history fully.” – Jeff Ostenson

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

The documentary opens with a series of quotes that give us, the viewers, insight into how important salmon and fishing are to the tribes.

They say:

- “Fishing is our way of life. We are Salmon People. Deeply and clearly, we think fishing is who we are.”
 - “For generations, salmon has sustained our way of life.”
 - “Fishing – it’s a time to teach, it’s a time to learn, it’s a time to become connected with your roots and who you are.”
 - “It’s been stated that salmon are as important as the air that we breathe... when the tide is out, the table is set.”
-
- Why do you think the salmon are so important to the culture and well-being of the tribes?
 - What do you think “when the tide is out, the table is set” means?
 - Why do you think the tribes call themselves “Salmon People?” What does it mean to be Salmon People if there are no salmon or you’re not allowed to fish for them?
 - Is there something that is deeply important to your family’s way of life – something that defines who you are as a family? What would happen if that thing was suddenly gone or you no longer had access to it? What would you do? Who would you be?

They go on to say:

- “Without the Boldt decision, there’d be no fish today.”
 - “It changed everything. Probably the most important decision in our state, in a lot of ways.”
 - “Without the Boldt decision, we might not be Indian anymore.”
-
- What do you think the person meant by saying that, without the Boldt decision, they might not be Indian anymore? How is “being Indian” so closely tied to the salmon?
 - How do you think the Boldt decision has helped to keep salmon from going extinct?
 - What are some of the actions that tribes have taken to protect salmon and their habitat?
 - What are some of the actions that non-tribal community members have taken?
 - What do you think would happen to our region if the salmon actually went extinct?

Even after the Boldt decision, Treaty rights and salmon populations continue to be in jeopardy.

Billy Frank Jr.'s grandson, Willie Frank, III. said, "Fishing is a way of life for me here, on the Nisqually River. I've had the opportunity to fish for over 20 years in the same fishing set where my father, Billy Frank Jr., and my grandfather, Willie Frank Sr., fished. For us, the Sundays when we're open on the river – that's our way of going to church. That's our way of going to church and connecting with our spirituality. And it's unfortunate now because we're down to 12 days to fish in a year."

- What are some of the factors that continue to affect salmon runs?
- What would need to happen to repair our rivers so the salmon can spawn in their natural habitat again?
- What do you think it feels like to fish the same waters as your father and grandfather? How might that be something spiritual?
- Is there something that you do that your parents or grandparents did? Something that is deeply special and important to who you are as a person? If yes, what it is and how does it make you feel connected to your family? If not, is there something you would like to pass on if you have kids or grandkids someday?

In 2020, the City of Bellingham, the Nooksack Indian Tribe, the Lummi Nation, and other groups began a project to remove a dam from the Middle Fork of the Nooksack River. The project was completed in 2022, extending the salmon run for 16 pristine miles. From 2011 to 2014, on the Elwha River, the Lower Elwha Klallam tribe successfully lobbied for the removal of two dams, restoring 70 miles of salmon habitat. In 2016, the Lummi Nation blocked the development of a coal terminal at Cherry Point in Ferndale that would have impacted their Treaty rights to fish and damaged the fragile environment. In 2013, the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe began a project to restore Sequim Bay by removing a decommissioned logging operation at Jimmy-Come-Lately Creek. In 1999, only 7 salmon returned to Sequim Bay. After the creek was restored, 2,500 salmon returned and there was a shellfish boom for the tribe. In The success of all three of these actions all stems from the Boldt decision to uphold the Treaty of Point Elliot.

- How do you think the Boldt decision allowed the tribes to successfully lobby the government to remove of the dams?
- How did the Boldt decision help the Lummi Nation block a multinational corporation from building a coal terminal?
- Who does it benefit when we restore our habitat?

Joseph Peters (Squaxin Island) said, "My great friend Raz (Russ) Hepfer, he glows when he talks about that damn dam being removed – and the fact that they get to have a fishery this year? Their culture's *restored*."

- What do you think Joseph Peters means by "their culture's restored"?
- How does the dam removal on the Elwha and Nooksack Rivers give other tribes courage?

(You can see "before and after" photos of the Middle Fork of the Nooksack River here: <https://cob.org/services/environment/restoration/middlefork/middle-fork-project-photos>)

Global warming and the heating of the rivers is also affecting the salmon run, which is infringing on Treaty rights. As citizens of Washington State, we are all responsible for doing our part to uphold the Treaty and to follow the law.

- If you are a NW Washington tribal member, what are some of the concerns you have about the Treaties being upheld? What are some of the things that need to happen to protect them?
- If you are not a NW Washington tribal member, what are some of the things you can do as a citizen to make sure you are helping to uphold the Treaty rights? Do you need to make any changes in your thinking or your actions?
- What do we need to give up in order to protect the salmon?
- How can giving something up spur innovation for even better solutions?
- What are some simple things an average citizen of Whatcom County can do to help preserve salmon habitat or make an impact on the health of our environment? (The ideas might be more simple than you think!)
- What is our duty as citizens, whether we belong to a tribe or not, when the tribes ask for help in fighting something that breaks the Treaty?

Jay Julius, from the Lummi Nation, says, “We are not a conquered people.” He points out that the tribes were sovereign nations equal in standing with the United States of America. The tribal leaders expected the US to act in good faith and for both sides to uphold their agreements, but the State of Washington went back on their word and broke the Treaty again and again.

- Do you feel the leaders and representatives of the United States felt that the tribal nations were equal to them? Why or why not? How do people treat each other when they are equals?
- Were you surprised to learn how Washington State broke the law? How can a State who has gone back on its word repair that damage?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you trusted someone, then found out that they didn’t keep their word or purposefully tricked you? What happened? How did that make you feel? What did you do about it?
- How does it feel when someone tells you that you can have something, then takes it back or tells you they never agreed to let you have it in the first place? How does it change how you feel about that person? What would need to change for you to trust them again?

One thing the documentary doesn’t go into is that Slade Gorton, the Attorney General for Washington State during US v. WA, was also the grandson of the man who founded Slade Gorton & Co. and that he descended from one of the founders of Gorton’s of Gloucester, two of the largest seafood companies in the United States. According to Rocket Reach, Slade Gorton & Co.’s revenue in 2023 was \$51.2 million. Zippia.com lists Gorton’s of Gloucester’s annual revenue in \$202 million in 2023.

- Do you think Slade Gorton should have been allowed to be Washington State’s lead attorney in US v. WA? Why or why not?
- Have you ever heard of something called “conflict of interest”? What do you think it might mean? What usually happens if a judge or lawyer has a conflict of interest on a case?
- Why do you think that this wasn’t talked about in the documentary?

Some of the people interviewed were still emotionally affected by seeing their fathers, mothers, friends, and relatives beaten, shot at, and arrested and by having their fishing gear, nets, boats, and motors confiscated. Willie Frank III said his cousin Nancy went to the jail to see their dads and her dad was upset because they were being fed in jail while their kids were at home starving.

- How do you continue to stand up for what is right when it feels the whole world is against you? How do you keep from giving up?
- How long would you fight for what you believe in? Would you ever give up? What if you were beaten and arrested and it never seemed like it was going to stop?
- What do you think would've happened if the tribes had given up?

The tribes were smart about how they got the world to pay attention to their cause. They set up a fishing camp, had fish-ins and sit-ins to get in front of the Federal government and the media, called in the ACLU, got celebrities like Marlon Brando and Dick Gregory to help. Billy Frank Jr. even met with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to ask for his advice. But sometimes, they fought back in ways that weren't quite legal, like when they set fire to a creosote-soaked bridge after Washington State came down on their fishing camp. That said, they were also in a dangerous and difficult situation where they weren't being treated fairly or being protected under the law.

- What are some ways you can call attention to injustice?
- What do you do when you see something happening that isn't right?
- How do you get people to listen when you're just one person or a small group?
- One person can change the course of history. What are you willing to fight for?

Now, the fishing industry in Washington State is co-managed by the tribes along with the State of Washington through the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. It isn't always easy, but everyone is at the table.

- What happens when you change "us vs. them" to "we"? How does the dynamic shift?
- What happens when two sides become one team? How does it change how you look at solutions? How does it change how you relate to one another?
- What are the benefits of working together and collaborating, even if it's harder?

Billy Frank Jr. was a civil rights leader who fought for his people and their rights, but by protecting our environment, he was fighting for all of us. He was arrested more than 50 times during the Fish Wars, but was respected by world leaders for his fairness, his compassion, his drive, and his dignity. He said, "Our number one objective in this life must be to find common ground," and, "We share this land. We share these resources. We share a common future."

- Since we share a common future, what are some ways we can learn to work with people that we disagree with at first?
- How do you find a common bond with someone who feels like they're on the opposing team?
- If we all share this land and these resources, aren't we all on the same team? What are some things we can do to show people that we respect them, care about them, and are listening to them, even if we're standing on opposite sides of an issue

FISH WAR

Classroom Connection Activities

WHAT WOULD YOU PROTECT? WHAT WOULD YOU FIGHT FOR?

(Students may choose one of the options or a combination of all three.)

In 1854 and 1855, when the State of Washington and the tribes were signing their Treaties, the State said, “The said tribes and bands of Indians hereby cede to the United States all their rights, titles and interest in and to the lands and country by them.”

The tribes added, “The right of taking fish, at all usual and accustomed grounds and stations, is further secured to Indians, in common with all citizens of the Territory.”

Imagine that a powerful group of new people suddenly arrive in Whatcom County. There are more of them than us, they’re stronger than us, and they’re not going away. Instead, they’re going to take over. They’re excited to make use of our industries and natural resources, but instead of making us leave, they agree to enter into a Treaty with us.

We are told that we all have to leave our homes and move to a new town out in the county that they are building for current Whatcom County residents. In return, we will be allowed to live and will have to learn to coexist with the newcomers in a new society.

1: Write

You are a civic leader and are going to the Treaty negotiations.

Write a statement that protects something that makes us who we are... or that makes you who you are. What is something that you simply cannot afford to lose? Is it a place? A thing? A way of life? A language? A way of practicing your beliefs?

2: Draw

You are a civil rights activist trying to get the world’s attention.

Using a piece of printer paper, draw a poster that will help people understand what you’re fighting for.

3: Write & Draw

You are an everyday citizen in a world that is changing. Your rights are not being respected and you want people to know what is happening.

- Fold a piece of printer paper into eight squares.
- Draw around each square to make frames.
- In the style of a graphic novel, show what is happening to your people. Your story is short, but still needs a beginning, middle, and an end.
- Show a series of injustices or a single injustice that is taking place. Illustrate it and add dialogue or sound bubbles so the reader can understand what is going on.

QUOTES from *Fish War*

“The only way to convey messages or have a discussion was to use a trade language called Chinook jargon. Let’s just say it’s not very accurate. It doesn’t translate well into all languages. One word can have many meanings and it’s all based on context.” – Warren King George, Muckleshoot (about the signing of the Treaties between the tribes and Washington Territory)

“Territories were ceded and we were placed on little reservations. We got little reservations, but we also secured some rights.” – Jay Julius, Lummi Nation

“Leaders were savvy and made sure certain phrases were included to preserve fishing rights.” – Warren King George, Muckleshoot

“We reserved our hunting rights and our fishing rights and our gathering of berries and our health and education.” – Lorraine Loomis, Swinomish

“Tribes signed the treaties with the understanding of this arrangement is in perpetuity. We signed the treaty to retain our identity, not to become white. And that’s lost in the laundry, often.” – George Chad Bowechop, Makah

“We are not a conquered people. We entered into a peace treaty and ceded land in exchange for rights.” – Jay Julius, Lummi Nation

“Keeping those rights maintained a lot of power for our tribal communities.” – Kadi Bizyayva, Stillaguamish

“It was a contentious time. There was a lot of racism and a lot of defending yourselves downtown.” – Russ Hepfer, Lower Elwha Klallam

*“If somebody had a little outboard motor, the pigs would drop it in salt water, slash the nets, arrest the fishermen, treat them like they were thieves – like **THEY** were the thieves! – and here, everything had been stolen from the Indians.”* – Ramona Bennett, Puyallup

“The government said it was conservation, but what it really was was that they’d rather catch those fish out on the ocean or somewhere else out in Puget Sound so there aren’t fish returning to the Nisqually River.” – Michael Grayum, Fisheries Biologist Consultant during US v. WA

“They were desperate. That was the situation. They had no healthcare. They had no education. They had no money. They had no housing. There were no places to live.” – Mike Taylor, Attorney for the Quinalt Tribe during US v. WA

“Billy Frank Jr. liked to say, ‘I wasn’t a policy guy, I was a getting arrested guy.’ And that’s true. Billy was arrested more than 50 times in his fight to protect tribal fishing rights.” – President Barack Obama

“All my uncles and dad were in jail at the same time and that’s when Auntie Maiselle and mom had to go get net... ‘cause we weren’t gonna give up. They ended up arresting my mom and auntie.” – Tobin James Frank, Nisqually

“That’s just our smoke signal for help.” – Ramona Bennett, Puyallup (in response to why they set the creosote bridge on fire near the fish camp)

“The court said, ‘The treaties made under the US constitution are the supreme law of the land’ End of story. No further legislation required.” – Mason Morriset, Tribal Attorney during UW v. WA

*“Slade Gorton dragged our tribe into court over and over... and got his *** kicked every time. Ha ha ha ha ha!”* – Ramona Bennet, Puyallup

“There are no old trees anymore. We gotta start planning them and planting them now. It takes 500 years to plant a tree. We have to do that. It might take us a century to get our salmon back. We have to do that. We have to keep the quality of life here in the northwest that we enjoy.”
– Billy Frank Jr., Nisqually

COMMEMORATE BILLY FRANK JR. DAY (March 9th)

Billy Frank Jr. Day is on March 9th, his birthday. What’s something you can do this year to honor Billy Frank Jr. and to continue our mutual promise to uphold the Treaties Washington State signed with the NW Treaties Tribes?

Here are some ideas:

- Make posters that celebrate Billy Frank Jr. and highlight some of his words of wisdom and ask local shops and restaurants to display them.
- Plant big leaf maple trees along the Nooksack river to help cool the ground and improve salmon habitat.
- Instead of buying fish at the grocery store, buy fish directly from local Lummi fishers at the Lummi Seafood Market at 4920 Rural Ave, Ferndale, WA 98248, just off the Slater Rd. exit.

DID YOU KNOW? On November 16, 2015, the first street sign marking the name change of Indian Street to Billy Frank Jr. Street was installed in Bellingham.

More than 14 species of salmon and steelhead in Washington State are still listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. What can you do to uphold Billy Frank Jr.’s legacy by taking a step to help restore salmon habitat?

Before logging, farming, and development, the riparian zone along the Nooksack and Skagit Rivers was primarily made up of big leaf maple trees, not pine trees. Big leaf maple trees cool the ground beneath them and shade the rivers, keeping them cooler too. They also soak up a lot of water and help prevent the rivers from flooding. Restoring native habitat is also more cost-effective for your yard. It requires less watering than grass and non-native species.

TAKE IT FURTHER

If you'd like to learn more about the organizations mentioned in this documentary, here are some links!

Meet Billy Frank Jr. / Arts WA Billy Frank Jr. Statue Project

Learn more about Billy Frank Jr., see a timeline of his life and activism, and see the statue of him that is being made for Washington, DC. <https://www.arts.wa.gov/meet-billy-frank-jr/>

Listen to stories about Billy Frank Jr. from people who knew him and share your own.

<https://www.arts.wa.gov/tell-your-story/>

Northwest Treaty Tribes / Billy Frank Jr. Day

Visit NW Treaty Tribes' website to learn about everything they do to protect the Salish Sea (Puget Sound) and uphold Native Treaty rights. This link will take you to a page about honoring Billy Frank Jr. Day (March 9th), but you can explore the entire site from there.

<https://nwtreatytribes.org/how-to-commemorate-billy-frank-jr-day/>

In the "Being Frank" collection, you can learn more about Billy Frank, Jr. and how his legacy continues to improve our lives today. The articles are written by NW Indian Fisheries Commission Chairman Ed Johnstone. <https://nwtreatytribes.org/category/being-frank/>

Map of NW Indian Fisheries Commission Member Tribes: <https://nwtreatytribes.org/member-tribes/>

Visit the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge

Visit the national wildlife refuge established in honor of Billy Frank Jr. near Olympia where the Nisqually River enters Puget Sound. It's home to a number of protected animals and plants, including the threatened Oregon Spotted Frog and has a boardwalk that goes out over the estuary.

<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/billy-frank-jr-nisqually>

Article "Fish War: The Fishing Rights Documentary by North 40 Productions"

By Connor Kw3.com (June 21, 2024)

Read an interview with the directors of the film and learn how they made it happen!

<https://kw3.com/fish-war-indigenous-fishing-rights/>

North 40 Productions

Learn more about North 40 Productions and where the film Fish Wars is playing next.

<https://www.facebook.com/North40Productions/videos/1355954158411892>

Article "Lummi Nation Asks Army Corps to Reject Cherry Point Coal Terminal"

Learn more about how the Lummi Nation is using its Treaty rights to protect our local fish and wildlife here in Whatcom County while also protecting their right to fish in traditional waters.

<https://www.bellinghamherald.com/news/local/article22267380.html>

RE Sources

Learn about how RE Sources, based right here in Bellingham, WA, fights to protect the Salish Sea and uphold Native Treaty rights. <https://www.re-sources.org/>

First Nations Development Institute

Learn how Board Member W. Ron Allen, Chairman of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe) took his nation from zero resources and a landless reservation base in 1982 to an annual budget of \$26 million and a land base of 10,000 acres without Federal assistance. <https://www.firstnations.org/staff/w-ron-allen/>

In the Dirt

Directed by T.C. Johnstone

DOC-ED Grade 6-8 Additional Discussion Guide & Classroom Connection Activity



Synopsis

In the Dirt is a documentary film about a group of Native American cyclists who, along with retired pro cyclist Scott Nydam, their families, and local community members, work to bring the sport of mountain biking to the Navajo Nation, where no bike shops exist.

Through a grassroots native-led effort, this passionate group overcomes the odds to build a cycling culture, making cycling the fastest-growing recreational sport on the Navajo Nation. Along the way, they discover that they're healing communities by helping riders reconnect to the land, their families, their communities, and themselves.

Opening Questions for Reflection

** Note: This is helpful to do right after viewing the films.*

Close your eyes and take note of what you are feeling after watching this documentary.

- What emotions do you feel in your body?
- Did anything make you feel hopeful? Excited? Worried? Upset? Inspired?
- Did anything make you want to take action?
- Do you have any questions after watching the film?

Take a couple of minutes to write down the emotions you're feeling and any questions you have or actions you want to take. If you like, you can draw images that stayed with you from the film. This is just for you, to center your thoughts.

Some of the Main People in the Film

- **Scott Nydam** – Former Pro Cyclist & Founder of Silver Stallion
- **Vincent Salabye** – Diné Comp & Enduro Coach / Nigel James' Mentor
- **Nigel James** – Mountain Biker
- **Franklin Cook** – Coach & Mechanic
- **Randy Bitsue** – Coach & Mechanic, Project Bike Tech Southwest Liaison
- **Lorenzo Manuelito** – Coach & Mechanic
- **Terrence Yazzie** – Mountain Biker
- **Albert Avery** – School Social Worker
- **Thea James** – School Social Worker
- **Tanisha Bitsoi** – PE Teacher & NM High School Girls Basketball Coach of the Year
- **Greg Bahe** – Environmental Engineer & Parent of a Daughter who Mountain Bikes

Questions for Discussion

Bike shops don't just sell bikes, they repair them. Scott Nydam was a former pro cyclist who moved to Gallup and saw a need on the Navajo Nation for bike repair. He had an idea, but instead of trying to fix the problem he saw, he shared his idea with people in the community and asked what they thought, then worked *with* them to start fixing bikes.

- How can we help others solve a problem without assuming we have the answer?
- How does it feel when someone tells you how to solve a problem you're having without asking if you if you want help first? How do you feel about that person?
- How does it feel when someone shares an idea they have, then asks you to be a part of bringing it to life and making it work? How does it change how you see yourself?
- Have you ever collaborated with someone to solve a problem or come up with a solution? Did having more than one person's ideas make it easier? Harder? Both?

The Navajo Nation is 27,413 square miles, about the same size as the entire State of West Virginia. It's bigger than all of New England combined, bigger than the nations of Haiti, Rwanda, and many others. It has some of the most beautiful and rugged landscape in the world and yet, there's not one bike shop to serve the 165,000 people who live there.

- Why do you think there weren't any bike shops on the Navajo Nation, despite there being plenty of bikes and people who liked to ride them? What situations or conditions might have contributed to the lack of bike shops there?
- What happens to a bicycle if no one can fix it? Even for something simple, like a slipped chain? What was happening to all the donated bikes on the reservation?

Whatcom County is less than a 10th of the size of the Navajo Nation – 2,503 square miles – and has more than 20 bike shops to serve 230,000 people, including a van that comes to your house.

- Why do you think our county can support more than 20 bike shops? Do we need them?
- What contributing factors make it possible for more than 20 bike shops to thrive here?

DID YOU KNOW?

Gailbraith Mountain is one of the premiere mountain biking destinations in the world, and it's right here! There are more than 70 miles of singletrack (a mountain bike trail about as wide as the width of the bike) going through 3,000 acres with views of the city and Bellingham Bay. You can easily bike there from downtown Bellingham and access some of the best trails on the planet.

Scott Nydam's idea to fix bikes and get more people riding on the Navajo Nation has taken on a life of its own and has gone far beyond his original dream.

- How can the actions of one person affect an entire community? How can one person positively affect a community? How can one person negatively affect a community?
- Do you have to be famous to make a massive positive impact?
- If everyone took action to improve one thing in one small corner of the planet, what might happen? How might the world change?

In the film, many people share how cycling allowed them to reconnect to the land, to heal, and to rebuild their communities. On the trails, a lot more than bike riding was going on.

- What were some of the other things that were happening while people were out riding?
- How did people feel more connected to the land? To their culture?
- Why do you think so many people say they felt better when they were riding?
- What's something you do with friends or a group that makes you feel better about life?
- How might your life be different if you replaced screen time with time in nature?

Many people in the film connected riding the bike to Navajo horse culture. Tanisha Bitsoi, a PE teacher in Gallup, New Mexico, said, "The bikes – it has its own little, like, spirit... it's the same thing with our culture: we have different things that we hold sacred. It's kind of like a horse."

- How might a bike be like a horse? How is it different?
- How does a bike allow someone to interact with the land or go places in a different way than a car, truck, or even motorcycle?
- How might riding bikes in a group be similar to riding horses in a group? What about racing? What about Rezduro, the competition? How is that similar to rodeo?
- Is there something in your life that you love so much that it feels like it has its own spirit?

Many people in the film talked about how there's a lot more than mountain biking happening when people are out riding. People talk about their lives, share problems, listen to each other, check in with each other, and support one another.

- How do you think life on the Navajo Nation will change as more and more people start getting outside to mountain bike together?
- Do you think your life might change if your family did something like this together or if you were part of a crew that did something like this? How would it be different? How would *you* be different?
- Do you already have something like this in your life? How does it make you feel? Who else participates?
- How is doing something outside with someone different from watching tv with them or playing video games with them?

At the Rezduro Race, moms and matriarchs from a family created trails by hand; they knew the land and what special places to leave alone. Together, with the mountain bikers and organizers, they created a Navajo event that brought in lots of kids and parents. After the race, the announcer said, "Thank the bike and how it brought us together." He didn't thank the bikes, the thanked "the bike" – as if it was something singular and sacred.

- Why do you think the announcer thanked the bike when it couldn't hear him?
- What makes doing something for your own community so much more special?
- Why is it so important for communities to come together during group events?
- Is it really a community if everyone is alone at home most of the time? What makes a community healthy? What makes a community warm? What makes a community home?

IN THE DIRT: WHATCOM COUNTY

Classroom Connection Activities

OPTION 1: WHERE I BELONG (Poem, Song Lyric, Drawing)

Lorenzo Manuelito said that his grandfather's prayers kept them together and now he's finding that with his biking friends – that same shared compassion. He said, "The dirt is where I belong."

- Where is somewhere that you feel you truly belong? Is it a physical place or is it an activity that you can take with you almost anywhere?
 - What makes it special? Who else is there? What do you share together?
- A. Write a poem or song lyric** that captures the feelings and importance of the place where you truly belong. If you don't have that place yet, write about what you would like to have and how you would like to feel when you are there, what people you would like to have with you.
- B. Draw a picture** of a place you truly belong or of yourself doing something that makes you feel like you truly belong. Include at least three clues in the picture to help the viewer understand why that place or activity is special to you. Include any other people who are there with you.

OPTION 2: BLAZE A TRAIL (Community Action)

In the documentary *In the Dirt*, we see how a simple idea can snowball into a movement that uplifts, heals, and improves an entire community.

- What's a need that you've seen in our own community? Maybe it's at a micro-level, like inside your family or group of friends. Maybe it's at a slightly bigger level, like something in your school or an organization you belong to. Or maybe it's something that's affecting our entire town or county.

Instructions:

1. Identify the issue and come up with an idea of how you might help solve it.
2. Find someone to share your idea with them. Ask them if they have any ideas that might improve your original one.
3. Work together or in a small group to bring attention to the issue. You might need to make posters to bring awareness to people, write a letter to someone in charge letting them know how you feel and why you'd like to see a change, or there might be something you can do right now. (For example, if there's a hole in the sidewalk and everyone trips on it, could you mark it with yellow paint or fill it in with gravel or cement to make it safer?)
4. Share with your class what the problem was, what your original idea was to fix it, how you modified that idea, and what you did to take action.

OPTION 3: FIX IT UP (Hands-On Repair)

A circular economy is a model of resource production and consumption that involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing, and recycling existing materials and products for as long as possible. It helps to reduce waste and increases the inherent value of everything we make by extending the usefulness and lifespan of the item. That doesn't mean the items costs more; it means that we get more use out of the things we produce and reduce our need to make more new things and use more resources.

Repairing bikes instead of throwing them out or just buying a new one is a great way to contribute to a circular economy... and if you've outgrown your bike, you can fix it up and give it or sell it to someone who needs it, instead of having them buy a new one. But it's not just limited to bikes! It works for nearly EVERYTHING we own!

- A. Is there something you own that is broken, but could be fixed or repaired instead of thrown away and replaced?
- B. Are you about to buy something that you need? Can you find a used or refurbished option instead? Can you take time to fix the item instead of getting a new one?

Instructions:

1. Find something at home that's broken or wearing out and take time to fix it. Maybe it's something that needs a part reattached or something that can be repaired with super glue. Maybe there's a hole in your socks or favorite sweater that you can repair with a needle and thread. Or maybe something needs a screw tightened or a wheel reattached. It might even be an old stuffed animal that needs an eye or ear reattached. Anything goes!
2. Take a picture of the item before you start the repairs.
3. Do your best to repair the item. Ask for help or advice if you need it.
4. Take a picture of the item after you're done repairing it.

QUOTES from *In the Dirt*

"When I don't ride, you get mad a lot quicker. You start seeing yourself different, you know? And then, after the ride, all that energy, that bad energy or whatever you're carrying around, goes into that and you have no more." – Lorenzo Manuelito

"The bike can't solve *all* problems, but it can solve *some*." – Scott Nydam

"All of us, when we get together, it's like 'Regulators,' you know? Like 'Young Guns.' That's how I feel when we're together. It's the ultimate feeling. 'Regulators! Mount up! Let's go!'"
– Franklin Cook

"It's not biking. It's not PE. It's Indigenous Wellness." – Tanisha Bitsoi

"I don't want anyone to ride alone." – Mountain Biker

TAKE IT FURTHER

If you'd like to learn more about mountain biking, Silver Stallion, or the Navajo Nation, here are some resources for you to check out!

START BIKING IN WHATCOM COUNTY!

WMBC

Whatcom Mountain Bike Coalition (WMBC) is a non-profit organization. We work with many diverse groups in and around our beautiful city of Bellingham, Washington to promote continued and expanded trail access for all in our vibrant community.

Learn more here: <https://www.wmbcmtnb.org/after-school-bike-clubs>

RADICAL ROOTS MOUNTAINBIKE INSTRUCTION

Classes, meet-ups, trail rides and programs, right here in Bellingham.

<https://www.radicalrootsmtnb.com/upcoming-events-classes>

START A MOUNTAIN BIKE TEAM AT YOUR SCHOOL!

National Interscholastic Cycling Association

Does your school have a mountain biking team? You can start one and qualify to compete in local, state, and national competitions!

Learn more here: <https://nationalmtb.org/>

FIX YOUR BIKE!

“The Complete Guide to DIY Bike Repair and Maintenance” by Dylan Mancinelli in *Tracks Less Traveled*

<https://trackslesstravelled.com/diy-bike-repair-and-maintenance/>

Silver Stallion

Silver Stallion is a non-profit organization/501c3 that provides free bikes for kids, free bike repairs, youth programming, and race programming for kids on the Navajo Nation & surrounding communities. Could you help build something similar here in Whatcom County?

Learn more here: <https://silverstallion.org/>

Article in *The New Yorker* – “The Extreme Cyclists of the Navajo Nation”

This article features many of the same people who were in the film and has gorgeous photography. It also interviews Nigel James more and gets more of his perspective.

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/photo-booth/the-extreme-cyclists-of-the-navajo-nation>

Article in *The Radavist* about participating in biking & volunteer work with Silver Stallion

“Dzil ta’ah Adventures Navajo Youth Bike-Packrafting Adventure Series: Nazlini, AZ”

<https://theradavist.com/dzil-taah-adventures-navajo-youth-bike-packrafting-adventure-series-nazlini-az/>

Interview with Scott Nydam in *Velo* – “A Conversation with Scott Nydam”

<https://velo.outsideonline.com/news/a-conversation-with-scott-nydam/>

Article in *Cycling News* – “Scott Nydam Back Home”

<https://www.cyclingnews.com/news/scott-nydam-back-home/>

The Last Repair Shop

Directed by Ben Proudfoot and Kris Bowers

Winner of the Academy Award for Best Documentary Short Film

DOC-ED Grade 6-8 Additional Discussion Guide & Classroom Connection Activity



Synopsis

The Last Repair Shop tells the story of the musicians and craftspeople who maintain and repair approximately 80,000 musical instruments for the students of Los Angeles Public School System, a service provided free of charge to students since 1959. LAUSD is one of the only school districts in the United States to offer instruments free of charge to students and to repair them at no cost to families.

This documentary profiles four of the craftspeople working at the shop, each specializing in a different section of the orchestra, as well as students whose lives have been enriched by the instruments the repairs shop maintains. In a grand finale, alumni from the Los Angeles United School District perform original orchestral music in a special concert.

Opening Questions for Reflection

* Note: This is helpful to do right after viewing the films.

Close your eyes and take note of what you are feeling after watching this documentary.

- What emotions do you feel in your body?
- Did anything make you feel hopeful? Excited? Worried? Upset? Inspired?
- Did anything make you want to take action?
- Do you have any questions after watching the film?

Take a couple of minutes to write down the emotions you're feeling and any questions you have or actions you want to take. If you like, you can draw images that stayed with you from the film. This is just for you, to center your thoughts.

Some of the Main People in the Film

Steve Bagmanyan (supervisor / piano repair)

Dana Atkinson (string repair)

Paty Moreno (brass repair)

Duane Michaels (woodwind repair)

Ken Burget (piano tuner)

Dominic An (student)

Ismerai Calcano (student)

Miles Davies (student)

Andres Gonzales (student)

Porché Brinker (student violinist)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

At the beginning of *The Last Repair Shop*, we meet Porché Brinker – the little girl with braids who plays the violin – who talks about how her family struggles with illness a lot and doesn't always have time to listen to her play. She says, "Okay, I guess I'll play by myself." When asked about her violin, she says, "If I didn't have my violin from school, I would probably... I don't know what I would do. Don't even jinx me with that!"

- What do you think would happen to Porché if the Los Angeles Public Schools cancelled the free instrument and free instrument repair program? How might her life be different?
- What does playing the violin do for Porché, beyond allowing her to play music?
- Do you think Porché thinks of her violin as just an everyday object?
- Do you have something in your life that is as precious to you as Porché's violin? What does it give to you? What does it mean to you?

Many of the kids interviewed in the film talked about music as an escape from the hard things of everyday life, from anxiety to difficult family circumstances. But they also talked about the joy of playing music and how good it makes them feel.

- Is there something in your life that makes you feel that good? Do you have something that gives you an escape from the day-to-day world and allows you to relax? What is it? How does it make your life better, even if you're not the best at it?
- Do you think you'll continue doing it, even when you grow up? Do you think you'll continue doing it, even if it's not your job?

The four of the craftspeople we meet aren't just excellent at their jobs, they're also excellent musicians. Duane Michaels was even famous for a while! They all take their work seriously and care deeply about children being able to experience the joy of playing an instrument.

- Do you need to be famous in order to change the world?
- How can one person positively affect an entire community, just by doing their job well?
- What are some other jobs that positively affect an entire community? Do all jobs have the potential to make a difference in the success and health of our communities?

Dana Atkinson, who repairs the string instruments said, "It's not easy being a kid, but we try to make the playing of the instrument part as good as it can be."

- Why do you think the craftspeople take their work so seriously?
- How does fixing a musical instrument help a kid whose life is difficult? How does playing a musical instrument enrich the life of any kid who plays it?
- What are some of the things that are hard about being a kid? How does playing a musical instrument – or having another activity that really means a lot to you – help you deal with the stress of everyday life?

Paty Moreno, who repairs brass instruments, has first-hand knowledge of what it feels like to be a parent who can't afford the instrument rental fees. In the film, Paty says, "My son, he said, 'Mom, I would like to try the clarinet.' Twenty dollars a month, the rental, it was a lot for me. I was a single mom, remember? And I couldn't afford it. We were so poor. Sometimes we didn't have food. Sometimes we didn't have nothing for Christmas."

- How do you think Paty felt when she wasn't able to afford the \$20/month for her son to rent a clarinet? How do you think her son felt when he couldn't learn an instrument, just because his family was new to this country and struggling financially?
- Do you think Paty thinks of this experience when she's repairing instruments for other kids? How might that affect how seriously she takes her work? How might that give meaning to the work she does?
- How do you think Paty feels now when she fixes an instrument for a kid who might not be able to afford the repair otherwise?

Duane Michaels, who fixes woodwinds, says, "You do whatever it takes because, for a young child that's interested in playing, that one instrument could change their whole life." He also says, "In a way, you can feel like you're fixing an instrument for the future Grammy winner, if you wanna dream a little bit."

- How might a musical instrument change a child's entire life?
- What happens if kids are prevented from exploring things and finding out if they have a special talent or skill, just because they can't afford it or don't have the opportunity?
- Does your school offer free instruments and instrument repair to students? What would it take to start a program like this in your school district? How much money would it take to pay the repair technicians? How would you get the instruments?
- Do you have ideas for any other programs that would allow ALL students to participate in the arts and music, even if they can't afford the instruments or supplies?

A musical instrument doesn't care what you look like, how many friends you have, how much money you have, or how well you speak any particular language.

- What do you think is so special about music? How does it allow so many people to express themselves, to heal, to find comfort, to find joy, and to find community?
- Do you think it's important to have music classes at school, even if most people don't become famous musicians?
- Are there things we learn at school that are just important because it helps us be more fully rounded human beings? What other subjects or skills are like that?

Every single human being can make music. You don't have to be famous – or even very good – for music to be meaningful in your life.

- Is there a musical instrument you would like to try if you could? What is it about that instrument that interests you? What do you think it would feel like to play it?
- How can music make your life more meaningful, even if you're just listening to it? Is there a special song that you feel deeply connected to? What do you love about it?

THE LAST REPAIR SHOP: CIRCULAR ECONOMY + DREAMS

Classroom Connection Activities

STORIES FROM THE TREASURE JAR (Writing & Drawing)

“A lot of times I wonder what kind of little hands hold the instrument before me. I have a big jar – I call it the “Treasure Jar” – and it’s all the stuff I have found inside the instruments. Batteries, marbles, candies, pencils, erasers, this little toy – it’s tiny about this big and it’s all hairy. It’s like secret communication between the kid and myself. What kind of story that instrument can tell me if he can talk to me?” – Paty Moreno (brass repair)

Imagine that you are one of the instruments below and you have been sent to the repair shop because something weird was dropped inside you and now it’s stuck. Maybe the kid who plays you put it in there, maybe their little brother or sister was being naughty or curious and did it... or maybe there’s a completely bizarre explanation for how it happened!

- 1) Choose one of the instruments below and draw it larger on a sheet of blank paper. Draw the item that’s lodged inside us, as if we’re looking at the instrument with an x-ray.
- 2) Write a short story, from the perspective of the musical instrument, about its life, how it feels about the kid who plays it, how it feels about ending up in the repair shop, and what it’s looking forward to when it can play music beautifully again.

ALTERNATE: Write and illustrate a short graphic novel telling the story. Include at least eight frames, as well at least two internal thought bubbles for the instrument.

HANDS ON: BECOME A REPAIR SHOP! (Hands On + Writing)

When we throw something away instead of repairing it, we are throwing away all the resources that went into making that item and shortening the potential of its lifespan or usefulness. But when we treat items with care and respect, they can last for generations and keep more of our precious resources out of the landfill. Even if you don’t want to keep the item, making it useful again extends its life if you donate it, sell it, or give it to someone else who can use it.

Find something at home that needs fixing and repair it!

- 1) Take a picture or draw a picture of the item before you repair it.
- 2) Repair the item. (You might have to research how to do it online or ask someone to help you learn how, but once you do, you’ll have the knowledge forever!)
- 3) Take a picture or draw a picture of the item after it’s repaired.
- 4) Decide if you’re going to keep the item and keep using it or if you are going to give it to someone else who can use it.
- 5) Write up a “repair report” that explains what was wrong with the item, how you fixed the item, and how much money you saved by not throwing it away and buying the same item again. This can be a short paragraph, a bullet list, or a long explanation – whatever you need to get the information across.

QUOTES from *The Last Repair Shop*

From Dana Atkinson:

“When wood breaks, it breaks in a unique way and if you leave a crack open, the instrument buzzes. It can be really frustrating. It can be hard to find that last little buzz in the cello. When you find it, it’s like, “Oh, good! It’s gone!”

“... I thought I was broken; that buzz in the cello.”

“It’s really hard being a kid. Some of them come from a place of love and support and others come from huge dysfunction. The emotional broken things and the mental broken things are more difficult; you can’t glue that back together. That takes time and it takes care”

“Music is like swimming. The rhythm is constantly in the moment and, if you stop, there’s no music. Whatever you do, don’t stop. Keep going. No matter how bad of a trainwreck it is, just keep going. Don’t quit. Don’t give up. Persist.”

From Paty Moreno:

“Few years later, one of the technicians, Mark Como, he called me, and opportunity opened. LAUSD, they were going to hire two brass technicians. ‘You need to go there. You need to take the test.’ When I came to take the test, there were twelve men and myself. I was scared! My heart – it was like it was going to come out of my chest. I thought I had no chance, but I remembered my mother. ‘You’re smart, you’re strong, you’ll fight for what you want.’ Night before, with my kids, I talk to them, I said, ‘Look – I’m going to take this test. If everything go okay, we going to have a totally different life.’ The test was the most difficult experience... I did the test and I went home. I was sad and disappointed because I feel like I didn’t have a chance. I didn’t even want to wait for LAUSD to give the results, especially because there was only men working in the shop. And then... I get a phone call. You have no idea how it felt. I was screaming, jumping. When I saw my kids that night, it was like, ‘Yes. We did it. Yes.’”

From Duane Michaels:

“The whole reason why I wanted to learn how to play music came from the old Frankenstein movie. Frankenstein was out in the woods and the whole township was after him, you know, with the shovels and everything, and he was in the woods trying to run away. And that always stuck with me because, growing up, I got picked on so much. I don’t know what they thought, really. I was kind of in my own world. Some people would say, maybe, a little off center? Yeah. So, when I saw that spot in the movie where that old blind gentleman who lived out in the woods was sitting in his house by the fire and he was playing the violin and Frankenstein hears it and he almost gets tears in his eyes from the sound and he follows it and... the blind man hears someone at the door and he says, ‘Come on in,’ and he fixes tea and all this stuff – and I’m going, ‘Wow – the bow is going across the screen and it makes the monster cry and relax...’ and that was such an impression on me. And then years go by and I was at a swap meet and I saw a violin sitting there someone was selling and I said, ‘Yes, this is what I wanna do. I wanna play that violin.’”

TAKE IT FURTHER

If you'd like to learn more about the film or how to bring a free instrument loan and repair program to your community, here are some resources to help you get started.

Watch an interview with Porché Brinker and some of the filmmakers about how the movie was made!

“Meet Porché Brinker from *The Last Repair Shop*”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQ-8NOv5gCs>

Watch Again, Share, and Inspire

If you would like to share this with your families, city leaders, or school board, the producers have put the documentary on youtube, free of charge.

Watch Again Here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xttrkgKXtZ4>

Watch Kris Bowers, Ben Proudfoot, and Porché Brinker accept the Oscar for Best Documentary Short Film!

On stage: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxoR5CDXS6c>

Backstage: <https://abc.com/video/39b9dee4-cbaa-4cbb-8c0c-b9e7131c37b9>

“*The Last Repair Shop* wins Oscar for Best Documentary Short”

Monday, March 11, 2024 / ABC News

Read about winning the Oscar and watch behind the scenes footage from the awards

<https://abc7news.com/the-last-repair-shop-on-red-carpet-documentary-short-los-angeles-unified-school-district/14502261/>

Blue Skies for Children

This non-profit helps kids in Whatcom and Skagit Counties and has an “instrument loaner” program to help kids participate in their schools’ music programs.

<https://www.blueskiesforchildren.org/>

Donate an instrument!

<https://www.blueskiesforchildren.org/donate.html>

The Jazz Project

Interested in playing in a jazz band? The Jazz Project has lessons and youth programs, but also has a scholarship fund to help kids pay for lessons and afford instruments.

<https://jazzproject.org/scholarship-lesson-fund/>

Audition for the Mount Baker Youth Symphony or attend one of their concerts

<http://www.mbys.org/>

Get something else repaired for free!

Northwest Free Repairs meets at the Makerspace in Bellis Fair Mall on the 2nd and 3rd Sunday of every month from 1pm – 3:30pm AND at the Bellingham Public Library in the Skillshare area at 210 Central Avenue on the 2nd and 3rd Tuesday of every month from 4:30pm – 6:30pm. They fix small appliances, kitchen items, tools, electrical items, toys, space heaters, and more! Don’t bring anything grimy or containing gasoline or petroleum products. Safety first!

<https://www.bellingham.org/eventdetail/27436/northwest-free-repairs>