



**We**  
— are the —  
**Future**



Love is stronger  
than  
**HATE**



**COMMUNITY**

**WE THE FORGOTTEN ONES,**

**LET OUR VOICES BE HEARD**

By Ms. Abby and Mr. Patrick's 12th Grade Classes N, O, and P at International Community High School



**Power**  
To The  
**Peaceful**



Fight for  
**SOCIAL**  
**JUSTICE**



**Freedom**



**WE THE FORGOTTEN ONES,**

**LET OUR VOICES BE HEARD**

By Ms. Abby and Mr. Patrick's 12th Grade Classes N, O, and P at International  
Community High School

Behind the Book's mission is to develop engaged readers and writers in underserved NYC public schools by designing and delivering programs that are multi-disciplinary, culturally responsive, and promote deeper connections to books and their authors.

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Special thanks to spoken word artist Ameresoul for taking a break from his duties as a BtB Program Facilitator to coach these students on writing poetry.

In the interest of honoring student voice, Behind the Book presents students' work as received from the teacher.

This book was made possible by a generous grant from The Korein Foundation.

# DEDICATION

**Class N:** These poems are dedicated to the class of 2023 for their hard work and perseverance. Give them the strength to try working harder no matter how long and difficult the road might be. In order to be successful in accomplishing a goal, one must go through difficulties which make all the struggles worth it in the end. #HANG IN THERE, YOU'VE GOT THIS!!!!!!

**Class O:** This book is dedicated to all who are suffering and battling injustice in the world. This poetic art is intended to encourage those fighters who do not want to kneel in defeat, as well as those who need a little hope and support. We hope these poems touch your heart and inspire you to keep working to improve our society.

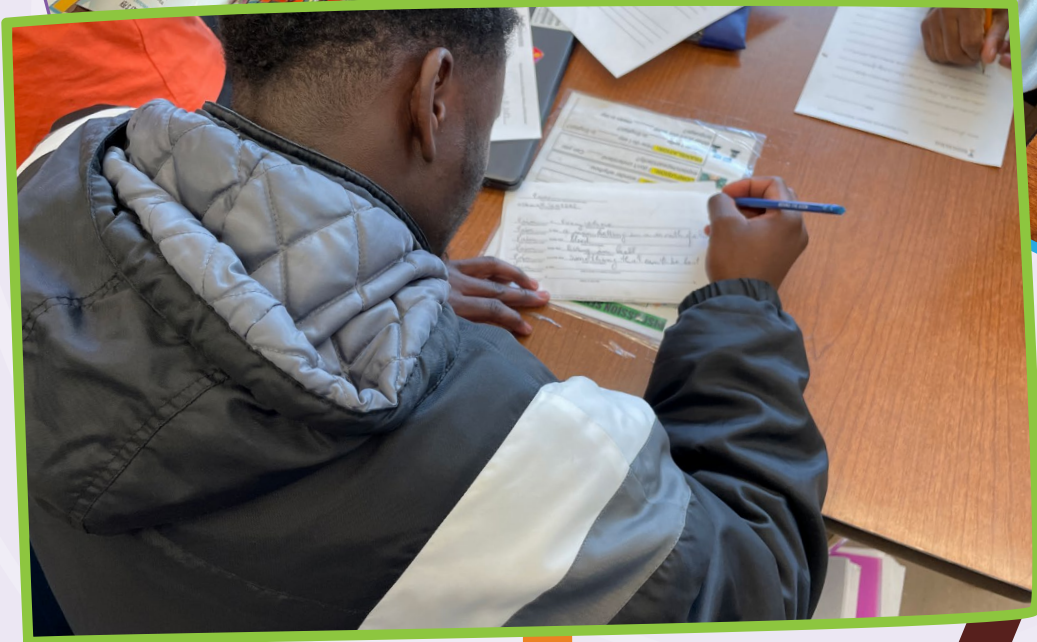
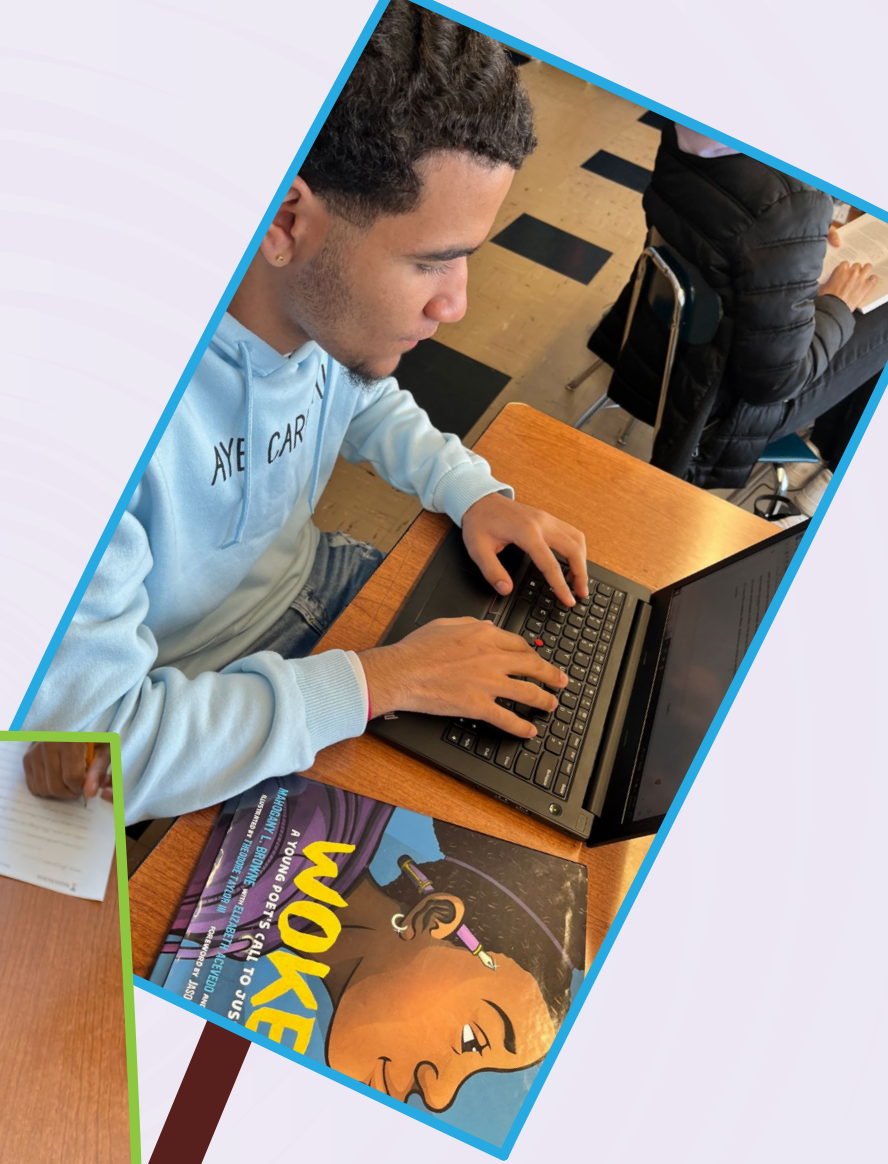
**Class P:** Class P dedicates this book to our inner self, the one we enjoy as children but hide for fear of being judged. We dedicate this book to a stereotyped society. We address this book to freedom, forgiveness, and progress.

# ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Individuality, freedom, and change are all closely linked and have an impact on our daily lives. Ms. To and Mr. Patrick's 12th grade classes at International Community High School explored all of these themes while reading *Woke* by Olivia Gatwood, Elizabeth Acevedo, and Mahogany L. Browne. This book is a collection of poems that begins an open-ended conversation about various social justice issues, prompting readers to add to the discourse. Students discussed and wrote poetry about concepts ranging between social justice, mental health, and acceptance. The program encouraged them to delve into how their individual identities affect the way that they experience different forms of freedom.

How does freedom granted or withheld play a role in stifling different communities? Inspired by Gatwood's passion during her visit to the school, many students chose a social justice issue that they felt connected to in order to write poetry describing the imperative nature of their issue and best ways to navigate it. Other students explored the difficulties of being their full self.

During art workshops, students used both theater and visual arts in order to further explore their identities in an inequitable world. They played drama games that allowed them to understand the ways in which individuals can work together to achieve a common goal. Through self portraits, students were able to examine the complexities of their identities. Through this art and writing, students were able to have a well-rounded understanding of the ways that freedom, individuality, and change are connected within the realm of social justice. Join the conversation by reading their perspectives!



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SUIGLY

# STEREOTYPE

Stereotype is judging individuals before knowing the real them

Stereotype is like saying are trees are lightly green but they are not

Stereotype is like a durian fruit which is ugly on the outside but sweet on the inside

Stereotype feels like losing a part of you and embracing the new you that people assumed of

Stereotype sounds like an explosion

Stereotype is like saying all Ocean are salty

Stereotype is assuming what people are not

We need to avoid stereotype to uncover the reality of people

We need to allow people to tell us who they are without judging them

We need to burn down stereotype to live like a flying bird

To change stereotype

You can educate yourself more to understand other race

We can treat an individual as a person rather than a group

Everyone can work together to end stereotype



*By Anisah*

# TRAUMA

Trauma is an emotional react to a terrible event  
Trauma is like the biggest fear to someone or something  
Trauma looks like an explosion of negative emotions  
Trauma feels like paralyzed and distraught  
Trauma sounds like phobia or a delicate injury  
Trauma is like the opposite of a joyful situation  
Trauma is the worst of emotions you could experience.

We need to talk about it  
We need to express more our feelings  
We need to stop struggling alone and accept help from others

To fight trauma,  
I can avoid trauma and fail  
You can gather you own power and fail  
We can fight back those bad experiences and success  
Everyone can defeat trauma, but remember you are not alone  
To fight trauma.



*By Anthony*

# WHAT THE COLOR TAKES

We are all born touching the ground

The ground that we all call home but  
a few feel unwelcoming but how can we call this home?

When some are called unacceptable can you still feel home?  
After being scorched down?

For the simple point of not being born with the same skin?  
Should that give you the brawn to point at me?

Is this how a sweet home should feel like?



*By Cristofe*

# SWEET HOME

Home is my nest against cold and  
hot weather

Home is like a sweet candy  
And a sour candy

For some, it's small or big  
For others, it's noisy and aggressive  
For me, it's calm and peaceful

Home is where love is built  
But not only love  
Hatred too

Violence, bullying, and storms make me  
feel like a leaf  
Easy to disappear  
Easy to beat

Home is my refuge

Home is the only place I feel safe

Sweet home is not always a bed of roses

But I keep going on and on

Memories built at home are the best

Because home has the best recipes

But we have to add our own taste too

Moving to a new home is like an earthquake

Rebuild everything that was destroyed

Create new memories

And adapt to a new home

Home is my only safety place

My sweet home,

I love it



*By Delfina*

# GUN VIOLENCE

Gun violence is a problem in our society  
Gun violence is like stealing people's lives  
Gun violence looks like hurting family  
Gun violence feels like anger, pain  
Gun violence sounds like killing people intentionally  
Gun violence is like taking people's lives  
Gun violence is not fair, shooting on innocent people for no reason  
We need to stop gun violence by protesting  
We need to fight for this kind of injustice  
We need to create a team to solve this problem  
To change gun violence

I can give a speech and ask for help from the government.  
You can email the mayor Erick Adams and let him know we suffering about Gun Violence  
We can work together to change this problem and save people's lives  
Everyone can fight this injustice by stopping selling guns to anyone.  
To end gun violence  
Change looks like solve the problem  
Change feels like freedom and happiness  
Change sounds like live in peace  
Change is to make something different



*By Ismatu*

# REALITY OF DEPRESSION

Depression is like having a hole in the soul,  
Some people can fill the hole,  
But other don't

Depression feel like trying to fill a bucket with water  
But the bucket has holes in it,  
Is like drive a boat in a thunderstorm,  
Is like a ton on top of you that  
Does not let you breath

Sometimes is a storm,  
It comes and it goes,

Sometimes disappeared,  
Sometimes doesn't

Having depression not a simple sadness,  
It is to feel hopeless,  
Senseless,  
And pointless existence

Understanding that is not their fault to feel this way,  
it is just how they react to thing in life  
Help is some way  
Set fire to the candle about to get out.



*By Jeiry*

# DON'T GIVE UP

Don't give up is don't stop until you win  
Reliance is like a lion  
Lion is like strength of don't give up  
Every day there are new challenge to face

Never allow ignorance  
Hate and envy  
and the negativity of some people  
Stop your desire to be a good person  
Y luchar por tus sueños

Remember that the only bad thing is  
the day  
Not all life  
Not giving up brings many successes to  
your life

When we give up  
We're letting our dreams fade away  
Don't give up and reclaim your dreams.



*By Jeison*



# MY SKIN COLOR IS BEAUTIFUL

My skin color is life, that anyone who sees it is amazed

My skin color is like the sunshine, striking

My skin color looks like cinnamon in arroz con leche

My skin color feels like touch a teddy bear

My skin color sounds like la negra tiene tumbao

My skin color is like chocolate

My skin color is life

We need to be proud of my skin color

We need to scream that

We need take advantage of

My skin color, your skin color are beautiful



*By Karla*

# LOVE YOURSELF

Your look in all time not changed,

Your principle as I know remained.

Your great clothes fit you well I liked.

Your courtesy with everyone is respected.

You deserve respect for being polite to everyone. Nobody judges you

My imagination drew your beauty without a flaw,

My thoughts are obsessed with your eyes that glow.

My mind called your look as flower and dew.



*By kazuki*

# CHANGE

To inequality and injustice

Life is like floating in the ocean, hearing the sound of the waves and feeling it, throwing you left and right to the point that you would sink if you give up. Life has ups and downs and we need to learn how to survive.

Equality is giving people the same opportunities.

Equality is like a utopian desire that we all strive for.

Equality looks like a lake as the water is placid and colored like roses.

Equality feels like hearing raindrops from your warm bed.

Equality sounds like the chant of the birds in the morning

Equality is like a heart made of gold

Equality is a word that can be defined up to the interpreter

We need to realize that we have so much in common than our differences

We need to know that equality isn't just between white and black, or male and female.

So to the rest we need to love each other and treat people the way you want to be treated. We all bleed the same.

We need to live life before life leaves us.

Equality is unachievable however that does not mean we should not strive for equality

Through equality there is love and unity.

We need to know that life is short and let's live it to the fullest.

What's more to life than happiness

despite the fact it comes and goes

let's live our life with a purpose and

leave a legacy on the next generation

I can spread awareness around the globe

You can be the change you want to see

We can work together to make it come true

Change looks like paradise in heaven

Change feels relaxed and relieved

Change sounds like drum beating at a festival that would get you jump and dance

Change is progress and change require a lot of things such as knowledge, dedication and generosity.

In order to change we need to put our phones down and be willing to listen to other people's stories, not going with the assumption or generalizing people.

We owe it to ourselves.



*By Mamadou*

# ABLEISM

Ableism is problem in the world in general  
Based on different skills.

Ableism is like discrimination  
And also stop the future of many people  
Who can show the wonder  
Of having different qualities.

Ableism is looks like two Apples  
That one is damaged on the outside  
And the other is not but when it comes  
to eating  
The one that is not damage is the one that  
is useless  
And the other is perfect in the same way  
People judge people just because they  
have qualities  
That makes them special.

Ableism feel like lonely  
No listened to no right  
And above all no courage to express oneself.

Ableism sound like depressing  
And discouraged.  
Ableism is like stuffed animals in a store  
Are the both worth the same but because one  
Has different quality people prefer to take  
the other  
And do not give the opportunity to experiences  
Something new.

Ableism is it to stop seeing the  
wonderful things  
That each person has and cling  
To the stereotype of society  
That does not leave them anything good.



*By Rosy*

# EDUCATION

Education is the key to success

Education is like providing stability in life

Education looks like learning for peace

Being educated feels like having power that no one can take away

Education sounds like freedom

We need to be educated

We need to help everyone get education

We need to fight for education

I can go to school

You can go to school

We can send our children to school

Everyone can get education anywhere



*By Moustapha*

# RACISM

Racism is discrimination when you are different. Racism is like watching ducks in a goose pond. Racism looks like a box of colored pencils. Racism feels like a smooth touch of cotton compared to a rock. Racism sounds like someone crying in the night for a bad day. Racism is like one person looking through the covered and dark window, and the other looking through where the sun and the green field can be seen. Racism compares two totally normal people.



*By Stojakovic*

# ABLEISM

Religion is like a flying dove  
Being christian is the part of me, the part of me  
That is a deep hole that no one understands.

People call us nicknames the clapping people  
How can they fight for justice when they are being unjust.

I'm fighting for justice and let my voice be heard as a storm.  
A storm that people can feel frozen to hear.  
I treat you like a flower, but you treat me as a little piece  
of garbage.

I believe in el padre, hijo y espíritu santo but you just  
judge me to let  
people make me feel like a poor dog. YOU said my  
religion doesn't help me

But it is the voice that helps me to treat you as a flower.  
Juan 13:34 said to me to love, LOVE YOU,  
How can I learn to love you? I rely on my religion to make  
you feel as a delicate baby.

I cannot be free to speak up, when my fear is stronger  
than my beliefs.

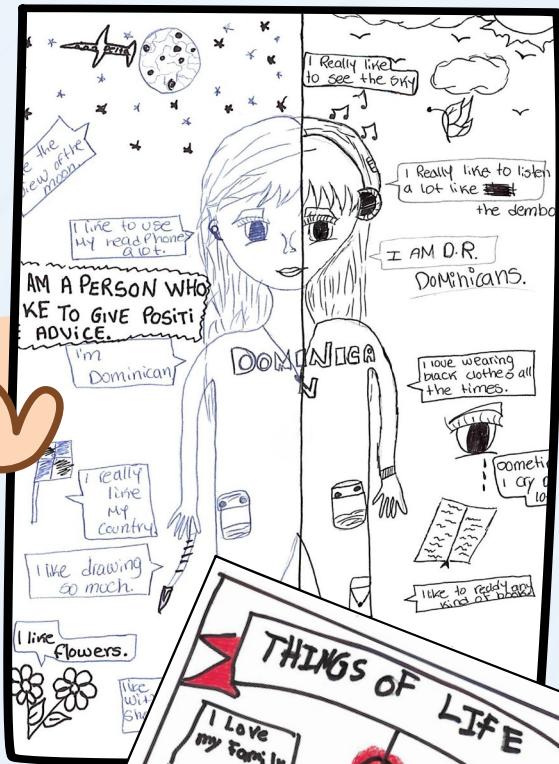
Where is JUSTICE when it comes to religion ? they put a  
blindfold on their eyes and act like they were blind.

Beautiful sunset and the shine of the sun that is to be  
admired as a Hollywood star, when my heart feels like  
in jail.

My people, my family are being unjust  
My people, my family are suffering



*By Suigly*







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# FAREWELL NEVERLAND

Neverland my love  
I say I'm sorry  
Cause I'm free falling  
Falling from a paradise that's full of lies.

No matter where I go  
Looking for home  
I can't find where I belong.  
Neverland, my paradise  
I say goodbye  
Cause you're not the land of dreams but  
The land of fallacies.  
Falling from my dream  
I can't find my Peter Pan.

My Peter Pan...  
Who's going to make my dreams come  
true  
I can't find my Peter Pan.  
So I keep falling.  
Farewell, my Neverland.

Because you were supposed to be the  
water of this flower.  
Helping me grow and survive.  
But now I'm like a cactus.  
I don't need water anymore.

Farewell Neverland  
Because you made me a slave of morfeus  
Farewell Neverland  
You keep me dreaming awake when my  
nightmares  
Where the ones coming alive.  
Farewell Neverland  
Because I don't wanna be a flower  
In a flower shop waiting for someone  
To choose me and let me die.  
Why be a flower when you can be a  
venus flight trap?  
Farewell Neverland  
Cause I'm almost touching the ground.  
So, farewell my Neverland.



*By Akira*

# WE ARE ALL THE SAME

Discrimination is treating a person differently, or less favorably, for some reason.

Discrimination is more akin to race, color, and sex.

Discrimination looks like perfect colors and imperfect colors.

Discrimination feels like anger, sadness, and shame.

Discrimination sounds like “less of a person.”

Do you think you are superior because of the color of your skin?

You better reflect because you are in a big mistake!

We are all the same with the same heart.

Africans, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Russians or Indians.

Gays, lesbians, tall, short, brown, blond, brown, fat, skinny, handsome, ugly, friends, cousins, brothers, all together through life we walk hand in hand.

The color of our skin is changed by a ray of sun, if the sun shines, the race or color does not matter.

Through the eyes of love, we are all equal, we are all one.



*By Anyeli*

# MY GIRL

I see you look toward the mourning dove in wonder.

I see how easily you fall into every moment as if it were the only one that ever existed.

I see how much you care for our planet and everything in it.

I see how much you crave the same love you so easily give away to the world.

You deserve all the love earth has to give my girl.



*By David*

# THE MONSTER THAT TORMENTS YOU

Sadness is a feeling that sits deep inside of you that comes and haunts you and makes you feel bad about yourself.

And sometimes you can feel like the loneliest person in the world and you can feel that you cannot get out of that sadness that affects you physically and mentally.

And sometimes you may have people around you, but maybe they walk away from you because you always live with something deep inside of you.

And you know that it affects you because your character is not the same as how they knew you before and now they see something different in you.

And it will reach a point where you yourself will seek help on your own.

And you have to take strength and courage and bravery and remind yourself that you can and that if you can get out of that tormenting void.

And remember that you are also human and it's okay to be bad and it's okay to feel sad sometimes and it's okay to walk away for a moment because of certain things that affect your health and your thoughts.

But I remind you that when you seek the necessary help you need, you will feel like the freest and happiest person in the world.

And I remind you that you are also human and that sometimes we will have ups and downs but believe me that everything happens for a purpose and everything will be fine.

And at the end of your life you will see and feel different and very happy and everything was left behind and now you will be a new and very happy person. I trust you and if you succeed.



*By Estefany*

# GUN VIOLENCE

## **Gun violence is**

violence using guns  
Killing people  
People dying  
Fear to be killed  
Fear to live your house

## **Gun violence is like walking in fire**

I saw people  
Children crying to stay alive  
Every day  
People are killed with guns  
Gun violence we don't need you no more  
We're tired  
Tired to see blood  
Blood around us  
Absolutely nothing  
Nothing good ever comes from gun violence  
The crime is yours and the crying is ours.

## **Gun Violence look like hanging a person**

Gun violence feels like melting lava from the volcano.  
Gun violence sounds like earthquake  
Gun violence is like hellfire  
Gun violence is useless death.

## **We need to protect kids not guns**

We need to protect kids not killing them  
We need to protect their future, not end it.

## **To end gun violence**

I can make a promise to myself.  
*I promise to do all I can to protect children from  
gun violence  
by encouraging  
supporting  
solutions that create safer,  
healthier homes,  
schools  
communities*

To end gun violence  
You can make a promise too  
We can protest  
Everyone can stop gun violence

## **To end gun violence**

Change looks like utopia  
Change feels like victoryyyyyyyyyyy  
Change sounds like paradise  
Change is no more guns.



*By Hezou*





*By Karen*

Stereotypes are making conclusions of a person on the first look.

Stereotypes is walking through somebody's body

Judging without a realistic you

Is throw silence rocks that you actually can heard

Stereotypes sounds like an miserable way of enjoy life

You, we,them , us need to keep our comments to yourself,

being healthy is shows from the heart,

from growing and glowing to living

# IMMIGRATION

To leave your home in search to support your family means learning about other cultures and meeting people who occasionally lead a hand to you, while others try to take advantage of you. Immigration is starting a new line from scratch like a baby starting from the ground up, so you can move forward. Another issues is not knowing which path to take, the police purpose you as if you were a colon for trying to immigrate to a country that is not your own in search of better life and employment for yourself. It's tough to see that suffering is necessary for having a better life.



*By Lizbeth*

# FEAR

Fear is feeling alone  
Fear is like a dark night  
Fear looks like a light that goes out  
Fear feels like sad  
Fear sounds like a storm  
Fear is like shadow  
Fear is a feeling clinging that you have no way out.

We need to meditate  
We need to analyze  
We need to talk to someone you trust.

To people who are afraid,  
I can tell my experience  
You can talk to a person  
We can motivate to a person  
Everyone can support each other  
To feel brave.

Change looks like calm  
Change feels like peace  
Change sounds like silence  
Change is feeling that you are a new person.



*By Maria Inés*

# THE PAIN

Pain is Everywhere,

Pain is like a man getting chew in a

mouth of a lion,

Pain looks like a wound that will never heal,

Pain feel like your soul and your heart getting burnt  
in Hell,

Pain sound like screaming,

Pain is like a stone breaking bones in your body,

Pain is traumatic,

We need to stay strong and fight it without panic,

We need to cry sometime to let go,

We need to pretend like everything is fine sometime,

It once says before, Pain is Inevitable but suffering  
is optional.



*By Mbarak*

# INEQUALITY

Inequality is a wheelbarrow, connected. The wheelbarrow has to have a tire, the container has to be contained and then pushed by a person from point A to B. It is so connected. It connects to a point.

If it is set apart the wheelbarrow is of no use, it turns into a mere object like money. Money gets its value from people or it is no different to a piece of paper if there was only one person living in this universe. The wheelbarrow cannot be overloaded It can only take the specific amount of burden it is designed for. As human beings, we are created to give the same amount of values to one another. If one gets too many privileges compared to the rest, it is like an overloaded wheelbarrow.

An overloaded wheelbarrow more than it can take cannot move; it will spend the rest of its time crawling.

Inequality feels like 12 months of rain and 12 months of no sunnier days. It is being on the same team as the devil coached by hatred and selfishness while your opponent is the privileged ones that are benefiting from your difficulty.

I had seen firsthand people in my community, as they cross the road, they would be shouted at by a word that promotes hatred. Unlike the ones who jaywalk are in no trouble, the privileged ones.

Inequality was an island contained by a select group of people, the privileged ones. If the nearer people to the island get close to the edge to drink water, they would get bitten by guard dogs.

The people in my community are judged not by their intelligence or what they can offer but based on how they are categorized, where they are assigned to.



*By Moussa*

# TRAUMA (I'VE BEEN THERE BEFORE)

Trauma is a mental problem  
Trauma is like lose your identity  
Trauma looks like wasp pick you again  
Trauma feels like when you fall because of a little rock

Trauma sound like silent

Trauma is like scared for the dark  
Trauma is a mental problem

We need to understand why we have a trauma  
We need to get help from professional people  
We need to reflect about the situation

To end trauma  
I can reflex and fight with my problem  
You can talk with her or she  
We can try need things like a sport  
Everyone can talk with a familiar  
To fight trauma.



*By Raul*

# GUN VIOLENCE

What is the essence of gun violence?  
My worries every day,  
Security, safeness, do these feelings still exist?  
I am wondering about them, because of the  
existence of Gun violence,  
People die,  
People are losing their family member,  
Innocents live are taking away for no reason,  
Everything due to what?  
Gun violence,

Why do people practice it? Why does the  
government allow the use of guns?  
Is the NYPD doing their duty of protecting?  
Of course, police are doing their job,  
But more than 500 people die every day  
because of violence committed with firearms  
The only assistance is that the hand is at of  
own heart  
The only guiding light comes from your heat  
Less, support gun violence



*By Roukiatou*

# GUNS VIOLENCE

Guns they say that knives can kill but that is not  
the purpose  
Everytime there is bloodshed  
Everytime a heart is stabbed  
Many more mothers moan  
The sounds of destruction  
Oh there is so much violence,  
When will the anger ever stop  
Some crazy kills our children, And a thug then kills  
some cop.  
Violence on the street, Kids killed in schools,  
Even cops on the beat.

Overpowers the voice of those  
Who are innocent  
Who suffer with no reason  
Who beg for life  
Who have heart full of innocence  
One day I will help my community for protection  
You have to find  
Your own true your voice  
Take it or leave it, it's your choice.  
The only helping hand is at the end of your own arm  
The only guiding light comes from your own heart.  
I feel like protecting my community to feel safe.



*By Sirandou*



# LIFE IS LOVE, AND LOVE IS LIFE

Life is life, however it would go

Love is love, no matter what would occur

Love is growing more with every heartbeat

Feelings of my heart could never change love is life,  
life is love you can enjoy them as much as you want...



*By Titash*

# TRAUMA IS JUST AN OBSTACLE, DON'T STOP

I have lost my eyes for not seeing you and my mouth is straight without  
your name, my hand touches the stone inert.

Wait for the caresses that the silence amazes her, it is that it comes and  
lasts, because I am only a man.

They offer me a displaced sky.

A sky without my horizon and A Cross marked by stars makes my chest  
beat for its north.

I do not know the voices that stalk me. I resist, and I recognize each Blow.

This is at a time when I don't want to see anyone there, I just want to be  
fine and not be here.



*By Yiseiry*

# METEORITE IN SPACE

Identity is a puzzle with no end and no beginning  
Identity is like a flower in a garden with lot different flowers  
Identity looks like a wall without colors something that  
you paint  
Identity feels like a rock that you sculpt  
Identity sounds like a melody that sounds interesting  
Identity is like a pen in front of a empty paper  
Identity is like a empty space when the bigbang happened

We need to understand that we have bad and good we are  
a yin and yang

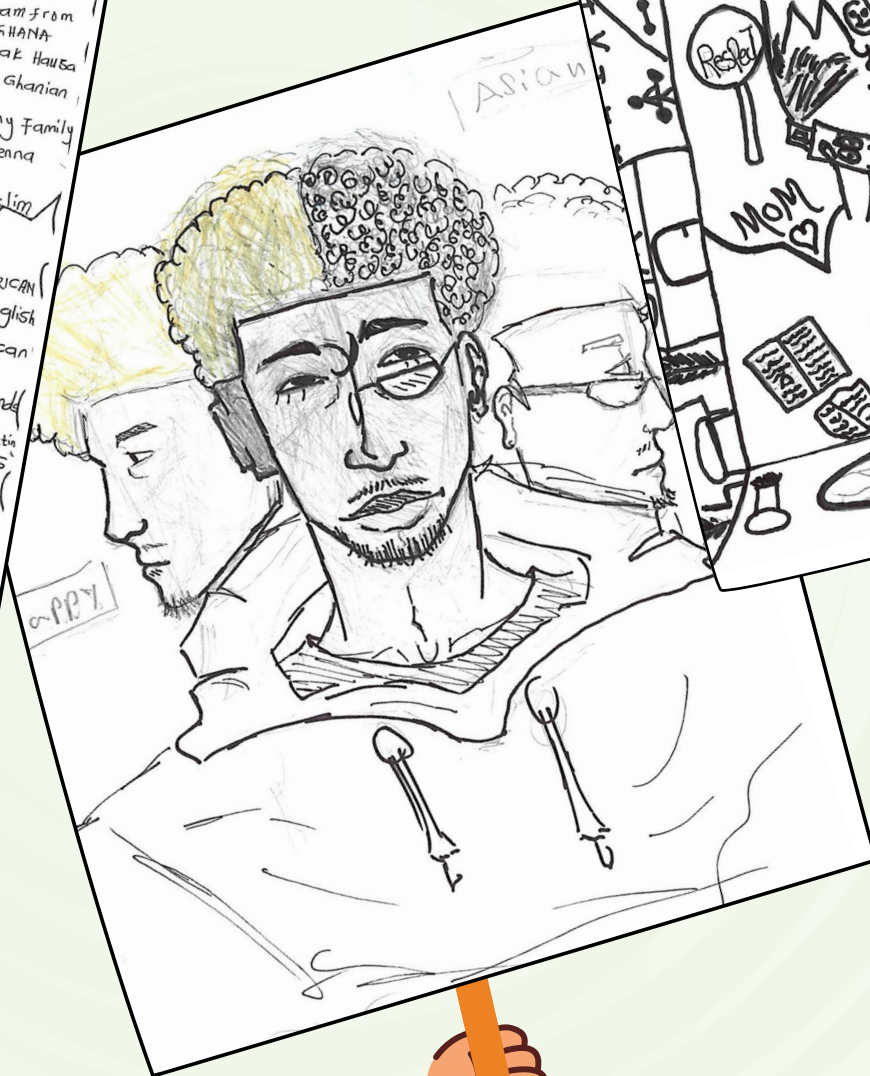
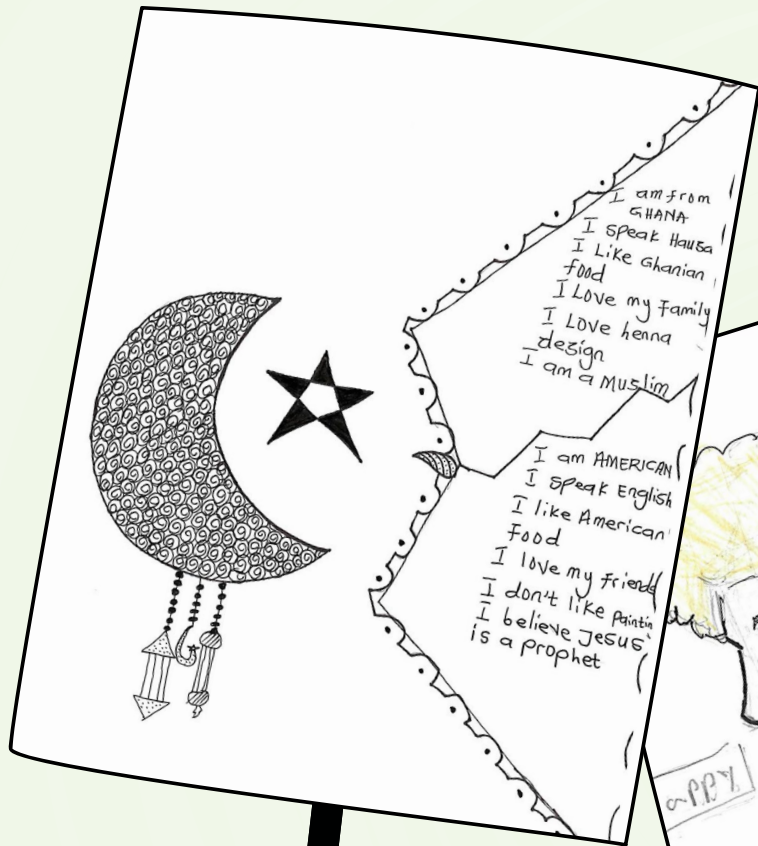
We need to understand that events don't describe you  
but lead you to understand yourself better  
We need to fight our fears to understand  
ourselves better.

To challenge ourselves

I can create a statue  
you can find yourself like a pirate looking for a treasure  
We can motivate each other.  
Everybody can fight the night so the next day can shine.



*By Yordy*





CLASS

P



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# DISTRUST

We need to seguir adelante, ellos nos dejan para poder sacar adelante.

To terminar Desconfianza  
I can comunicarme más con ellos para terminar la desconfianza you can tratar de platicar sobre nosotros lo que ellos piensan we can hablar y contarles todo y tener confiar en ellos Change feels like hablar con ellos y decirles las cosas que no le gustan y decir que te digan las cosas que ellos les gusta a les molesta

Distrust is not knowing people as they are and not knowing what they think  
Mistrust looks like seeing my parents and not

recognizing them, being confused when I see them and mistrusting not being able to see them for many years. I feel bad because I could never see them when I wanted to see them.

We need to move on they leave us to be able to move forward

To end Distrust  
I can communicate more with them to end the mistrust you can try to talk about us what they think we can talk and tell them everything and trust them

Change feels like talking to them and telling them the things you don't like and telling them to tell you the things they like to bother you



*By Eduardo*



# AT THE END WE ARE NEVER LONELY

Feel lonely is when you think no one is there for you

Feel lonely is like be in the space

Feel lonely looks like the flower out the water

Feel lonely feels like you're drowning

Feel lonely sounds like the water of the ocean running

Feel lonely is like a weight on your stomach

We need to have a friend

We need to feel love

We need to feel the heat of someone

To fight the loneliness

I can show the world that there is always someone to support you

You can run away to find your space

We can be compassion with each other

Everyone can put in the shoes of

others, give what you want to receive

It can be close

Or far away

But there will be always someone to hear you

To love you

To hug you

To end loneliness



*By Elaine*

# TRAUMA

Hi, today my topic is about trauma . people think that when you're having a bad moment their laughter because the people laugh at others when they see the other person past a bad moment...

at if a person has trauma from something that happened to him in his life, I think it is important that he tell that person that he is not alone because I think it is important that if he is going through a bad time, it is better that he tell him that He is there to help him because he is not alone.



*By Jeyson*

# THE TRUTH ABOUT POVERTY

Poverty is a lack of resources,  
Poverty is a plague,  
Poverty is a hive of bees,  
Poverty feels like a parasite,  
Poverty sounds like a scream of desperation  
Poverty is like a cave full of snakes  
Poverty is disappointment,  
We need to eliminate this nightmare from our minds,  
We need to confront this truth with positivity.  
To fight poverty,  
I can use my voice as a weapon to fight,  
We can put drops of water to fill the empty pond,  
Change looks like to birds singing in the morning,  
Change looks like people smiling because they are healthy.



*By Jose*

# INJUSTICE

Injustice is something that looks when someone does something unfair.

Injustice is like when someone does something unfair.

Injustice looks like when somebody does something that is not right but they think it is.

Injustice feels like when someone is denied a job because of their skin color or their background education.

Injustice sounds like something unfair.

Injustice is like discrimination against the helpless.

Injustice is something that looks when someone does something unfair.

We need to stop people who like to do a lot of stuff unfair to others.

We need to let people know that when somebody makes something unfair that is called injustice.

We need to battle injustice with justice and pride.

To change injustice, I can protest to stop injustice.

You can take my hand and walk with me.

We can fight together.

Everyone can protest to stop injustice.

To change injustice.

Change like every skin color united.

Change feels like being free.

Change sounds like the national anthem.

Change twists the injustice in the world.

Injustice will end when we all change our mind.



*By Kahori*

# INMIGRACION

Inmigración es cuando una persona huye de su país por problemas para buscar oportunidad en otros países, inmigración se siente como una persona se siente triste confundido al estar en un país que no conoce y al no saber las culturas y el idioma y al no tener a su familia cerca, inmigración es como una persona viaja a otro país para buscar oportunidades y una mejor forma para vivir y darle una mejor vida a su familia y aprender nuevas cosas como nueva cultura y nuevo idioma.

Nosotros necesitamos acostumbrarnos una nueva vida fuera de nuestro país y lejos de nuestra familia, nosotros necesitamos seguir adelante, continuar avanzando y progresar a pesar de las malas situaciones y debemos superar cualquier obstáculo o dificultad y no detenernos en el camino.

Yo puedo acostumbrarme a las nuevas costumbres y tratar de aprender el idioma que hablan en el país Tu Puedes escuchar la historia por la cual tuvo que pasar para llegar a un nuevo país.



*By Kevin*

# POVERTY

Poverty is not having enough money to buy food and clothing and shelter.

Poverty is like a unhappy child and a sick children and families without economic resources.

Poverty feels like being hungry all day long.

Poverty sounds like a stomach full of air lacking food.

Poverty is like a hurricane destroying everything on its way.

Poverty is not having enough money to buy food, clothing and shelter.

We need to ask for help from those who are wealthy to share.

We need to donate money to organizations to help the poor.

We need to be more empathetic to avoid poverty in the world.

To change poverty  
I can raise my voice to the rich for help.  
You can hold my hand and join my cause.  
We can bring smiles to the poor.  
Everyone can be one to fight poverty.

To change poverty  
Change looks like more happier children running around.  
Change feels like rejoicing when the bellies are full.  
Change sounds like laughter because they just ate.

Change is necessary to end poverty.

Poverty will end when our mind starts to think and take action about it.



*By Nefin*

# DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is something that affects many people, discrimination is like a burden that some people carry on their shoulders, discrimination looks like a broken shoe, discrimination feels like a being abandoned of their privileges, discrimination sounds like whispers between the walls, discrimination is like a scar that your always carry with you, discrimination is pain in your heart.

We need to more people with love  
We need to more acceptance between us and what is different  
We need to understand that everyone has a history.

To fight discrimination  
I can learn more about other people  
You can be ally to support  
We can be aware of the issue  
Everyone can be one all together  
To fight discrimination.

Change looks like a community united and supporting each other  
Change feels like the freedom to be yourself wherever you go  
Change sounds like joy and laughter all together  
Change is love and peace.



*By Raquel*

# FREEDOM

Freedom is liberty since we are born.

Freedom is like liberty of speech.

Freedom look like keep our eyes on the prize.

Freedom feel like a goal you achieve.

Freedom sound like a song we should all be able to sing.

Freedom is like a bird flying around and surrounding us.

Freedom is a feeling to feel everywhere you go.

We need to bend our strength.

We need to reach out to the earth or clouds to be heard.

We need to make everyone sum to this cause.

To change Freedom

I can show up, and scream my right.

You can sum to us and finally overcome the battle.

We can together be the leader and made the world better.

Everyone can have the right of freedom and don't be scared.

About who we are say our names louder.

To fight Freedom.



*By Rudy*





*By Wailyn*

Discrimination is judging a person by just seeing their personality,  
Discrimination Looks like a destroyed work of art, Discrimination Feels  
like a destroyed book, Discrimination is judging a person by their skin  
color or race

We need to More education to know how you treat people  
We need to have a better heart to understand others  
We need to More humility to help others more

To Change, Topic Discrimination  
I acne help a person if they are being discriminated against  
You can be more humble, be more understanding, have a good heart

To Change Topic Discrimination

# IMMIGRATION

Immigration is when a new person arrives in a country and does not know a language. Distrust feels like When a person does not know a language, they feel sad and may miss their country. We need to what we can do is move on because no one was born knowing. We need to what we can do is educate our colleagues to fight for their dreams. I can what you can do is fight for my dreams to learn a new language. You can see a person who can help me solve that problem with a new language. We can all unite so you can achieve your dreams.



*By Wilbert*

# POBREZA

Pobreza es cuando pasas diversidades  
Pobreza es como cuando no tienes donde vivir  
Pobreza es no tener trabajo  
Pobreza es como no tener dinero  
Pobreza para comprar alimentos

Nosotros necesitamos tener un buen trabajo  
para poder mantener un hogar  
y pagar necesidades que nos afectan en la vida cotidiana

Para combatir la pobreza

Todos pueden por empezar de cero por ejemplo teniendo  
un buen trabajo un hogar administrar bien el dinero en  
cosas necesarias y que nos beneficien en nuestras vidas

El cambio es cuando las cosas que te dificultan antes estan  
desapareciendo ahora estan mejorando y tomando sentido.

Poverty is when you pass diversities  
Poverty is like when you have nowhere to live  
Poverty is not having a job  
Poverty is like not having money  
Poverty to buy food

We need to have a good job  
to keep a home  
and pay for needs that affect us in daily life

To fight poverty

Everyone can start from scratch, for example, having a  
good job, a home, managing money well for necessary  
things that benefit us in our lives.

Change is when the things that made it difficult for you  
before are disappearing, now they are improving and  
making sense.



*By Yessika*

# JUDGING PEOPLE

Judging is when people label you as someone you are not .

Judging is like Steve .

Juzgar look like cómo te ves antes los ojos de los demás .

Judging feels sad , stressful and traumatized .

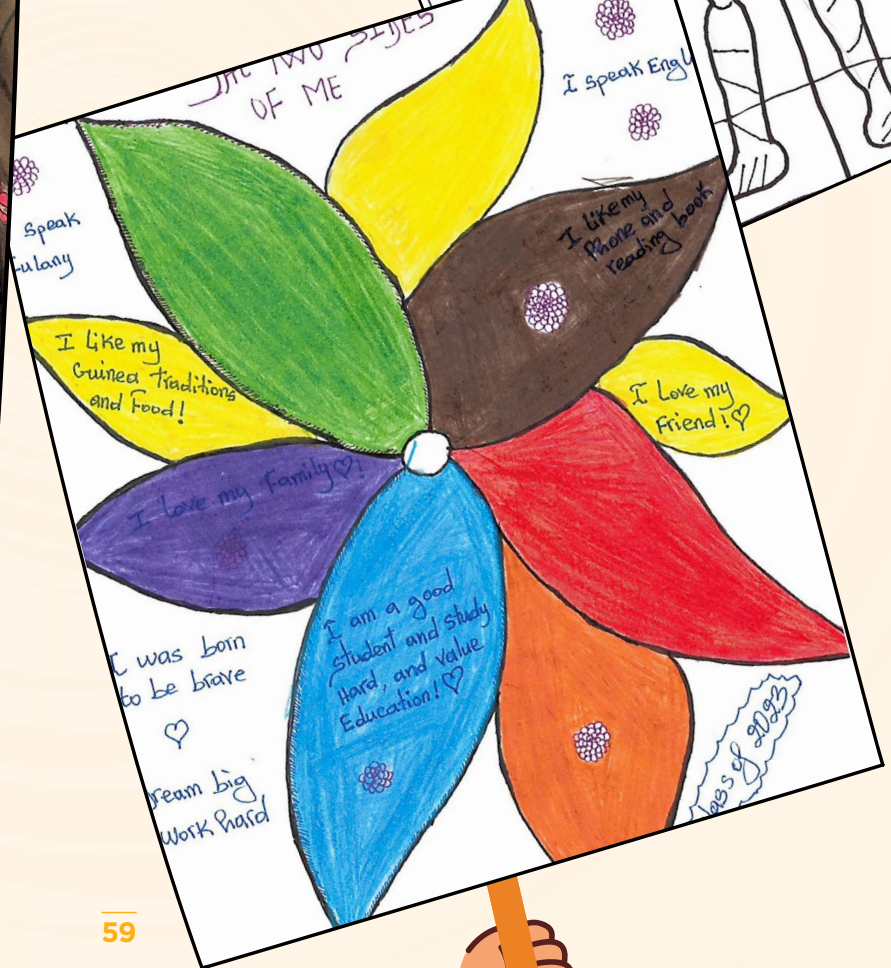
Juzgar sounds like te ves una mala persona.

We need to conocer antes de juzgar a la persona .

we need to creo que mi opinión afectará a la otra persona por esto pensaré antes de decirlo.



*By Yimeiris*



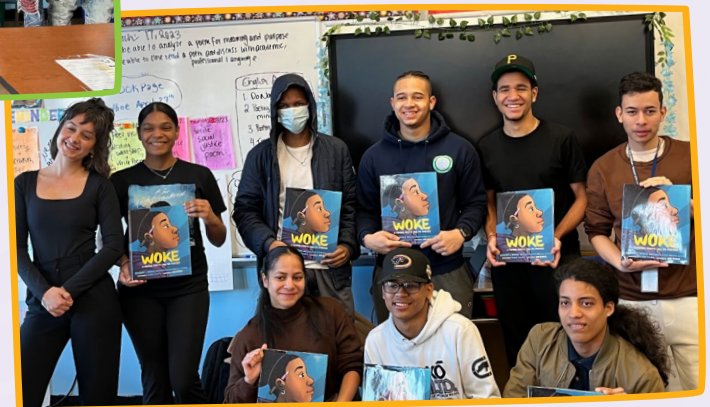
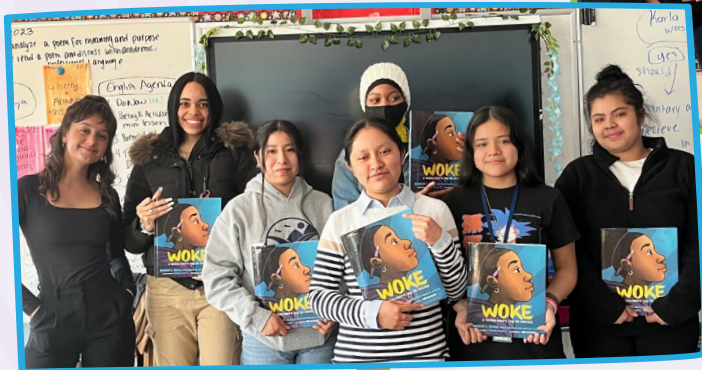
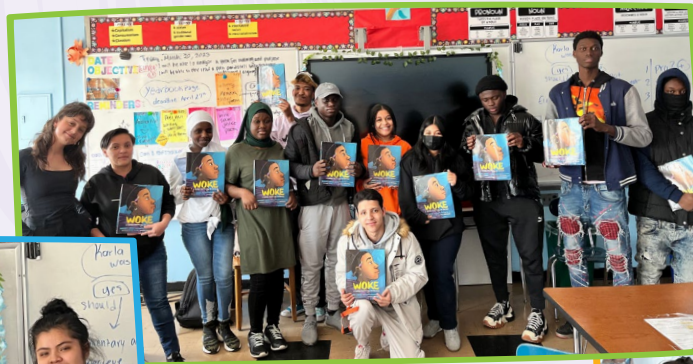
# ABOUT THE VISITING AUTHOR

Originally from Albuquerque, New Mexico, Olivia Gatwood has received international recognition for her poetry, writing workshops, and work as a Title IX Compliant educator in sexual assault prevention and recovery. Her work historically focuses stories about young womanhood as a site for obsession, intimacy, and hysteria, often pulling from horror and surrealism to depict a coming of age. Olivia's spoken word performances have been featured on HBO, Huffington Post, MTV, VH1, and BBC among others. Her poems have appeared in The Poetry Foundation, Sundance Film Festival, Lambda Literary, and The Missouri Review, among others. She is the author of two poetry collections, *New American Best Friend* and *Life of the Party*. She is the co-writer of the film *The Governesses*. Her debut solo novel, *Whoever You Are, Honey*, will be released in 2023.



# ABOUT THE STUDENT AUTHORS

Classes N, O, and P are a kind, passionate, and creative group of 12th grade students who attend International Community High School in the Bronx, New York. These students embody diversity; they come from all over the world, bringing with them their many languages, different religions, and beautiful cultures. They respect each other, learn from each other, and help each other grow. These students are powerful, capable forces of positivity, change, and empathy, and always celebrate the best in themselves and others. Classes N, O, and P are unforgettable and unstoppable.



# ABOUT BEHIND THE BOOK

Behind the Book brings authors and their books into classrooms to build literacy skills and foster a community of lifelong readers and writers. Working with classes from Pre-K through 12th grade, our series of workshops is designed to bring books to life and inspire students to reach their full potential. Behind the Book is embedded in the class curriculum, nurtures critical thinking, creativity, and self-confidence in New York City public school students. All programs meet the Next Generation Learning Standards. The staff who has been behind the books this school year include: Executive Director Andrew Frank, Director of Programs Anmarie Paul, Program Manager & Volunteer Coordinator Alexandra Berndt, Program Administrator Kelly Choi, Curriculum Developers Keturah Abdullah and Roya Nabizadeh, Program Facilitators Tatiana Colgin, Amere Cortijo, Shirly Hernandez, and Elizabeth Valentín, Program Interns Avanti Tulpule, Kaylee Young-Eun Jeong, and Grace Riginos, Director of Development Amanda Carr, Development Manager Roshana Nabi, Operations Manager Christy Hood, Marketing and Communications Strategist Vivian Cruz-Rivera, and Student Book Art Director Adriana Moreno.



**Behind the Book**



# NEXT GENERATION

# LEARNING STANDARDS

**RL 8.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings.

**RL8.5:** Compare and contrast the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text(e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

**RL8.10:** By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature including stories, dramas, and poems.

**W.8.4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**W 8.5:** With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

**L.8.6:** Acquire and use accurately grade appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases: gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression



**Behind the Book**



BtB empowers the next generation of readers and writers by nurturing critical thinking, creativity, and self-confidence in our students.



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