

Sosúa: Making a Better World

Video Viewing Guide



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ABOUT THE FILM:

Sosúa: *Make a Better World* tells the story of Jewish and Dominican teenagers at the Washington Heights and Inwood YM+YWHA in New York City, who together with the legendary theater director, Liz Swados, put on a musical about the Dominican rescue of 800 Jews from Hitler's Germany. Award winning filmmakers Peter Miller and Renée Silverman interweave an intimate, behind-the-scenes portrait of the making of the theater production, and a portrait of a diverse neighborhood, with this little-known Holocaust story.

Through the young actors' eyes, we are introduced to a morally complex history in which the Dominican dictator, Rafael Trujillo – a murderous strongman – , took in the Jews, largely because they were white. At the same time, he was also murdering tens of thousands of Haitians because they were not. The film draws on rare archival images to illustrate the little-known Dominican rescue effort from newsreel clips of FDR's Evian Conference and evocative shots of boatloads of refugees in New York harbor to scenes of working and domestic life in the rural Dominican outpost of Sosúa where the Jews launched their new lives.

But the main story lies in the present. Over the course of the film, we are engrossed by the alchemy of the cast members who come together in making the musical. We see a disparate group of young, untested, talented Dominican and Jewish kids who through dancing, singing, crying, and creating theater together, form new bonds forged on old ties.

In a neighborhood where Jews and Latinos live side by side but rarely interact, Sosúa: *Make a Better World* charts the teens' extraordinary journey of discovery of what unites them – both in the past and in the present.

VIEWING GUIDE GOALS:

1. Engage young people in discussions surrounding how the past offers a way to unite the present.
2. Participate in learning activities that have the potential to bridge cultural and socioeconomic divides.
3. Demonstrate the power of theater as a catalyst for change.
4. Provide young people with opportunities to take action in their communities.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

The Sosúa: *Making a Better World Video Viewing Guide* was created with educators in mind and provides teachers with multiple learning activity options that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Other features include Key Terms, themes for considerations inquiry questions, and Key Understandings. Teachers can choose to engage students in all activities comprised in this viewing guide or select specific activities for lesson plans.

Before viewing the film, in order to build background knowledge, students will engage in pre-viewing activities. The pre-viewing activities are intended to increase students' understanding of the background history of Sosúa and the Jewish refugees who settled there, the significance of the Evian conference, profiles of world leaders during this time period, and connections between the past and present.

Teachers are encouraged to have students view the 54 minutes film in segments. Learning activities should follow after each film segment.

The Post-Viewing section will provide students with the opportunity to apply what they have learned by participating in a community building project, researching the story of an immigrant or migrant, in order to create a memory box or digital scrapbook, or researching the story of a refugee and sharing their experience through a monologue. Teachers can choose one or many of the projects listed in this section of the viewing guide.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions. (Middle School)
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-12.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text and make clear the relationships among the key details and ideas. (High School)
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7: Integrate visual information (e.g., charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts. (Middle School)
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as writerly) in order to address a question or solve a problem. (High School)
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners building on others' ideas, and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

KEY TERMS:

- *Dictator*: A person who rules a country with total authority often in a cruel and brutal way.
- *Emigration*: To leave one country or a region to settle in another.
- *Refugee*: Someone who has been forced to leave a country because of war or religious or political reasons.
- *Kibbutzim/Kibbutznik*: A communal settlement in Israel; A member of a kibbutz.
- *Tolerance*: Willingness to accept feelings, habits, or beliefs that are different from your own.
- *Discrimination*: The practice of unfairly treating a person or group of people differently from other people or groups of people.
- *Racial Superiority*: The belief that some particular group or race is superior to all others.
- *Sabbath*: The seventh day of the week observed from Friday evening to Saturday evening as a day of rest and worship by Jews and some Christians. It precludes all work which some observant Jews define by not turning on or off electricity.
- *Passover*: A Jewish holiday in March or April that celebrates the freeing of the Jews from slavery in Egypt.
- *Chanukah*: A winter holiday commemorating the victory of a small band of Jews, the Maccabees, over the Greeks, and the subsequent reclamation and rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem in 165 BC. Jews traditionally celebrate the holiday by lighting eight candles on a candelabra known as a menorah. In the United States, the holiday has come to symbolize the struggle for religious freedom and the importance of spreading light and faith in times of darkness.

PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES (Three (3) Instructional Days)

Theme: Understanding the Past, Present, and Future

Inquiry Question: How does the past effect the present and shape the future?

Key Understandings:

- Examining the past helps us to better understand the present.

- Through the study of history, we can determine how the past has effected the present and will shape the future.

ACTIVITY ONE: Photos Analysis

Divide students up into small groups and have them analyze one of the six photographs using the NARA Photo Analysis Worksheet to respond to the following questions:

1. Based on what you have observed in the photograph, list three things you might infer about life in Sosúa.
2. What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?

To access the NARA Photo Analysis Worksheet, click on the following link:

http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/photo_analysis_worksheet.pdf

Photographs:

- Photograph 1: A Family in Sosúa
http://www.Sosúanews.com/news_pictures/2008/09/30-9_hess_6.jpg
- Photograph 2: Settler on the Beach
<http://www.mjhnyc.org/Sosúa/photo5.htm>
- Photograph 3: Land Development
<http://www.mjhnyc.org/Sosúa/photo3.htm>
- Photograph 4: Synagogue
<http://www.mjhnyc.org/Sosúa/photo10.htm>
- Photograph 5: Horse Children
<http://forward.com/workspace/assets/images/articles/horsechildren-060508.jpg>
- Photograph 6: Sosúa Settlers
<http://www.mjhnyc.org/Sosúa/photo6.htm>

ACTIVITY TWO: Sosúa's History

Have students read the background essay, *Sosúa* and complete the Summarizing Graphic organizer. To access the Summarizing Graphic organizer click on the following link:

http://teacher.scholastic.com/reading/bestpractices/vocabulary/pdf/sr_allgo.pdf

Background Essay: Sosúa

Founded in 1938 as a haven for Jews escaping Nazi persecution, Sosúa was an isolated settlement on the coast of the Dominican Republic that offered refuge to approximately 800 German, Austrian and Polish Jews from 1940 - 1945.

The proposal to settle Jews in Sosúa emerged from the 1938 Evian Conference, convened by President Franklin Roosevelt in response to the growing Jewish refugee crisis in Europe. Among the 39 nations attending, the Dominican dictator, Rafael Trujillo, was the only one to come forward with an offer to accept one hundred thousand Jewish refugees. Trujillo's offer was an especially generous in relation to the general population as there were - all told - about only 1.6 million people living in the Dominican Republic at that time.

A murderous and racist dictator, Trujillo's offer to rescue Jews stemmed from his desire to improve his international reputation after the "Parsley Massacre" of 1937 in which an estimated 20,000 Haitians were slaughtered at the Haitian/Dominican border. It is called the "Parsley Massacre" because the Haitians and the Dominicans were so blended that their ethnicity was determined by how one pronounced the Spanish word for 'parsley'. The Haitians who couldn't roll their "r's" in Spanish were killed.

In addition to redeeming his image, Trujillo was also said to be interested in "whitening" the general population of the DR, with the expectation that the young single men among the Jewish refugees would marry Dominican women. While the entire world was evolving toward restrictive immigration policies and created barriers against Jewish refugees, the Dominican Republic represented a rare exception. Still, racism was also an underlying principle for Dominican immigration policy, but Jews, in this instance, "passed" the fictitious color line and were welcomed on the condition that they become agricultural workers. The Joint Distribution Committee, an American Jewish organization, created the Dominican Republic Settlement Association (DORSA) and funded it to purchase 26,000 acres of an abandoned banana plantation in Sosúa.

Initially, the settlement struggled. The European refugees needed a period of adjustment to the semi-tropical climate of the island. Tomatoes, the first crop chosen for commercial exploitation, proved unattractive to the local Dominican population. The colony appeared to be headed for disintegration. DORSA imported experts from kibbutzim in Palestine to teach the settlers communal agriculture. The kibbutzniks helped build a communal meat processing plant and a butter and cheese factory. By October 1941, the Nazi Germany had cut off Jewish emigration from occupied Europe. A trickle of refugee settlers continued to arrive in the Dominican Republic, despite the fact that the American entry into the war made it even harder to cross the Atlantic. By 1944, the settlement in Sosúa began to thrive as the colonists focused on raising cattle, and on butter and cheese production.

All told, the Dominican Republic saved the lives of about three thousand Jewish refugees, at times by merely granting them a visa. In addition to the refugees who settled in Sosúa, about two thousand Jews passed through the Dominican Republic before arriving at their final destination, the United States. Trujillo, in tandem with American Jewish organizations, would have welcomed many more refugees were it not for the lack of support of the United States during the war. Today, thousands world wide can trace their family heritage to the Jews of Sosúa.

Sosúa: *Make A Better World*, <http://Sosúafilm.com/about/history.html>

Excerpted from (Fix citations):

- www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/Sosúa1.html
- Marion Kaplan, *Dominican Haven: The Jewish Refugee Settlement in Sosúa, 1940-1945*
- NPR – *Tell Me More: Dominicans, Haitians Remember Parsley Massacre, October 1, 2012*

ACTIVITY THREE: Evian Conference

Direct students to read the article *Emigration and the Evian Conference* (<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005520>). While reading the article, students will select three significant facts or statements that stood out to them and explain the reasons why they selected those particular facts or statements to the person next to them. Have students select one of the facts or statements that they discussed with their partner and create a political cartoon that depicts that fact or statement. Share two examples of political cartoons with students as models.

Political Cartoons

- Political Cartoon 1:
<http://brandeiscenter.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Cartoon-1-Statue-of-Liberty-copy.jpg>
- Political Cartoon 2:
<http://www.annefrankguide.net/en-us/content/evian-cartoon.jpg>

ACTIVITY FOUR: World Leaders

Divide students up into small groups, direct students to read the biography of one of the following world leaders during World War II:

- Adolph Hitler (Nazi Germany): <http://www.biography.com/people/adolf-hitler-9340144>
- Rafael Trujillo (Dominican Republic): <http://www.biography.com/people/rafael-trujillo-39891>
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt (United States): <http://www.biography.com/people/franklin-d-roosevelt-9463381>

While in small groups, have students complete a profile sheet for the leader assigned. Allow time to review the profile charts as a whole class.

World Leader Profile

Name	
Occupation	
Early Years	
Best Known For...	
Legacy (ies)	

ACTIVITY FIVE: The Past is Present

Direct students to read *Washington Heights Y Brings Community Together*

(<http://www.jcca.org/they-dared-to-dream-together/>) and respond to the following questions:

- Describe the Washington Heights Community.
- How did the theater production, *Sosúa: Dare to Dance Together*, bring Jewish and Dominican teens together?
- In what way did these two groups have a shared history? Provide specific examples from the article.
- How does the past effect the present and shape the future?

Allow time to discuss students' responses to the questions above as a whole class discussion.

ONLINE RESOURCES:

Photograph 1: A Family in Sosúa:

http://www.Sosúanews.com/news_pictures/2008/09/30-9_hess_6.jpg

Photograph 2: Settler on the Beach:

<http://www.mjhnyc.org/Sosúa/photo5.htm>

Photograph 3: Land Development:

<http://www.mjhnyc.org/Sosúa/photo3.htm>

Photograph 4: Synagogue:

<http://www.mjhnyc.org/Sosúa/photo10.htm>

Photograph 5: Horse Children:

<http://forward.com/workspace/assets/images/articles/horsechildren-060508.jpg>

Photograph 6: Sosúa Settlers:

<http://www.mjhnyc.org/Sosúa/photo6.htm>

Museum of Jewish Heritage (NYC):

<http://www.mjhnyc.org/Sosúa/photo1.htm>

Photo Analysis Worksheet (National Archives and Records Administration):

http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/photo_analysis_worksheet.pdf

Sosúa's History (Sosúa: Make a Better World):

<http://Sosúafilm.com/about/history.html>

Political Cartoon 1:

<http://brandeiscenter.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Cartoon-1-Statue-of-Liberty-copy.jpg>

Political Cartoon 2:

<http://www.annefrankguide.net/en-us/content/evian-cartoon.jpg>

Dominicans, Haitians Remember the Parsley Massacre (NPR):

<http://www.npr.org/2012/10/01/162088692/dominicans-haitians-remember-parsley-massacre>

Emigration and the Evian Conference (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum):

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005520>

Jewish Refugees (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum):

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005468>

Biography-General Rafael Trujillo (Biography.com)

<http://www.biography.com/people/rafael-trujillo-39891>

Biography-Adolph Hitler (Biography.com)

<http://www.biography.com/people/adolf-hitler-9340144>

Biography-Theodore Roosevelt (Biography.com)

<http://www.biography.com/people/franklin-d-roosevelt-9463381>

The Peopling of New York 2011 (Macaulay Honors College at CUNY):

<http://macaulay.cuny.edu/eportfolios/berger2011/washington-heights/problems-of-washington-heights/a-century-of-ethnic-tensions/>

Cultural Aspects of Washington Heights (Macaulay Honors College at CUNY):

<http://macaulay.cuny.edu/eportfolios/berger2011/washington-heights/cultural-aspects-of-washington-heights/>

Washington Heights Y Brings Community Together (Jewish Community Center of North America):

<http://www.jcca.org/they-dared-to-dream-together/>

The Dominican Republic's Haven for Jewish Refugees (Jewish Virtual Library):

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/Sosúa.html>

Jewish Legacy Survives in the Dominican Republic (Chicago Tribune):

http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2007-11-29/features/0711280199_1_dominican-republic-dominican-dictator-rafael-trujillo-Sosúa

DURING-VIEWING ACTIVITIES
(Three (3) Instructional Days)

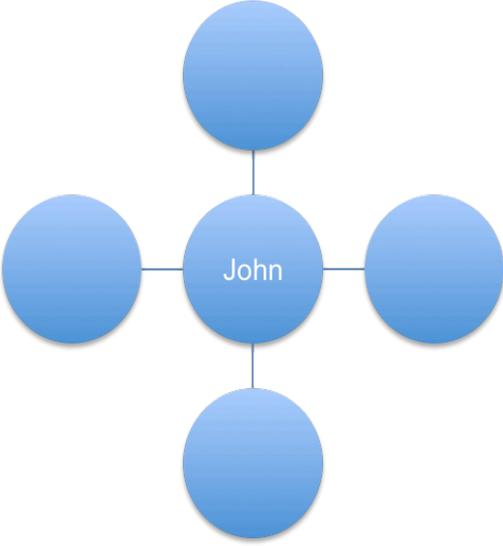
Theme: Creating One Community

Inquiry Question: How did the play create a sense of community?

Key Understandings:

- Community is not a product or a destination; it is a process that creates, evolves, and changes as it brings diverse people together.
- Community building is developing authentic relationships between people.
- Building a community is a collective process and takes most of the group to allow it to happen.

Students will complete the following while viewing the film:

<p><i>Like Me But Not Like Me</i> (0:00-6:10)</p>	<p>While viewing this segment, students will complete the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do you think John meant when he said, “kids that are like me, but not like me?” 2. Create an identity chart for John. See the example below: <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>
<p><i>Kind of Two Sides</i> (6:10-18:23)</p>	<p>While viewing this segment, students will complete the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the significance of the following: 1933, Hitler, Roosevelt, Trujillo, 1938, Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Washington Heights. 2. Complete a Venn diagram that compares the Dominicans and Jews who

	<p>live in Washington Heights (to access a Venn diagram, go the following link: http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/pdf/venn.pdf).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. What do you think Nomi meant when she said, “But I guess, even, no matter how much people try to open up to different races and religions and cultures and colors, there’s always going to be some sort of sense of familiarity with the people who are like you.” 4. Read the following quote,: “I know there is strength in the differences between us. I know there is comfort where we overlap.”-Ani DiFranco, an American singer, songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, and poet. Compare this quote to the statement made by Nomi (in question #3) using a Venn diagram (to access a Venn diagram, go the following link: http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/pdf/venn.pdf). How is DiFranco’s statement and quote similar to Nomi’s? How are the two different?
<p><i>Their Show</i> (18:32 - 24:33)</p>	<p>While viewing this segment, students will complete the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the poem, <i>The Survivor</i>, written by Primo Levi. To access this poem, go to the following link: http://www.poetrysoup.com/famous/poem/2327/the_survivor). After reading the poem, respond to the following journal prompt: According to this poem, who is a survivor? What does it mean to survive? 2. Draft a poem about Denny’s survival story. 3. What did Liz mean when she said that “the show is their show now”? 4. Create an identity chart for Kaitlin. 5. According to the film, how would you define Sabbath? 6. What are Kaitlin’s views about the Jews at the Y? How is this view different from her views of the Jews in her neighborhood?
<p><i>Where the Secrets Lie</i> (24:33-37:36)</p>	<p>While viewing this segment, students will complete the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is Chanukah? 2. Create an Identity chart for Jordan. 3. Activity: Teach someone something that is significant about you. How did it make you feel when you were teaching someone? What did you learn from the lesson that you were taught? 4. Come up with an interpretation for Liz’s quote: “It’s not Disney, you know you can’t expect it to happen in even a year and you can’t expect it to happen all to everybody and you can’t expect it to happen completely, but it’s the subtle things that really contain beauty.” 5. How do you know that the community is coming together? How do you know that the students are becoming a family? Provide two examples from the film that may demonstrate this? 6. What are some of the challenges of the performance?
<p><i>Like a Village</i> (37:36 - 46:53)</p>	<p>While viewing the film, students will complete the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For Nomi, how is Passover different since participating in the play? 2. According to the film, why is Passover significant for both the Jews and Dominicans? 3. What is meant by Victoria’s statement, “No one is free until everybody is free”? 4. What is meant by Liz’s statement, “If nothing else they’ve gotten a feeling of community and it’s interesting to be doing a show about community where you make a community to do it”? Using a Venn

	<p>diagram compare Liz’s statement to the following quote:</p> <p>“One of the marvelous things about community is that it enables us to welcome and help people in a way we couldn’t as individuals. When we pool our strength and share the work and responsibility, we can welcome many people, even those in deep distress, and perhaps help them find self-confidence and inner healing.”-Jean Vanier, a Canadian philosopher, theologian, and humanitarian</p> <p>Note: To access a Venn diagram, go to the following link: http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/pdf/venn.pdf</p>
<i>Make a Better World</i> (46:53-55:54)	<p>While viewing the film, students will complete the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Journal Assignment: What was the “miracle” the young people created? 2. How did the story become the audience’s story? Provide specific examples from the film. 3. What lesson(s) do you think the young people taught to the community?
Film Debrief	<p>After students view the entire film have them to consider the dramatic and filmmaking aspects of the film by engaging students in discussion to the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why do you think the filmmakers chose to follow and feature John, Jordan, Kaitlin, and Nomi in the film? 2. What do you think were the organizational principles that guided the film? 3. What do you think is the main story being told through the film?

ONLINE RESOURCES:

Sosúa’s History (*Sosúa: Make a Better World*):

<http://Sosúafilm.com/about/history.html>

Poem, Survivor (Primo Levi):

http://www.poetrysoup.com/famous/poem/2327/the_survivor

Venn Diagram:

<http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/pdf/venn.pdf>

POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

For this section of the *Sosúa: Make a Better World Video Viewing Guide*, students will apply what they have learned by participating in a community building project, researching the story of an immigrant or migrant and telling their story by creating a memory box or digital scrapbook, or researching the story of a refugee and sharing their experience through a monologue. Teachers can choose one or many of the projects listed below:

Activity One: Community Improvement Project
(Five (5) Instructional Days+ outside of class work time required)

Have students participate in a community improvement project to build critical civic engagement and leadership skills. Students can choose an issue that they wish to focus on (either locally or globally) or provide suggestions using the web resources provided below:

- 137 Community Projects That Build Social Capital:
http://www.bankofideas.com.au/Downloads/Social_Capital_Handout_2.pdf
- 100 Simple Service Ideas:
<http://www.lionsclubs.org/EN/common/pdfs/iad500.pdf>
- Rotary International:
www.rotary.org/en/document/577
- Do Something.org:
<http://www.dosomething.org/>
- Global Youth Service Day:
http://www.gysd.org/community_building

To begin the research process have students visit the *Sosúa: Make a Better World* website (<http://www.sosuafilm.com/>) to learn more about the community improvement aspect of the film. Encourage students to contact the filmmakers if they have any questions.

Activity Two: Immigrant and Migrant Stories and Memories
(Three (3) Instructional Days + outside of class work time required)

This activity requires students to interview an immigrant or migrant and create a memory box that uses artifacts to tell the story of that person's movement from one place to another. See links below for resources on how to conduct an interview:

- How to Conduct an Interview (Scholastic):
<http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3752516>
- How to Conduct an Interview:
<http://stringers.media.mit.edu/interview.htm>
- How to Conduct a Strong Interview:
http://www.whatkidscando.org/featurestories/2007/maine_students/tip_sheets/INTERVIEW%20TIP%20SHEET.pdf

For a digital alternative to the memory box, have students create a digital scrapbook to share the memories of the immigrant or migrant who they interviewed. Students can go to the links below for digital scrapbooking resources:

- Smilebox:
<http://www.smilebox.com/scrapbooks.html>
- Pinterest
<http://www.pinterest.com>
- Free Digital Scrapbooking:
<http://freedigitalscrapbooking.com/>

Activity Three: Story Monologue
(Five (5) Instructional Days + outside of class work time required)

Have students conduct research on a refugee experience and create and perform a monologue based on that story. Students can consult the links below for research resources and selected refugee stories:

- UN Refugee Organization:
http://www.unrefugees.org/site/c.lf1QKSOWFqG/b.4950721/k.9B5E/Refugee_Stories.htm

- Refugee Transitions:
<http://www.reftrans.org/student-stories/>
- Refugee Council:
<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/animation>
- Red Cross:
<http://www.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/Refugee-support/Refugees-true-stories>
- US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants:
<http://www.refugees.org/refugee-voices/>
- Sanctuary Australia Foundation:
<http://www.sanctuaryaustraliafoundation.org.au/refugee-stories/>

Have students identify and analyze characteristics of a monologue using examples to model writing. Based on their research into refugees, students will write a monologue and re-enact their story by performing in the classroom.

Note: Below are suggested resources that may be used to assist students with creating their monologues.

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- Learning with Monologues Unit
<http://www.connected-learning.org/Products/tcastrle2.htm>
Monologue Performance Rubric
 - <https://www.theatrefolk.com/freebies/RJMonologueRubric.pdf>
Monologue Writing Curriculum Guide
 - http://thehipp.org/education2/writing_a_monologue.pdf
A Refugee's Monologue by Muhammad Shanazar
 - <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/a-refugee-s-monologue/>
Monologues for Men and Women
 - <http://www.sunnyhillsdrama.com/Monologues.htm>

ONLINE RESOURCES:

137 Community Projects That Build Social Capital:

http://www.bankofideas.com.au/Downloads/Social_Capital_Handout_2.pdf

100 Simple Service Ideas:

<http://www.lionsclubs.org/EN/common/pdfs/iad500.pdf>

Rotary International:

www.rotary.org/en/document/577

Do Something.org:

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

Global Youth Service Day:

http://www.gysd.org/community_building

How to Conduct an Interview (Scholastic):

<http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3752516>

How to Conduct an Interview:

<http://stringers.media.mit.edu/interview.htm>

How to Conduct a Strong Interview:

http://www.whatkidscando.org/featurestories/2007/maine_students/tip_sheets/INTERVIEWING%20TIP%20SHEET.pdf

Smilebox:

<http://www.smilebox.com/scrapbooks.html>

Free Digital Scrapbooking:

<http://freedigitalscrapbooking.com/>

UN Refugee Organization:

http://www.unrefugees.org/site/c.lfQKSOwFqG/b.4950721/k.9B5E/Refugee_Stories.htm

Refugee Transitions:

<http://www.reftrans.org/student-stories/>

Refugee Council:

<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/animation>

Red Cross:

<http://www.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/Refugee-support/Refugees-true-stories>

US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants:

<http://www.refugees.org/refugee-voices/>

Sanctuary Australia Foundation:

<http://www.sanctuaryaustraliafoundation.org.au/refugee-stories/>

Learning with Monologues Unit

<http://www.connected-learning.org/Products/tcastrle2.htm>

Monologue Performance Rubric

<https://www.theatrefolk.com/freebies/RJMonologueRubric.pdf>

Monologue Writing Curriculum Guide

http://thehipp.org/education2/writing_a_monologue.pdf

A Refugee's Monologue by Muhammad Shanazar

<http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/a-refugee-s-monologue/>

Monologues for Men and Women

<http://www.sunnyhillsdrama.com/Monologues.htm>

DIRECTORS' NOTES:

In September 2009, the Washington Heights YM+YWHA program director, Vicki Neznansky, approached Peter and me about documenting an upcoming teen musical. "This is not going to be some amateur kid production," Vicki assured us. "It's going to be a big, life changing experience that will speak to the whole community and beyond." Vicki proceeded to describe how the story of the musical would be based on a true but little publicized chapter of Holocaust history when the murderous dictator of the Dominican Republic, Generalissimo Trujillo offered refuge to 800 European Jews. They ultimately came to settle in the deserted outpost of Sosúa from 1939 until the end of WWII.

Vicki then announced that the illustrious Broadway director, Liz Swados, had agreed to direct and compose the show. Swados has been a hero of mine since her 1978 hit, "Runaways". Peter and I were intrigued and curious about how the project would unfold and agreed to film the first day.

We arrived early and trailed the kids who auditioned in groups of ten. There we filmed for the first time, John, 17, who shared hilarious stories on being the only Dominican scholarship student at an elite Princeton boarding school and Nomi, 12, who candidly dissected her raw experience at the Y camp where the Dominican and Jewish girls assiduously avoided contact with each other. Then there was Jordan, 14, a heavy set boy who declared – on camera, "I want to prove them wrong – the kids who tease me – I want to show them that I can be somebody."

Peter and I were both hooked – we could see the seeds for a powerful documentary. The structure of the "making of" chronology would enable us to explore and interweave a compelling array of themes. We'd have the "fly on the wall" perspective on the creative process of a world-class theater artist with a unique approach to workshopping material with young people. The historical underpinnings for the show offered the opportunity of including rare archival materials in a fresh light. Most importantly, the film would tell the individual stories of adolescents who are unguarded and articulate interpreters of what it means to come of age – and to come together – in a diverse urban neighborhood.

We spent the next ten months filming the kids at rehearsals, celebrating holidays, and kibitzing during down time and also at home, in their schools and communities. In that time, we strived to capture the elusive quality of what it means to have a life transforming experience – especially at this critical moment in the kids' development. As Liz says, "It doesn't happen in a day; it doesn't happen in even a year – it's not Disney but you can see it in their eyes." We not only had the privilege of seeing it "in their eyes" but also witnessing the creation of a community that did indeed transform lives. I hope that some of the magic of this visionary project has been captured in our film – and will indeed go beyond "the whole community" to touch viewers with its honesty and passion. - **Renée Silverman**

I'm drawn to stories of how history shapes our lives. The films I've made about the past are always just as much meditations about the present, using historical stories as a lens for understanding who we are today. Among my most recent films are two about Jewish subjects; *Jews and Baseball* and *AKA Doc Pomus*, and one about Latino history, *A Class Apart: A Mexican American Civil Rights Story*. Each film was at its heart about underdogs overcoming bigotry and barriers to become vital parts of the American mainstream. *Sosúa: Make a Better World* is in many ways a culmination of all of the stories I've been fortunate enough to tell in my films. It's been an amazing experience watching the Dominican and Jewish teenagers come together to learn about their common past, and in the process, discover what unites them in the present. Jews and Latinos live side-by-side in Washington Heights but too infrequently interact. That putting on a play about a little-known story from the Holocaust brought them together is testament to the power of history and the necessity of the arts in our lives. I am overjoyed that my friend and filmmaking partner, Renée Silverman, invited me to join her in documenting this amazing story. And I look forward to continuing to share the Sosúa story with audiences, and thinking about ways in which more barriers can be brought down in our wonderfully diverse nation. - **Peter Miller**

Learning Dimensions for Willow Pond Films and Other Islands Film created the *Sosúa: Make a Better World Video Viewing Guide*. To contact Learning Dimensions, please email learningdimensionschicago@gmail.com. For more information on this educational guide or other Willow Pond Films and Other Islands Films related educational materials, please email the following links: info@willowpondfilms.com and/or Renée@otherislandsfilms.com.

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