

Press Release

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*For Immediate Release*

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### Vashon World AIDS 2021 Events

Vashon Island, a small island community of 10,000 year-round residents in Washington State, commemorates International World AIDS Day (Dec 1st) with a series of unique events to engage the community on the issue of AIDS.

remember – celebrate – engage - inspire

#### **Events:**

#### ***Crash Course In Activist Art Exhibit***

Location: Blue Heron Art Center

Date: December 2-30

Vashon artists West McLean and Peter Serko collaborate with VHS AP art students to create activist art drawing on the students' experience with COVID. The collaboration includes an educational component on art created during the early years of the AIDS epidemic.

#### ***Why We Fight video collaboration***

Vashon High School Drama Club students recreate the speech known as "Why We Fight" given by AIDS activist Vito Russo in 1988. The speech is widely considered significant milestone in the AIDS activist movement during the early years of the epidemic.

Producers: West McLean and Peter Serko

Performance direction: Chris Boscia

Teacher: Andy James

Performers: Vashon High School Drama Club Students  
Premiere: Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> Blue Heron Art Center

***Putting a Positive Spin on the Story: Combatting the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Young Women in Africa***

Location: McMurray Middle School Library

Date: November 30, Dec 1-2nd

Teacher: Rebecca Blankenship 7<sup>th</sup> grade social studies

Librarian: Julie Jaffe

Quest artist/speakers:

Sona Jobarteh – activist and musician (Africa-Gambia)

Cate O’Kane - activist and consultant (UK)

Jacob Bain - musician and videographer.(Vashon)

In 7<sup>th</sup> grade students study Africa. Social studies teacher Rebecca Blankenship in collaboration with librarian Julie Jaffe have created an HIV/AIDS component in the curriculum that was first done in 2019 with great response from students.

A few facts:

- Women account for more than half the number of people living with HIV worldwide. Young women (10-24 years old) are twice as likely to acquire HIV as young men the same age.
- HIV disproportionately affects women and adolescent girls because of vulnerabilities created by unequal cultural, social and economic status.

Students will study the role African storytelling traditions play in promoting public health initiatives include HIV/AIDS. Sona Jobarteh will share her experiences as an activist, cultural storyteller, and musician in Gambia.

***“Mothers and Sons” staged reading***

***A Tony Award Nominated play by Terrence McNally***

Location: VHS Theater

Date: December 4<sup>th</sup> 8:00 pm

Directed by: Chris Boscia

Cast: Jeanne Dougherty - Darragh Keenan - Pheobe Tate – Evan Whitfield

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