

STUDY GUIDE



GEFFEN
PLAYHOUSE

THE RESERVOIR

WEST COAST PREMIERE
THE RESERVOIR

06.18 – 07.20.2025

GIL CATES THEATER

The Reservoir was originally produced and featured in the 2022 Colorado New Play Summit at the Denver Center Theatre Company, Chris Coleman, Artistic Director.

The Reservoir was originally commissioned and developed by
The Ensemble Studio Theatre/Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Science & Technology Project.

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THANK YOU

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DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
City of Los Angeles

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ACCESSIBILITY AT GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

The theater has wheelchair and scooter-accessible locations where patrons can remain in their wheelchairs or transfer to theater seats.



OPEN CAPTION PERFORMANCE

Saturday, July 5, 2025, 3:00pm — An LED sign will display the text of the live production in sync with the performance.



AUDIO DESCRIBED PERFORMANCE

Sunday, July 6, 2025, 2:00pm — A performance audio describer will give live, verbal descriptions of actions, costumes, scenery, and other visual elements of the production.



**AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE
INTERPRETED PERFORMANCE**

Sunday, July 13, 2025 at 2:00 pm — An ASL interpreter will be present in the house left.





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GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH DENVER CENTER
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS & ALLIANCE THEATRE PRESENTS

THE RESERVOIR

WRITTEN BY
JAKE BRASCH

DIRECTED BY
SHELLEY BUTLER

SCENIC DESIGNER
TAKESHI KATA

LIGHTING DESIGNER
JEANETTE OI-SUK YEW

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
KARIMA KARKORI

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
LIZ BROHM HANRAHAN

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
REBECCA K. HSIA

COSTUME DESIGNER
SARA RYUNG CLEMENT

SOUND DESIGNER & COMPOSER
MICHAEL COSTAGLIOLA

DRAMATURG
OLIVIA O'CONNOR

CASTING BY
**GRADY SOAPES, CSA, JODY
FELDMAN &
PHYLLIS SCHURINGA, CSA**

CAST



**ADRIÁN
GONZÁLEZ**
HUGO / OTHERS



**MARIN
HINKLE**
PATRICIA / OTHERS



**JAKE
HOROWITZ**
JOSH



**LIZ
LARSEN**
BEVERLY



**CAROLYN
MIGNINI**
IRENE



**GEOFFREY
WADE**
HANK



**LEE
WILKOF**
SHRIMPY



**MARWA
BERNSTEIN**
U/S PATRICIA / OTHERS



**HENRY
LEBLANC**
U/S HANK / SHRIMPY



**NANCY
LINARI**
U/S BEVERLY / IRENE



**TIROSH
SCHNEIDER**
U/S JOSH / HUGO /
OTHERS

ABOUT THE PLAY

OVERVIEW: Josh's life is spiraling, but luckily, his grandparents are here to help. And by help, we mean offering unsolicited advice, relentlessly judging his life choices, bringing up their own mortality over coffee, and dragging him to Jazzercise class at the JCC. From Bev's no-nonsense tough love to Shrimpy's wildly inappropriate jokes, these grandparents steal the show—and maybe, just maybe, help Josh find his way. *The Reservoir* is a sharply funny and deeply heartfelt new play by Jake Brasch about family, memory, and healing.

TIME / SETTING: 2013-2015, Denver, CO.

RUNNING TIME: 2 hours and 15 minutes, including one intermission.

AGE RECOMMENDATION: 12+

WARNINGS: Strobe Lighting Effects • Loud Sound Effects

CONTENT ADVISORY: This production contains mature content and profanity.

ARTISTIC BIOGRAPHIES



JAKE BRASCH *Playwright (he/they)*

Jake Brasch is a writer + performer + composer + clown and a recent graduate of The Juilliard School. *The Reservoir* marks his professional playwriting debut. Jake recently received both national awards named in honor of Paula Vogel—one from The Kennedy Center and the other from the Vineyard Theatre. They are the inaugural recipient of the Terrence McNally Recovery Commission and were recently named a finalist for the Alliance/Kendall National Graduate Playwriting Competition. He's a proud alum of Youngblood at the Ensemble Studio Theatre and the Page 73 Writers Group, and is currently developing work with Manhattan Theatre Club, Atlantic Theater Company, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Alliance Theatre, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, South Coast Repertory, The Acting Company, The Farm Theater, and the EST/Sloan Project. With playwright Nadja Leonhard-Hooper, Jake is a co-founder of American Sing-Song, a duo that writes and performs filthy, hour-long comedic musicals. Jake has long worked as a birthday party clown in the tri-state area and is currently developing a sitcom based on his exploits. He has three brothers, 24 pairs of glasses, and lives in Brooklyn with his brilliant husband, Tyler. B.F.A.: NYU Tisch School of the Arts. www.jakebrasch.com



SHELLEY BUTLER *Director (she/her)*

Shelley Butler has worked extensively with writers on new plays and musicals at theaters across the country and has over forty Broadway, Off-Broadway, and regional credits to date. Notable productions include: the world premiere of Lucas Hnath's *A Doll's House, Part 2* at South Coast Repertory, the world premiere of Kate Hamill's *The Scarlet Letter* for Two River Theater, and *The Constant Wife* by W. Somerset Maugham for the Denver Center for the Performing Arts Theatre Company. Shelley spent two seasons as artistic associate in charge of new play development for Hartford Stage, three seasons as artistic associate for Great Lakes Theater Festival, and currently serves as Artistic Director for the newly created South Carolina New Play Festival. Shelley has directed and developed work nationwide for companies including: Ars Nova, Primary Stages, Ensemble Studio Theatre, WP Theater, Yale Repertory Theatre, The Old Globe, Milwaukee Rep, Hartford Stage, South Coast Repertory, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Geva Theatre Center, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Pioneer Theatre Company, Contemporary American Theater Festival, New York Stage and Film, Partial Comfort Productions, New Georges, The Playwrights Realm, Keen Company, and New Dramatists. Shelley is the recipient of a Drama League Fall Directing Fellowship, a 2018 Drama League Directing Resident, a 2005 Director's Guild of America Trainee, and a proud member of SDC. Upcoming: Liz Duffy Adams' *Dear Alien* at the Alley Theatre. www.shelleybutler.com.

GRIEVING BEAUTIFULLY

הכפהמ הרכז

yehi zichra mahapecha
may your memory be a revolution.

BY TIFFANY OGLESBY, GEFEN PLAYHOUSE TEACHING ARTIST

How do you mourn the loss of what was? How do you ache over what you imagined life to be? How do you lament the death of a loved one? How do you continue on? How do you grieve? How do you grieve beautifully?

When one thinks of the meaning behind grief, words like: sorrow, sadness, and agony are often at the forefront. It can be challenging to think of any other outcome beyond the throes of an ending. While it is true that the loss of someone or something can leave a person filled with despair, exploring the benefits of mourning can provide clarity, acceptance and expansion.

“GRIEF IS ITSELF A MEDICINE”

- William Cowper, *English poet*

Because grief is a fated emotion that all human beings experience, removing shame and fear gives us the space to talk openly about it with compassion, either with a professional or trusted confidant. It's important to acknowledge the multi-layered ways in which grief shows up, how we choose to handle it, and the lasting impacts it may have on us - both good and bad. In *The Reservoir*, the writer Jake Brasch demonstrates how grief can be messy, yet can also provide a beautiful transformation.

“The heart of grieving really is around yearning, yearning for that person to be back or for things to be back the way they were before...grief is a natural response to loss, it is what our brain, our mind, our body does in reaction. And the vast majority of us are quite resilient. We know... that the vast major-

ity of us will find a way to sort of restore this meaningful life, find a way to continue...” - Dr. Mary-Frances O'Connor, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Arizona

The lead character Josh is described as someone moving “through life with a manic need to understand.” His habitual ways of coping with the setbacks of life are no longer sustainable.

With the unconventional help of his grandparents, he learns to stand on his own, but not without failing and grieving boldly.

“WHAT IS GRIEF, IF NOT LOVE PERSEVERING?”

- *Vision from WandaVision on Disney+*

It is often said that grief is the price you pay for loving someone or something fiercely. The inability to write, perform, or illustrate can cause an artist to wither. The loss can also redirect them to discover an innovative way to express themselves. The death of a parent can cause a daughter to harden emotionally. That death also has the potential to bring a daughter and a mother closer with fond memories and the willingness to spend more precious time together. The tragedy of a breakup can also cause a person to appreciate themselves more and enjoy their own company. Grief has the power to provide us with the gift of appreciating as Beverly calls them in the play — all of the delicious little things: Mountain views. Afternoon naps. Pumpernickel bagels with scallion cream cheese. The Sunday crossword. In addition to the five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance, there is also room for a new perspective.

“ MOUNTAIN VIEWS.
AFTERNOON NAPS.
PUMPERNICKEL BAGELS
WITH SCALLION CREAM CHEESE.
THE SUNDAY CROSSWORD.
ALL OF THE DELICIOUS
LITTLE THINGS.

-Beverly, *The Reservoir*

ALZHEIMERS & THE BRAIN



Scan the QR Code to the left to read "What Happens to the Brain in Alzheimer's Disease?" from the National Institute on Aging.



Scan the QR Code to the left to watch "Expand your perception. Change your life" where Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor draws a map of the human brain, explaining how it is comprised of four distinct modules, each serving a unique role in function and personality. This combination of cognitive and emotional components gives rise to the multidimensional characters within each of us.



Scan the QR Code to the left to watch: "Why is Alzheimer's disease so difficult to treat?" where Krishna Sudhir delves into how Alzheimer's disease affects your brain and cognitive abilities, and what makes the disorder so hard to treat.



Scan the QR Code to the left to watch: "A Marriage to Remember | Alzheimer's Disease Documentary" from the New York Times. In this short documentary, the filmmaker Banker White explores how Alzheimer's disease has revealed the strength of his parents' marriage.



Scan the QR Code to the left to watch "What scientists have learned from studying people over 90" from the 60 Minutes Archive. In 2020, 60 Minutes checked in on the groundbreaking 90+ study, a group of Americans age 90 and above still thriving in old age. Lesley Stahl revisited the participants, whom she first met in 2014, and caught up with the scientists expanding their findings on what leads to a longer, healthier life, with a special focus on memory and dementia. and emotional components gives rise to the multidimensional characters within each of us.

RECIPE: NANA'S CHRISTMAS COOKIES

In the play, Josh remembers ditching soccer practice as a kid to hang out with his Nana, Irene. They'd play piano duets and make her famous Christmas cookies all throughout the year. Try making this cookie recipe below, from [SallysBakingAddiction.com](https://sallysbakingaddiction.com), and remember Irene's secret tip: *"The trick is an eighth teaspoon of almond extract."*

CHRISTMAS SUGAR COOKIES

Author: Sally McKenney Prep Time: 2 hours, 30 minutes Cook Time: 12 min. Total Time: 3 hours, 45 minutes (includes cooling) Yield: 24 3-4 inch cookies

INGREDIENTS

- 2 and 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 3/4 cup unsalted butter, room temp.
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg, room temp.
- 2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 1/8 - 1/4 tsp. almond extract



DIRECTIONS

1. Whisk the flour, baking powder, and salt together in a medium bowl. Set aside..

2. In a large bowl using a handheld or a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter and sugar together on high speed until completely smooth and creamy, about 3 minutes. Add the egg, vanilla, and almond extract (if using) and beat on high speed until combined, about 1 minute. Scrape down the sides and up the bottom of the bowl and beat again as needed to combine.

3. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and mix on low until combined. Dough will be a bit soft. If the dough seems too soft and sticky for rolling, add 1 more Tablespoon of flour.

4. Divide the dough into 2 equal parts. Place each portion onto a piece of lightly floured parchment paper or a lightly floured silicone baking mat. With a lightly floured rolling pin, roll the dough out to about 1/4-inch thickness. Use more flour if the dough seems too sticky. The rolled-out dough can be any shape, as long as it is evenly 1/4-inch thick

5. Lightly dust one of the rolled-out doughs with flour. Place a piece of parchment on top. (This prevents sticking.) Place the 2nd rolled-out dough on top. Cover with plastic wrap or aluminum foil, then refrigerate for at least 1-2 hours and up to 2 days.

6. Once chilled, preheat oven to 350°F (177°C). Line 2-3 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Carefully remove the top dough piece from the refrigerator. If it's sticking to the bottom, run your hand under it to help remove it—see me do this in the video below. Using a cookie cutter, cut the dough into shapes. Re-roll the remaining dough and continue cutting until all is used. Repeat with 2nd piece of dough. (Note: It doesn't seem like a lot of dough, but you get a lot of cookies from the dough scraps you re-roll.)

7. Arrange cookies on baking sheets 3 inches apart. Bake for 11-12 minutes or until lightly browned around the edges. If your oven has hot spots, rotate the baking sheet halfway through bake time. Allow cookies to cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely before decorating.

8. Decorate the cooled cookies with royal icing, easy cookie icing, or cookie decorating buttercream.

RECIPE COURTESY OF <https://sallysbakingaddiction.com/christmas-sugar-cookies/>

Nana's Christmas Cookies

2 and 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. salt
3/4 cup unsalted butter, room temp.
3/4 cup granulated sugar
1 large egg, room temp.
2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
1/8 tsp. almond extract

COGNITIVE RESERVOIRS:

THE PATHWAYS WE BUILD
TO FIGHT



ILLUSTRATION BY RUDZHAN
FROM ADOBE STOCK

BY ASHLEY DENISE ROBINSON, GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE TEACHING ARTIST

In *The Reservoir's* opening scene, we meet our main character, Josh, at the water. He is injured and numbed out, halfway between intoxicated and sober, at the Cherry Creek Reservoir in Denver, Colorado. As the title implies, "reservoir" is a major theme in the play. The playwright, Jake Brasch, makes clever use of the word's many definitions to drive home his point: where we come from heavily influences where we're going, but we can attempt to carve out new pathways to flow in a different direction.

The reservoir where we find Josh is an 880-acre natural lake that is used for boating, fishing, jet-skiing, and sailing. The cognitive reservoirs that Josh ultimately tries to preserve amongst himself and his four grandparents are as deep and complex as the Denver waters, and just as vast. Cognitive reserve can be defined as the *"...lifetime experiences, in combination or interaction with genetic factors [that] enable cognitive processes to be resilient...which allow individuals to better cope with brain disease or aging. These experiences include educational and occupational attainment, general cognitive ability or intelligence, and engagement in activities that are cognitively, socially, and physically stimulating."*

The concept of cognitive reserve, originating in the late 1980s, has been further developed to prove that "...people with greater cognitive reserve are better able to stave off symptoms of degenerative brain changes associated with dementia or other brain diseases...". Aforementioned brain diseases include Alzheimer's and alcoholism, of which Josh himself and all of his grandparents ultimately feel the debilitating effects. In the play, Josh reads a book by real-life Chief of Cognitive Neuroscience and Professor of Neuropsychology at Columbia University Dr. Yaakov Stern (who is also a character in the play). Dr. Stern's studies motivates Josh to work on rebuilding, fortifying and carving out new pathways for himself and his elders, to retain his sobriety and attempt to save them from their diminishing diseases. Dr. Stern's work includes researching how education, activity, and nutrition affect cognitive reserves. He discovered that "...people with higher education had less of a chance of developing dementia over time...", to which Josh promptly responds by feeding his family fistfuls of spinach, requiring attendance at mandatory Jazzercise classes, administering quizzes upon quizzes, and performing difficult recitations of facts and history: an all-out maniacal and obsessive attempt in order to preserve his family, and himself.

Dr. Stern's interest in the study of cognitive reserves led him to discover that not only does the concept apply to Alzheimer's and dementia, but "...it's a story about how people can cope with almost any type of brain change that occurs." Alcohol use increases the likelihood of developing Alzheimer's, and while developing Alzheimer's is not solely genetic, Josh's relationship (past and present) with alcohol does make him more susceptible to the disease. Though Josh ultimately finds his rash efforts may not be enough to save his loved ones, it is the connection and care he has for his grandparents that helps him to love himself enough to deafen and dampen, at least, one disease plaguing him.

FILL YOUR RESERVOIRS

A Cognitive Reserve is like a mental "savings account" built up over your life. The more you challenge your brain through learning, working, and staying socially or physically active, the more "reserve" you have to help your brain stay strong.

ACTIVITY: Using a pen or pencil, draw a picture of your "happy place", your "safe space", your "sanctuary", where you feel your most confident and honest self. Is this a place from your past? Is this a current space you encounter? Is this a large or small place? Are you indoors or outdoors? Are there others around, or are you alone?

CHALLENGE: Choose 3 different crayons or markers and color in everything you drew, using only 3 colors. Limited to only three colors, how do you decide what area or object to color? How can you use techniques like shading to get around your limitation of tools?

BONUS: Throughout the play, Shrimpy recites the list of U.S. Vice Presidents. How many of them can you list? **HINT-** There have been 50 VP's since starting with John Adams was the first in 1789. There has only been one female Vice President... so far.



SCAN the QR code to the watch Dr. Yaakov Stern discuss the concept of cognitive reserve on Vimeo.



SCAN the QR code to read more about Cognitive Reserve from Harvard Medical School.

SOURCE: Harvard Medical School Contributors. (2024) "What is Cognitive Reserve?" Harvard Health Publishing. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/what-is-cognitive-reserve>

COGNITIVE RESERVOIRS

BRAIN-BUILDING: HOW TO GROW YOUR COGNITIVE RESERVE

Set up the chess board, get crafting or crack open a good book. An active social and intellectual life may lower your risk of cognitive impairment in later years

BY STEPHANIE S. FAUBION, M.D., MAYO CLINIC PRESS EDITORS, FROM MAYOCLINIC.ORG

In addition to protecting your heart and staying physically fit, there's another factor that may play an important role in preserving your brain health. It involves the concept of cognitive reserve — essentially your brain's ability to adapt to age- or disease-related changes by drawing on existing neuronal networks or generating new neuronal connections where old ones may fail.

Your cognitive reserve relates to brain networks set up by factors such as brain size and neuron count, natural intelligence, life experience, education, and occupation. The greater your reserve, the more leeway your brain has when asked to perform certain tasks — something that becomes more important as time goes by.

The idea that you can increase your cognitive reserve is a hot topic in research these days. It implies the possibility of preventing or compensating for cognitive decline by strengthening nerve networks and even building new ones through intellectual and social stimulation.

Most studies show a positive link between having an active social & intellectual life throughout the adult years, & a decreased risk of cognitive impairment in later years.

A study by Mayo Clinic researchers offers a good example. The investigators found that ordinary yet intellectually stimulating activities such as using a computer, playing games, reading books and engaging in crafts — including knitting, woodworking and other types of handiwork — were associated with a 30 to 50 percent decrease in the chances of developing mild cognitive impairment.

As with physical exercise, some activities seem to provide more of a cognitive workout than others. For example, the Mayo study found that reading newspapers had less effect than reading books. In addition, watching less TV was more favorable for cognitive health than watching more TV. You can use this as inspiration to sit down with a good book rather than reaching for the remote. Other studies have mentioned taking courses, learning new languages, traveling and going to the theater, to name just a few. The important part may be choosing those activities that absorb your mind, draw you in and engage your thought processes.

It also may be that engaging in intellectually and socially stimulating activities helps reduce stress. For example, playing a game with another person usually involves a deliberate effort to pay attention to what you're doing. People who are working on a craft often find themselves becoming completely immersed in what they're doing.

This is similar in some ways to meditative techniques that focus on becoming fully aware of the here and now. Such techniques tend to produce a relaxation response — sort of the opposite of the body's fight-or-flight response to stress. The relaxation response decreases your blood pressure, heart rate and breathing rate. It increases concentration, immersion in the moment, and feelings of contentment and well-being. It may also help buffer areas of the brain from stress-related changes, thus preserving neurons and their connections.

Finally, participating in enjoyable leisure activities, especially social ones, can help prevent depression and loneliness, both of which have been associated with poor cognitive health.

You have the road map for building your cognitive reserve. Now you can schedule activities that you enjoy and that are also good for your brain.

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are for informational purposes only & do not constitute a medical service. Always seek the advice of a qualified health professional for medical advice, diagnosis, & treatment.

THE RESERVOIR CROSSWORD

From Geffen Teaching Artist, Tiffany Oglesby

Use the clues to fill in the words to the right.

Words can go across or down.

Letters are shared when the words intersect.

Answers on p. 31

ACROSS

5. Fermented juice of apples
6. A combination of acetic acid and water made by a two-step fermentation process
8. The Centennial State
9. "O come ye, o come ye to _____"
10. An "absolute schmuck" of a Jewish grandpa
12. Shrimpy's mother's maiden name
13. Beverly does this along with exercising and reading, *hint- you're doing one now*

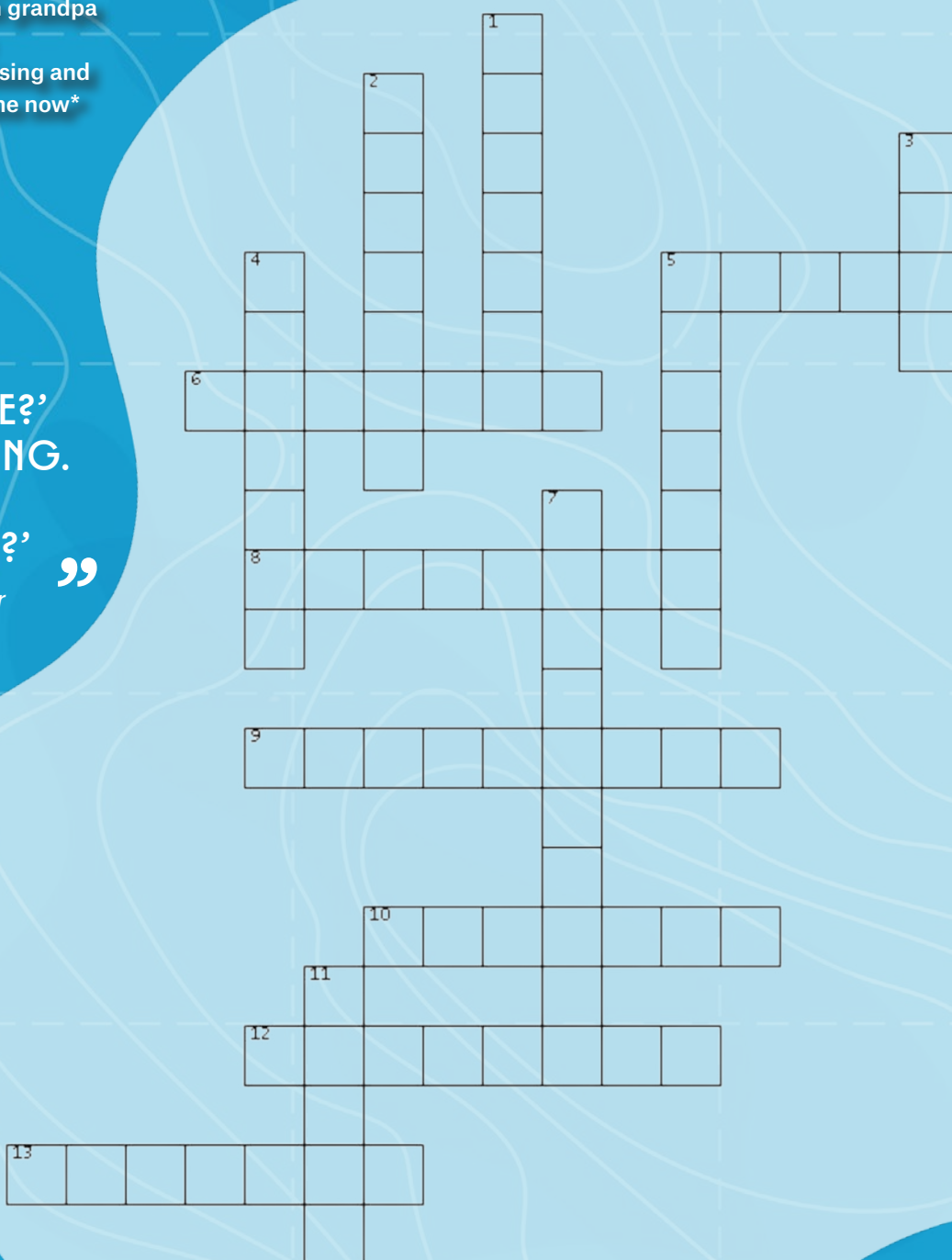
DOWN

1. Josh drinks this during the show, found in the baking aisle
2. A four-sided spinning top, played with during the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah
3. A bilateral animal that typically have a long cylindrical tube-like body and no limbs
4. Hank prefers ranch with this food, which is rich in vitamins A, C, and K
5. A crunchy corn-cheese puff snack
7. Lenni is what type of teacher?
11. Josh will live in this dorm when he returns to NYC

Puzzle created on
www.discoveryeducation.com

“ ‘COGNITIVE RESERVE?’
THAT’S SHITTY BRANDING.
HOW ABOUT...
‘BRAIN INSURANCE?’ ”

-Shrimpy, *The Reservoir*



WHY SOME SENIOR CITIZENS HAVE A SECOND BAR MITZVAH

BY JULIE WIENER FROM MYJEWISHLEARNING.COM

At his first bar mitzvah back in 1946, Harold Gorvine didn't get to read from the Torah or give a talk about the portion. "All I did was recite the Haftarah," he recalled. "And I don't remember if there was a party afterwards."

Shortly after his 83rd birthday, Gorvine had a do-over, of sorts: a second bar mitzvah, at P'nai Or, a Renewal congregation in Philadelphia, one of two synagogues where he and his wife are members. This time, the retired teacher — known as "Doc" to generations of students at the Philadelphia-area Akiba Hebrew Academy (now Jack Barrack Hebrew Academy) — chanted his portion, Ki Tavo, and gave a talk about the Torah portion, known as a d'var Torah. Meanwhile, his wife, children, grandchildren and many former students watched proudly.

Not to be confused with an adult bar/bat mitzvah, a ceremony for adults who never marked this rite of passage, the optional "second bar mitzvah" is an opportunity for older adults to reaffirm their commitment to Judaism and bring their loved ones together. While one can opt for this ceremony at any age, the most common age is 83. The reasoning is that it is 13 years after 70, the life expectancy described in Psalm 90.

Comparing the second bar mitzvah to the first one, Rabbi Avi Winokur who has presided over two such ceremonies at Philadelphia's Society Hill Synagogue, an egalitarian congregation that uses Conservative liturgy, said: "This is not about your parents telling you to do something, it's not about Hebrew school, it's not about the culmination of these years of study and all the pressure and expectations associated with it. It's really a free-will situation."

Whereas a first bar or bat mitzvah, which traditionally takes place at age 13 — or 12 for girls in some traditional Jewish communities — marks one's entry into Jewish adulthood,

the age when one takes on ritual obligations and can be counted in a minyan, a second bar or bat mitzvah is tantamount to a renewal of vows.

Like a first bar or bat mitzvah ceremony — in which ritual expectations and the amount of preparation vary widely, though the rite frequently includes reading from the week's Torah portion — there is no standard playbook for the second one. For celebrants who have been regularly leyning, or chanting from the Torah, for years, the new ceremony may merely require practicing the specific portion and preparing a d'var Torah, or a speech based on the weekly portion. Others may need to learn, or relearn, how to read from the Torah.

Rabbi Rachel Timoner, of Congregation Beth Elohim, a Reform synagogue in Brooklyn, N.Y., said her congregation hosted a double bar mitzvah: A longtime congregant celebrated his second bar mitzvah, at age 83, on the same day a 13-year-old member had marked his very own rite of passage.

"It was really meaningful," she said. "It's a beautiful way to make intergenerational links in a community and a beautiful way to honor a person reaching the milestone of age 83."

Gorvine, who is especially proud that his oldest granddaughter also read from the Torah at his ceremony, said, "Having a second bar mitzvah was a celebration of my life as an American, as a Jew and as a Reconstructionist Jew." (Gorvine had his bar mitzvah at a synagogue affiliated with the Renewal movement, but identifies as Reconstructionist, he said.)

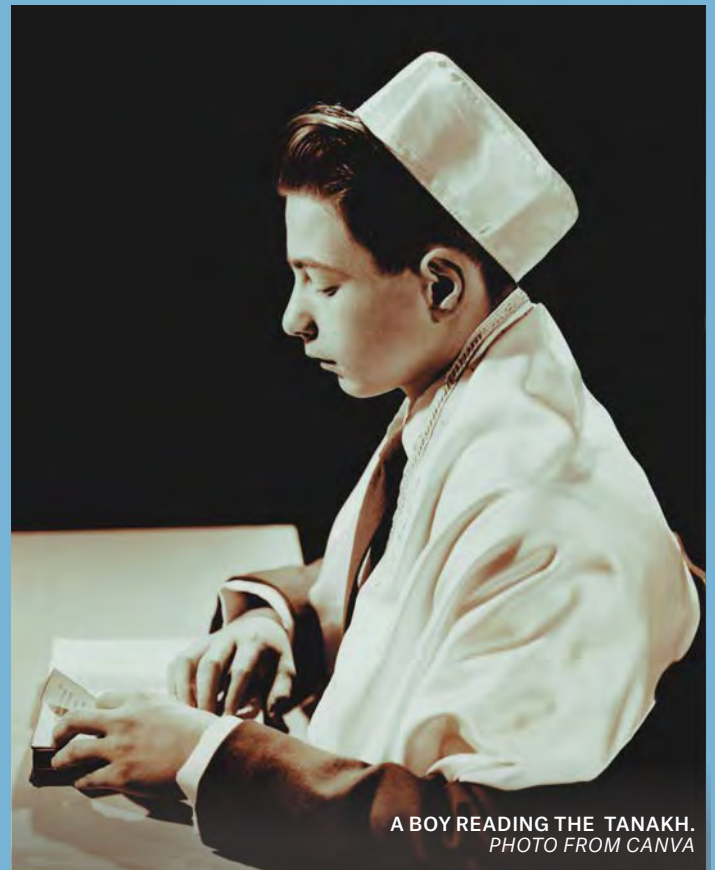
In 1955, Ivy Ames was one of the first girls at her Fairlawn, N.J., Conservative synagogue to have a bat mitzvah — thanks to her mother's advocacy. She remembers little about it, other than it involved reading from the Haftarah at a Friday night Shabbat service.

Decades on, at age 75, she spent more than a year preparing for a second bat mitzvah. Together with five other women she participated in a weekly class at Temple Beth Am, a Reform congregation in Miami. Some of the women in the class had never studied Hebrew before, while others were brushing up. Recalling her original bat mitzvah, Ames said, "My mother told the rabbi, 'Look, rabbi, you have four daughters and no sons, so you ought to consider' allowing the girls in the synagogue celebrate this rite of passage.

"I thought as an adult it would certainly be a more spiritual experience," Ames said. "As a 13 year old preparing for the bat mitzvah was all social, a chance to meet with boys. This time, I wanted to gain a better understanding."

The second bat mitzvah was a group ceremony, and Ames didn't pick the date. But coincidentally, she ended up with the same Torah portion, Parshat Emor, that she'd had the first time around. "When they announced the day and the portion, I said it was bashert," she said, using the Yiddish word for "meant to be."

SOURCE: Weiner, Julia. "Why Some Senior Citizens have a Second Bar Mitzvah". MyJewishLearning.com. <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/why-some-senior-citizens-have-a-second-bar-mitzvah/>



A BOY READING THE TANAKH.
PHOTO FROM CANVA



L-R: LIZ LARSEN, CAROLYN MIGNINI AND LEE WILKOF IN REHEARSAL
FOR THE RESERVOIR AT GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE.
PHOTO BY ISAAK BERLINER

ACTIVITY: WRITING A SPEECH

We are often asked to write and deliver speeches celebrating the special moments in life. There are toasts to celebrate unions like the best man's speech at a wedding, delivered at the reception and often in jest at the Groom. There are speeches to mark important milestones like a Bar Mitzvah or a Graduation. There are speeches called "eulogies" in remembrance of a loved one who has passed, often delivered at a funeral/celebration of life service.

In the play *The Reservoir*, Shrimpy has his epic second bar mitzvah at the age of 83. The bar/bat mitzvah ceremony celebrates at young person turning 13, marking their transition into adulthood according to Jewish tradition. It's customary for the celebrant to deliver a speech, either in the synagogue or at the reception that follows. This speech is usually crafted around a thought from their portion of Torah (the compilation of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible) how they will apply it to their own life.

Also in the play, Josh is asked to write a eulogy. It can be a great honor to be asked to deliver a eulogy for a friend, family member, or loved one. It is a communal and therapeutic way to express one's feelings, share special memories, and to acknowledge the accomplishments of those who have passed.

When we are emotional, it may feel overwhelming to both find the words to write and then to deliver the speech at the service or ceremony. Often we do not learn how to write these speeches, but author Rob Biesenbach suggests that there is no one "right" way to write a eulogy. Any great speech can be like telling a short story. First and foremost, speak from the heart — If it's meaningful to you, it will be meaningful to others. Use this activity to practice the art of writing and delivering a speech.

ACTIVITY TIME: Up to 1 hour for writing. Pick one type of celebratory speech to write: a *wedding toast/vows*, a *graduation speech*, a *speech for your bar or bat mitzvah*, or a *eulogy*. A good structure for a speech is a beginning/introduction, a middle, and an end/closing. A good length to aim for is 5-to-10 minutes for your speech, which is approximately one to two pages for 5-minute speech, and three to four pages for a longer 10-minute speech.

WEDDING TOAST: Choose someone in your life with whom you are close. Imagine it is their wedding and they have asked you to give a toast at the reception. What is your story? How did you first meet them? When did you first meet their new spouse? What life advice could you offer to the newly married couple, or what do you wish for their new adventures together? You may also think about writing a speech to your Significant Other either your vows, or re-newing your vows at an upcoming wedding anniversary.

GRADUATION SPEECH: In the play, Josh is enrolled at NYU. Whether you have an upcoming graduation, or have already graduated years ago- write a speech to your fellow classmates. What have the stories during your time at school taught you, and what advice would you offer to your fellow graduates about education and life?



Scan the QR Code to the left to watch: "Good Grief" with sociologist, Dr. Matisa Wilbon. "Although grief is difficult, this talk identifies ways you can find the good in it and challenges you to view grief as a gift."

ACTIVITY: WRITING A SPEECH



BAR/BAT MITZVAH SPEECH: Take inspiration to renew your commitment to your faith like Shrimpy. Creating a great bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah speech involves integrating humor, emotion and personal memories to captivate the crowd. Keep it succinct yet informative with an introduction, body and closing which will make a great D'var Torah. Acknowledge those who have helped you along the way, such as family members and friends, by expressing gratitude for their support. To gain ideas on how to deliver this powerful message, check out online examples of what other people used for successful speeches in years past. Or imagine a child's ceremony and celebrating your child's growth into adulthood.

EULOGY: Choose a character from a tv show, book, movie or play that has had a profound impact on you, or if you are comfortable, write in remembrance of someone whom you have lost. Write a short eulogy for this character or person. Think about traits of that person, use your imagination, or pull from real moments in your life with them. Get creative and tell their story.

Below are some helpful tips from Rob Biesenbach on how to write a eulogy, but these tips can be applied to other celebratory speeches.

- **TELL A STORY:** When you find a quality or two to focus on — whether it's kindness, generosity, enthusiasm — make this a thread that runs through the overall narrative of the eulogy or speech. And be sure to include stories from the person's life that exemplify those qualities. These could be big events, like major life turning points, or small moments. The stories can even be funny. A little comic relief is welcome at times like these.
- **FIND THE LITTLE DETAILS:** Small details — especially sensory details — make a big impact. If I was telling a story about my grandfather, I might mention the sound of the mourning doves that were always in the backyard, or the smell of sawdust in his wood shop or the steaks sizzling on the giant brick barbecue he lovingly built.
- **USE A QUOTE:** A quote that captures the point you're making can be a great way to introduce or conclude the speech. You can find quotes online for practically every subject under the sun. Or you can cite a passage from a favorite work of literature or film, the Bible or some other source that's important to you or your loved one.
- **DRAW A LESSON OR OFFER ADVICE:** Is there a lesson in the life that was lived? Something you've personally learned or will do differently? Or that others might find of value? Maybe you'll attack each day with more enthusiasm or treat others a little better. Find some way to show that the spirit of the deceased lives on, (or offer advice to the newly married couple).

SOURCE: Esenbach, Robbie. "How to Write a Eulogy 10 tips". RobbieEsenbach.com <https://robbiesenbach.com/how-to-write-a-eulogy-10-tips/>

ACTIVITY: DELIVERING A SPEECH

ACTIVITY TIME: Up to 1 hour for practicing. In many ways, delivering a speech uses some of the same skills as an actor uses on stage to perform! The actors in *The Reservoir* have rehearsed the play before they performed it in front of an audience. It is important to practice your speech before you deliver it. Public speaking can also be intimidating, so rehearsal will help you feel more confident and comfortable. Watch the videos below to get some insight in public speaking to practice delivering the speech you wrote!



SCAN the QR code to the left to watch the video "Public Speaking Tips Using the Hollywood Formula for Telling Stories" with Communication Coach Alexander Lyon and Film Editor Jeffe Bartsch, discussing why they think that the best public speakers are storytellers.



SCAN the QR code to the left to watch the video "An Actor's Warm-Up | Voice | National Theatre", led by Jeannette Nelson, helping actors to prepare their voice ahead of performances, featuring exercises on breathing, resonance, projection and articulation.

COLORADO



BLACK CANYON OF THE GUNNISON NATIONAL PARK
PHOTO BY EFRAIN PADRO/ALAMY
WWW.AUDOBON.ORG

EXCERPTS FROM HISTORY.COM

Famous for its diverse landscapes ranging from the Rocky Mountains to the Great Plains, Colorado's history dates back to as early as 13,000 B.C. when evidence suggests Paleo-Indians lived in the region. Around A.D. 500, the area saw the rise of the Ancestral Puebloans, known for their cliff dwellings and sophisticated agricultural systems in Mesa Verde. Drought and nomadic tribes drove the cliff dwellers from their land in the late 1200s. By 1500, members of the Ute tribe, the state's oldest continuous inhabitants, settled in the southern Rocky Mountains.

European explorers arrived in present-day Colorado in the late 1500s. The Spanish, led by conquistador Juan de Onate, claimed the southern part of the state in 1598. French explorer René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, claimed the



land east of the Rocky Mountains in the name of France in 1682. Following the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the U.S. bought the Louisiana Territory from France, which included the eastern half of the state. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the two-year Mexican-American War in 1848, resulted in Mexico ceding what is now the southwestern U.S., including part of Colorado. In 1850, the American government purchased the remainder of present-day Colorado from the Republic of Texas.

In 1858, gold deposits were discovered near present-day downtown Denver. The Gold Rush, along with the arrival of the railroads in 1870s attracted many new people to the area. Migration to the state also led to escalating tensions and conflicts with indigenous tribes. The deadliest occurred November 29, 1864, when American soldiers and Colorado militia killed 230 Cheyenne and Arapaho people, in the peaceful Sand Creek camp in southeastern Colorado. including women, children and the elderly. Again in 1862 U.S. troops trespassed on Ute land leading to the six-day Battle of Milk Creek. The United States Congress passed the Ute Removal Act in 1880, and the following year the U.S. Army forcibly removed nearly 1,500 Ute people to a reservation in Utah.

Colorado, known as the "Centennial State," was admitted to the Union on August 1, 1876, 100 years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, becoming the 38th state.

COLORADO FACTS

Capital: Denver

Population: 5,773,714 (2020 U.S. Census)

Size: 104,094 square miles

Tree: Colorado Blue Spruce, **Flower:** Rocky Mountain Columbine,

Bird: Lark Bunting, **Animal:** Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep

Rocky Mountain National Park is the fifth-most visited national park in the nation, attracting more than 4 million visitors a year. Colorado has 58 mountain peaks over 14,000 feet.

The Colorado State Capitol in Denver marks one mile above sea level, earning Denver the nickname: The "Mile High City".

Colorado Springs English teacher Katharine Lee Bates wrote the poem that became "America the Beautiful" after visiting Pikes Peak.

“

IT'S A MAJESTIC
FUCKING CANYON.
WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT
FROM ME?....

WE'RE HERE.
RIGHT NOW. WE KNOW NOTHING
AND YET: WE ARE HERE, HONEY.

-Beverly, *The Reservoir*

”



SCAN the QR Code to the left to watch *In The Americas* with David Yetman episode "Ancient peoples of the Colorado Plateau" from PBS.

More than a thousand years before the arrival of Europeans in the southwestern, indigenous peoples were establishing their occupation of the Colorado Plateau, learning how to live in a climate where winters were bitter and summers torrid. Contemporary archaeologists uncover the tribes scientific and technological accomplishments that were hidden in plain sight. **Aired 04/01/2023**



SCAN the QR code to the left to watch *Black Canyon Gunnison National Park Colorado* from GoTraveler, which



is also pictured to the right. Crystalline rock walls and startling depths. Come here for spectacular canyons that have been shaped and reshaped. The Black Canyon is so steep and narrow that for most of daylight, it's dark. Far from city lights, astronomers love to come here for incredible star gazing.



SCAN the QR code to the left to read the article "A River Runs Through Us" by James Beard Award Winning journalist Boyce Upholt for TheNatureConservatory.com, about the challenges facing the Southwestern United states with the ecological changes of the Colorado River Basin.

COLORADO



SCAN the QR code to the left to read the article "Long before Denver was Here", nearly 50 Native American tribes called the Front Range home" from CPRNews.com, about the different indigenous tribes that once called the Denver area home, before their people were pushed very far away from their homeland.



SCAN the QR Code to the left to watch *Colorado Experience: "The Ute Water Legacy"* from PBS.

This episode dives into the history of the Ute Water Settlement, a landmark water agreement affecting the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute Tribes. Spanning several decades of negotiations, take an in-depth look at the complex interplay of water rights, tribal sovereignty, and environmental stewardship in the arid West. **Aired 10/03/2024**



THE LONG DRAW AT BLACK CANYON OF THE GUNNISON
PHOTO BY BENEC PALOS (@BENCE_P)
WWW.MAGNIFICENTWORLD.COM/BLACK-CANYON-OF-THE-GUNNISON-NATIONAL-PARK/

TATTERED COVER BOOK STORE



TATTERED COVER BOOK STORE, DENVER CO
PHOTO COURTESY OF



**Tattered Cover
Book Store**

Bringing Books & People Together Since 1971

RESEARCH FROM OLIVIA O'CONNOR, DRAMATURG FOR THE RESERVOIR AND GEFEN PLAYHOUSE'S LITERARY MANAGER

Playwright Jake Brasch's mom, Kate, worked as a children's book buyer for many years at Tattered Cover Book Store. First opened in 1971, the Denver institution had three locations in 2013-2014: a flagship location on Colfax Ave, a location in Lower Downtown, and a satellite store in Highlands Ranch. The Lower Downtown location is the one pictured to the left; in early 2014, it was consolidated to a single floor.

Profiles on Tattered Cover over the years highlight its sense of community (as it expanded, the store had two moves staffed by volunteers), its analog coziness (when computers were first introduced to the sales floor, they were painted brown to blend in with the shelves), and its beloved comfy reading chairs. There's also a moral righteousness to the independent bookseller: Joyce Meskis, the owner of Tattered Cover from 1974 through 2015 (she fully retired in 2017 and died in 2022), was a staunch defender of the First Amendment.

But alongside the romance is the struggle to turn a profit in an industry with notoriously thin margins, to compete with online behemoths for customers, and to maintain a beloved store's identity over many decades. In 2022, the *Denverite* published an in-depth article about the store's shifting values under new ownership: "[Employees] say the store is growing too fast and becoming too corporate, old-timers are being pushed out, staff are overworked, [and] wages are too low." The article also highlights the ways in which the store came under criticism in 2020 for refusing to take a stance during the protests that followed the murder of George Floyd (criticism that then unearthed larger critiques about the company's workplace environment and customer experience). Running alongside these critiques are acknowledgements of the company's value over the preceding decades. One long-time employee remembers the store as a place of solace after his mother's death and his divorce; another former employee remembers the relief of finding an accepting workplace after her gender transition in the 1990s. In 2024, Tattered Cover was acquired by Barnes & Noble, but according to a press release is to be run independently by its own store managers, maintaining its distinct identity. Today it has four locations in Denver and Littleton, Colorado.

The events of *The Reservoir* take place near the end of an era for the store, just about a year before longtime owner Joyce Meskis announced her retirement.

ACTIVITY: DANCE, DANCE *evolution*

The Creative Team for *The Reservoir* uses movement in the play to help tell Josh's story, reminding the audience of the journeys we all take in our life with family members through movements both mundane and transformative.

Movement is a great tool when a creative team is building a piece of theater. Whether through choreographed dance or exaggerated gestures, actors can use their bodies to help tell a story.

ACTIVITY TIME: Up to 30 minutes. Include 5 minutes to stretch and warm-up. The activity can be done solo or with others.

Choreograph two different dances or "routines" based on the movements, gestures, and actions you do during your favorite chore, and your least favorite chore. You may choose two different songs to accompany each routine. Select songs that musically and lyrically evoke the feelings you have when doing the chore.

1. Favorite Chore - emphasizing why you enjoy the chore
2. Least Favorite Chore - exaggerating the reasons why it may be such an annoying yet necessary chore to complete.

CONSIDER: The movements of your feet, your hands, your head and body, when one: washes the dishes, does the laundry, or vacuums the floor. What are all the steps one must complete to finish the chore? What is the pace at which you perform each step? Are there any items or "props" you handle or use to perform your chore? How does each movement help you tell your story of this moment? Is there a beginning, a middle and an end? How can you incorporate humor into your dance?

CHALLENGE: Find the perfect accompanying selection of music, and record your piece or perform your chore dance for a friend or loved one, or post on social media like Tik-Tok!

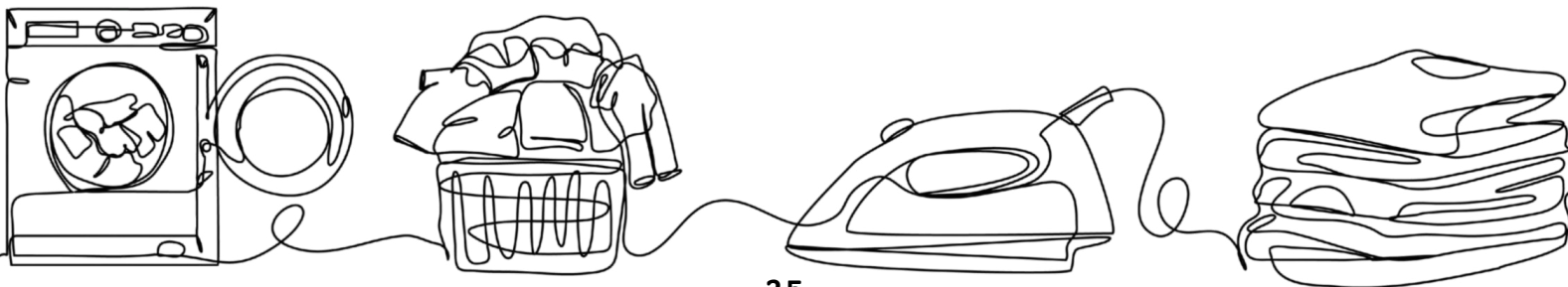
DID YOU KNOW? According to a survey of 1,000 Americans ages 18 and over, 80% of Americans will spend nearly a year of their life doing chores. 28% said laundry is the most time-consuming household chore. 1 in 3 Americans admit they enjoy doing chores. SOURCE: <https://www.angi.com/articles/household-chores-survey.htm?msocid=3f8f61f74be960ec0e18743f4a0761d7>



Scan the QR Code to the left to watch: "Addiction", a dance choreographed by Mia Michaels and performed by Kayla and Kuponon on Fox's *So You Think You Can Dance*.



Scan the QR Code to the left to watch: "Jazzercise and the 3 generations of women running it" about the history of Jazzercise with Judi Sheppard Missett with her daughter Shanna and her granddaughter Skyla.



ALCOHOL AND THE BRAIN

EXCERPTS FROM THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON ALCOHOL ABUSE
AND ALCOHOLISM

Alcohol Use Disorder or AUD is a medical condition that is characterized by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (*DSM-5-TR*), as “a problematic pattern of alcohol use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress.” AUD can be mild, moderate, or severe, depending on the number of symptoms a patient has experienced in the previous 12 months. As AUD progresses in severity, alcohol-induced changes in the brain can make it very difficult to cut down or quit. With prolonged abstinence, however, at least some AUD-induced brain function changes may improve and even reverse⁴ as other neurocircuits compensate for those compromised by alcohol. Evidence-based treatment can help people achieve abstinence and facilitate these brain changes.

Previously, AUD has been referred to as alcohol abuse, alcohol dependence, alcohol addiction, and, colloquially, alcoholism. It is important to note that the terms “alcohol abuse” and “alcoholism” may increase stigma, whereas using the diagnostic term “alcohol use disorder” with patients may help reduce stigma.

The term “addiction” is widely used but is not a diagnosis. When drinking becomes compulsive, it can be considered an addiction. In the context of addiction, compulsivity can be described as repetitive behaviors that persevere in the face of adverse consequences and are inappropriate to a particular situation. Individuals who suffer from compulsions often recognize that the behaviors are harmful, but they perform them nonetheless to temporarily reduce tension, stress, or anxiety.

The brain mediates our motivation to repeat behaviors that lead to pleasurable, rewarding states or reduce uncomfortable, distressing physical or emotional states. In this context, drinking alcohol can be motivated by its ability to provide both relief from aversive states and reward. These dual, powerful reinforcing effects help explain why some people drink and why some people use alcohol to excess. With repeated heavy drinking, however, tolerance develops and the ability of alcohol to produce pleasure and relieve discomfort decreases, which can further escalate alcohol use.

During acute and protracted withdrawal, a profound negative emotional state evolves, termed hyperkatifeia (*hyper-kuh-TEE-fee-uh*). Hyperkatifeia is defined as a hypersensitive negative emotional state consisting of symptoms such as dysphoria, malaise, irritability, pain, and sleep disturbances. Heavy drinking may also produce deficits in executive function that contribute to behaviors and symptoms such as impulsivity, compulsivity, impaired cognitive function, and impaired decision making. These brain changes related to excessive alcohol use underlie many AUD symptoms.

HOW DOES THE BRAIN CHANGE AS AUD DEVELOPS?

Alcohol produces pleasure. Alcohol produces pleasurable or rewarding effects by increasing activity in brain systems related to reward processing. In the basal ganglia, activation of opioid receptors in the nucleus accumbens may be responsible for some of the pleasure associated with alcohol intoxication. In addition, alcohol causes the ventral tegmental area to send dopamine signals to the nucleus accumbens. Dopamine is critical for learning to associate alcohol and its related “cues”—people, places, or things—with the rewarding effects of alcohol. Some people are initially drawn to alcohol more for its rewarding effects, while others seek it largely to alleviate physical or emotional discomfort, as detailed next.



Habit formation makes it harder to stop drinking. When drinking behavior patterns are repeated, the brain shifts control over the sequence of actions involved in drinking from conscious control via the prefrontal cortex to habit formation using the basal ganglia. This transition from incentive salience toward habitual responding, mediated by changes in brain circuitry, can make it more likely that someone will continue their drinking pattern and harder for them to stop.

Alcohol initially reduces, then promotes negative emotional states and pain. Alcohol may temporarily reduce negative emotional states in part by dampening activity in the extended amygdala. This brain structure mediates the fight or flight stress response and helps people learn to associate certain cues with danger or threat. Neurons interacting within the extended amygdala release stress-related neurotransmitters such as corticotropin releasing factor and dynorphin, which in turn influence other brain areas involved in stress responses, including the hypothalamus and brain stem structures.

Like its effects on emotional pain, alcohol can temporarily reduce physical pain. Research suggests that reduction of pain only occurs at or above binge levels of drinking (reaching a blood alcohol concentration of 0.08% or above, typically after 4 or more drinks for women and 5 or more

drinks for men within about 2 hours). As blood alcohol concentrations decrease, however, the sensation of pain returns even more intensely. This again leads to a cycle of misregulation, that is, using a “solution” that ultimately makes the problem worse. The discomfort or misery felt during withdrawal, including negative emotional states, is the leading precipitant of relapses in patients recovering from AUD.

The brain becomes motivated to continue drinking. As noted earlier, negative emotional states, or hyperkatifeia, can persist into protracted withdrawal and are a major driver for relapse in AUD. Also, the powerful effects of alcohol on neurocircuits relating to reward and relief cause the brain to attach strong motivational value or incentive salience to cues associated with alcohol, whether in the immediate environment or recalled from memory. These environmental stimuli, or thoughts of them, can prompt a return to alcohol seeking via connections made between the prefrontal cortex and the basal ganglia using the neurotransmitter glutamate. Especially when combined with negative emotional or physical states, the sight or thought of alcohol or related cues can trigger cravings, or the urge to drink.

Executive function becomes dysregulated. Alcohol disrupts function in the prefrontal cortical areas involved in executive function, impulse control, decision-making, and emotional regulation. These functional deficits make it harder to withstand urges and avoid repeating the behaviors related to the addiction cycle, particularly in the face of stress and physical and emotional discomfort. In severe cases, impairments in prefrontal cortical function can persist despite months to years of abstinence, making it particularly difficult to recover from or compensate for deficits in executive function.

WHAT DOES RECOVERY LOOK LIKE?

Recovery is a dynamic, individualized process through which a person pursues two clinical goals, cessation from heavy drinking and remission from AUD symptoms. If people achieve both aims and maintain them over time, they are considered clinically recovered from AUD. Importantly, recovery is often marked by additional improvements in physical health, mental health, relationships, spirituality, and other measures of well-being, which in turn, help sustain recovery. While individual paths to recovery vary widely, the majority of people with AUD reduce or resolve their drinking problems over time, with studies showing a reliable pattern of improvement that counters views of AUD as an inevitably worsening disorder. The first year can be a mix of gains and setbacks, but in the long term, quality of life measures typically increase and psychological distress decreases.

SOURCE: NIH Contributors. “Alcohol Use Disorder: From Risk to Diagnosis to Recovery”. <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/health-professionals-communities/core-resource-on-alcohol/alcohol-use-disorder-risk-diagnosis-recovery#pub-toc5>

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are for informational purposes only & do not constitute a medical service. Consult a qualified health professional for medical advice, diagnosis, & treatment.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

In the play, Beverly and Hugo go with Josh to support meetings to help him with his AUD. Alcoholics Anonymous is a support meeting and fellowship of people who come together to solve their drinking problem. It doesn't cost anything to attend A.A. meetings. There are no age or education requirements to participate. Membership is open to anyone who wants to do something about their AUD. A.A.'s primary purpose is to help people with AUD to achieve sobriety.

VISIT WWW.AA.ORG TO LEARN MORE OR FIND A MEETING NEAR YOU

SUBSTANCE ABUSE & MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE ADMINISTRATION NATIONAL HELPLINE

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation and to improve the lives of individuals living with mental and substance use disorders, and their families.

SAMHSA's mission is to lead public health and service delivery efforts that promote mental health, prevent substance misuse, and provide treatments and supports to foster recovery while ensuring access and better outcomes for all. SAMHSA envisions that people with, affected by, or at risk for mental health and substance use conditions receive care, achieve well-being, and thrive.

SAMHSA's National Helpline is a confidential, free, 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year, information service, in English and Spanish, for individuals and family members facing mental and/or substance use disorders. This service provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations.

Visit FindTreatment.gov which provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations.

Llama 1-800-662-4357. La Línea Nacional de Ayuda de SAMHSA es un servicio gratuito, confidencial, disponible 24/7. Este servicio ofrece referencias para tratamiento e información sobre salud mental y trastornos por uso de drogas o alcohol, prevención y recuperación.

Visita FindTreatment.gov/es para tener acceso confidencial y anónimo a una lista completa de instalaciones certificadas de tratamiento de uso de sustancias y salud mental en los Estados Unidos y sus territorios.

CALL 1-800-662-HELP (4357) OR VISIT WWW.SAMHSA.GOV

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

At the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, we understand that life's challenges can sometimes be difficult. Whether you're facing mental health struggles, emotional distress, alcohol or drug use concerns, or just need someone to talk to, our caring counselors are here for you. You are not alone. Available 24/7/365, Free, Confidential, Judgement-free, compassionate, support.

CALL OR TEXT 988

Llama o textea al 988 o chatea en linea988.org. Si tienes pensamientos suicidas, estás preocupado por un amigo o un ser querido, o necesitas apoyo emocional, llama o textea al 988 o chatea en linea988.org/chat y podrás hablar con un consejero de crisis capacitado quien te podrá ayudar las 24 horas del día.



TARA RICASA AND SARA PORKALOB AND STUDENTS
AT THE STUDENT MATINEE OF *DRAGON LADY* AT GEFEN PLAYHOUSE
PHOTO BY ISAAK BERLINER

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Depending on the time available and your participants' interests, guide them to respond to the suggested questions below. Encourage everyone to participate, and respect differing opinions. Individuals can share their thoughts with a partner, in a small group, as part of a bigger group discussion, or as written responses.

- What are some images and moments from the production that stood out or resonated with you? What was meaningful, stimulating, surprising, evocative, memorable, interesting, exciting, striking, touching, challenging, compelling, delightful, different, and unique?
- Overall, how did you feel while watching this show? Engaged? Amused? Inspired? Provoked? Uncomfortable? What made you feel this way?
- Did you identify or empathize with any of the characters? If so, which character(s) and when? If not, why not? Which characters remind you of someone in your life?
- What is your relationship like with your grandparents or your grandchildren? Often the idea of chosen family can extend outside of our relatives. Who in your life is in your chosen family? What is your relationship like with them?
- Check out these films focusing intergenerational relationships: *Red Hook Summer*, *Bad News Bears*, *The Farewell*, *Harold & Maude*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Oh God*, *Book 2*, *Encanto*, *Whale Rider*, *The Holdovers*, *Secondhand Lions*, *Daughters of the Dust*. After watching, compare the relationships between the characters in those films with the relationships we see in *The Reservoir*. What other stories with intergenerational relationships do you love and why?
- What are some family traditions, customs, or sayings of yours? What family recipe has been handed down over the years? Tell the story of your first bar/bat mitzvah.
- What experience in nature left you feeling like you could scream out "I KNOW NOTHING", like the characters do in the play at the Canyon?
- Who in your family do you feel most comfortable talking to about serious topics? What about less serious or silly topics? Who in your family has supported you through a difficult time?
- Describe the design elements from the show: set, props, costumes, music. Be specific as possible: what did you see, hear, feel and experience? How do these design elements inform the storytelling and how do they make you feel as an audience member?
- If you could tell a loved one anything, who would you tell and what would you tell them? Who or what inspires you? Give them a call or write them a letter and share how impactful they were in your life.

FROM THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE BLOG



CALL YOUR GRANDMA

Playwright Jake Brasch says *The Reservoir* is a loveletter to his grandparents. He says One of the joys of working on this play has been getting to hear grandparent memories.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO READ a few stories about grandparents from the cast and team of the play. From Jake: "I hope they might help you jog memories of your own. And for the young folk out there, I hope this play and these memories inspire you to call your grandma. I promise she has all of your answers."



What are your fondest memories of your grandparents?

Q&A WITH JAKE BRASCH

BROADWAY WORLD INTERVIEW ON THE RESERVOIR AT GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

SCAN THE QR CODE TO READ the interview from Broadway World.

Playwright Jake Brasch discuss his professional debut, the personal experiences that shaped *The Reservoir*, and bringing humor to difficult subjects.



JAZZERCISE, SPINACH OR THE CROSSWORD?



If you had to do one of these everyday – jazzercise, eating spinach, or crossword puzzles – what would you do?

SCAN THE QR CODE to hear the cast of *The Reservoir* weigh in.



NAVIGATING THE RESERVOIR

A VERY SERIOUS INTERVIEW
WITH JAKE BRASCH AND SHELLEY BUTLER



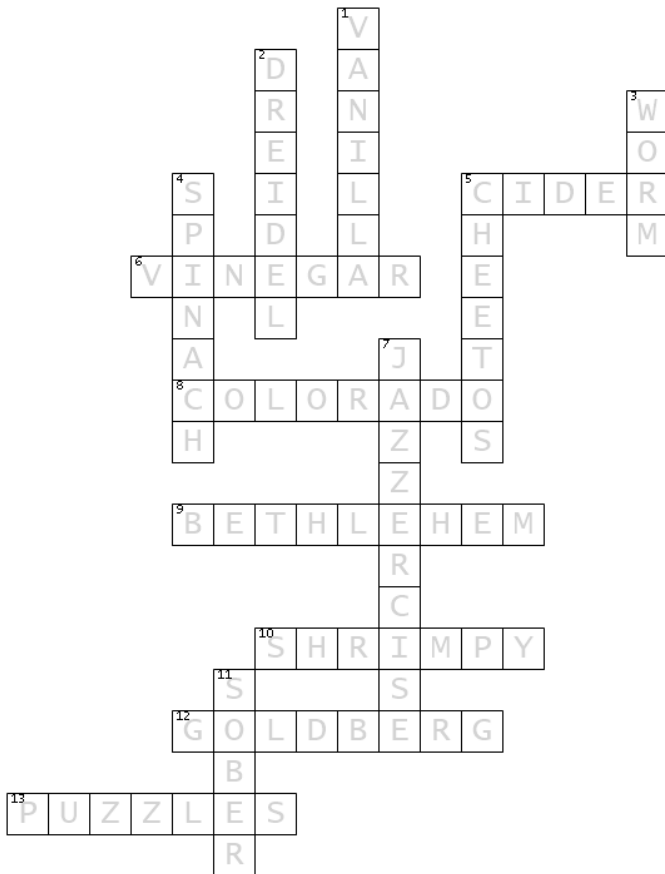
SCAN THE QR CODE TO watch Playwright Jake Brasch and director Shelley Butler talk about working on this life-affirming story, and what they hope audiences will leave with after watching this play.





DRAMATURG OLIVIA O'CONNOR AND PLAYWRIGHT JAKE BRASCH IN REHEARSAL FOR THE RESERVOIR AT GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE.
PHOTO BY ISAAK BERLINER

THE RESERVOIR CROSSWORD ANSWER KEY



GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE
EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
PRESENTS

BEYOND THE BARRACKS

AN EVENING OF VETERAN
CULTURAL IDENTITY MONOLOGUES

TUESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2025
7:30PM

Please join us for the culminating performance of the 2025 Veterans Writing & Performance Workshop. Following a 10-week educational intensive, an ensemble of military veterans from all branches will come together to share original and personal monologues with the community.

The Veterans Writing & Performance Workshop is funded in part by
The Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation and:

NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
ARTS
CREATIVE FORCES

FOR TICKETS & MORE INFORMATION VISIT
geffenplayhouse.org/veterans

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

THE EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM

The Geffen Playhouse's Education and Community Engagement programs provide access to current and next generation audiences with the goal of instilling an appreciation for theater that will last a lifetime. The programs are designed to deepen participants' meaningful connections to the plays, strengthen their critical thinking and communication skills, and foster community — with each other, the Geffen Playhouse, and Los Angeles.

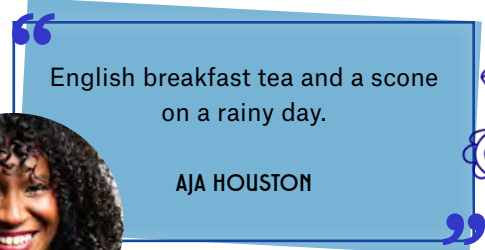
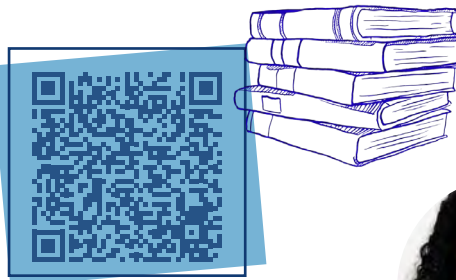
Whether in the classroom guiding a discussion after a student matinee, or leading a community group in a monologue writing workshop, the Geffen Teaching Artists are a vital bridge from the stage to the community.

The TAs at Geffen Playhouse are all working artists and are often “multi-hyphenates” - artists who have multiple skills such as acting, writing, directing, film-making and puppetry just to name a few.

Get to know the TA team a little better by scanning the QR Code to the right to read their bios.



GEFFEN'S EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STAFF AT THE STUDENT MATINEE OF *NOISE'S OFF* IN 2025. BACK ROW: DEJUAN CHRISTOPHER, ERRÒN JAY, AJA HOUSTON, LYSSA DEEHAN, MARK JACOB CHAITIN, PARIS CRAYTON III, BRIAN ALLMAN, BJ LANGE, TIFFANY OGLESBY; MIDDLE ROW: ASHLEY ROBINSON, GERRY TONELLA, PALOMA NOZICKA; FRONT ROW: SEAN MICHAEL BOOZER, SIDNEY EDWARDS, TARA RICASA PHOTO BY JEFF LORCH



AJA HOUSTON

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR
EDUCATION & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS
VISIT

geffenplayhouse.org/education



SCAN this QR code to watch videos from American Theatre Wing's Masterclass series on different jobs in American Theater. Stage Managers, Wig Makers, Scenic Designers, Front of House staff, Marketing Directors and many other people work behind the scenes to bring a show to life! If you are interested in a career in the arts and work behind the scenes, learn more here. #theater #jobs #alifeinthearts #getintotheatre #americantheatrewing #career #behindthescenes

WHAT REALLY MATTERS

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE DELICIOUS LITTLE THINGS IN YOUR LIFE?

In *The Reservoir*, Beverly tells Josh about the delicious little things that make life worth living: "Mountain views. Afternoon naps. Pumpernickel bagels with scallion cream cheese. The Sunday crossword." We asked a few of the Geffen Teaching Artists what were some of their delicious little things. Read their answers below.



“

Endless time, without curfew.
Safety in one's thoughts, and
our close friend's thoughts.
All the ___ you can eat.

ASHLEY DENISE ROBINSON

”

“

Lake swims. Dog snugs. Car singing.
Maple on everything. Baby rocking.
One-way tickets. Jacaranda blooms.
Green Mountain air. New plays.

LYSSA DEEHAN



”

“

Gardening, getting out on my
standup paddleboard and really
good coffee in the slight chill of
the early morning.

SEAN MICHAEL BOOZER



“

The smell of low and slow smoked
barbecue peaked by the taste as it
falls off the bone. Flying airplanes and
riding motorcycles!

BJ LANGE

”

“

Early bedtimes that turn into early risings.
Cream of wheat with butter and brown
sugar, like Grandma used to make. Jerk
Chicken fettuccine with steamed aspar-
agus. And delightful conversations with
loved ones that include ab tightening
robust laughter and deep thoughts being
shared.

ERRÒN JAY



”

“

Malibu Beach views. A glass (or two) of
champagne. A slice of NY style cheese-
cake. A Black sci-fi or romance novel.
A tray of briny oysters.
Soothing Coltrane.

TIFFANY OGLESBY

”



WHAT ARE
YOURS?



REMEMBERING & CELEBRATING ADRIENNE OMANSKY

BY BRIAN ALLMAN, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Last November, Geffen Playhouse lost an unwavering, committed, and long-time education and community partner after 25 years of collaboration. Adrienne Omansky was the stalwart group leader of the Stop Senior Scams Acting Program (SSSAP) and a positive influence amongst everyone who had the pleasure of working with her. Adrienne's compassion and dedication left an indelible mark on our Geffen Playhouse Lights Up Community Engagement program, and fellow community organizations. She embodied what it means to lead with heart and vision, with an unyielding commitment to the greater good.

Adrienne's work transformed lives, and her kindness united people; a child actor, activist, and retired Los Angeles Unified School District educator of over 38 years. Adrienne dedicated her post-teaching career to protecting seniors from fraud through the innovative Stop Senior Scams Acting Program, founded in 2009. SSSAP guides senior volunteers to perform skits, musical numbers, and testimonials that dramatize common scams, educating peers in an engaging and relatable manner. These performances have reached diverse venues across Southern California, from intimate community centers to large conventions, highlighting scams like IRS impersonations, fake prize winnings, and identity theft.

Adrienne's commitment extends beyond local communities. In 2018, she testified before the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, sharing insights from SSSAP and emphasizing the program's impact in empowering seniors to recognize and resist scams. Her advocacy contributed to the Los Angeles City Council's designation of May 15 as Senior Fraud Awareness



TOP PHOTO: ADRIENNE WITH MEMBERS OF THE STOP SENIOR SCAMS ACTING PROGRAM. BOTTOM PHOTO ADRIENNE ON VACATION
PHOTOS COURTESY OF ARTHUR OMANSKY

Day, underscoring the importance of ongoing education in combating elder fraud.

Under Adrienne's leadership, SSSAP has evolved into a dynamic troupe of senior actors, some as old as 98, who often draw from personal experiences to craft their performances. The program's unique approach—combining humor, music, and real-life scenarios—resonates deeply with audiences, making complex fraud schemes understandable and memorable. By fostering peer-to-peer education, Omansky has created a supportive environment where seniors feel empowered to share their stories and learn from one another.

Adrienne was instrumental with many intergenerational programs including reading programs between seniors and children in elementary schools to acting programs with older adults and high school students. She had two programs with University High School students and her acting class, in association with the Geffen Playhouse -- that were performed on the Geffen stage. Adrienne's acting class was her creation as part of her Programs for Older Adults, when she was teaching with LAUSD. A few of the current actors in her SSSAP were students in her acting class and were a part of those intergenerational programs.

Adrienne's unwavering dedication to senior education and fraud prevention has not only safeguarded countless individuals but has also inspired a community-driven movement that continues to thrive and adapt in the face of evolving scams. Her loving and caring husband of 50+ years, Arthur Omansky, will now oversee the SSSAP Geffen Lights Up Community Engagement group. Adrienne proves that heroes can be any age.



SCAN the QR code to watch a video "Senior Acting Group Uses Theater to Warn Others About Scammers" from Spectrum News 1 in 2018.



SCAN the QR code to read more about the program and Adrienne's impact- "How Seniors Can Recognize and Avoid Scams on Senior Fraud Awareness Day" from the San Fernando Valley Sun in 2024.



SCAN the QR code to watch Adrienne read her story "The Beautiful Swimming Pool" as part of Staged Stories at the Wallis in 2019. Staged Stories gives older adults (55+) a chance to reconnect with their creativity, write their personal stories and share them onstage at The Wallis.



A STILL FROM ADRIENNE'S TESTIMONY IN A 2018 U.S. SENATE HEARING LOOKING AT HELD EXAMINING SCAMS AFFECTING OLDER AMERICANS
PHOTO FROM CSPAN

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