

VISION QUILT 2023

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

Our mission is to harness the power of art and community voice to create real change against gun violence in our neighborhoods. Our work amplifies community voices & mobilizes action through workshops, exhibitions and community dialogue.

Prepared by Diana Garcia



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Letter from our Executive Director

Our collective grassroots efforts expanded in exciting ways during 2023. We want to thank all of our partners, donors, and funders in California, Oregon, and Washington for this success.

Thousands of visitors to the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art viewed the work of students from Odyssey Middle School, thanks to the efforts of artist Naomi Spinak.

BIPOC nonprofits, educators, activists, and artists in Portland, Oregon are beginning to partner with the newly formed Vision Quilt Team in Rose City.

Thanks to the eight-year commitment by Lighthouse Community Public Schools in East Oakland, key parts of the multidisciplinary curriculum entitled “Addressing Gun Violence: Creating Visionaries, Storytellers and Changemakers” were implemented in 2023 in their two middle schools with a finale exhibition seen by over 600 people. Vision Quilt documented the impact of this work on principals, students and community members. A film was created so that other schools and community-based organization can see an overview of this FREE curriculum in the hopes that they will adopt it for their communities.

None of this success can occur without the tireless efforts of our volunteers and partners. We are a unique, small, but mighty nonprofit that depends on grants and donors. Please consider supporting our efforts to serve youth and communities most impacted by gun violence.

In gratitude,

Cathy DeForest, Ph.D.

Vision Quilt Founder and Executive Director





Program Overview

Vision Quilt's programs harness the power of art and storytelling to address gun violence and promote healing and social change within BIPOC communities. Our workshops provide participants with a platform to think about their experiences, express their visions for safer communities, and engage in dialogue about root causes and solutions to gun violence. These workshops involve youth and survivors directly impacted by gun violence.

Our exhibitions showcase the powerful artwork created during our workshops, amplifying the voices of those affected by gun violence and sparking conversations within the community. These exhibitions serve as opportunities for dialogue, education, and advocacy, engaging a diverse audience in discussions about the impact of gun violence and strategies for prevention.

Community dialogues provide a space for individuals to come together to discuss pressing issues related to gun violence, share personal experiences, and brainstorm solutions. These dialogues aim to foster understanding, empathy, and collaboration among community members and empower participants to become advocates for positive change within their communities.

Overall, Vision Quilt aims to raise awareness about gun violence, provide healing and support to those affected, and mobilize communities to take action towards creating safer and more peaceful neighborhoods.



Workshops

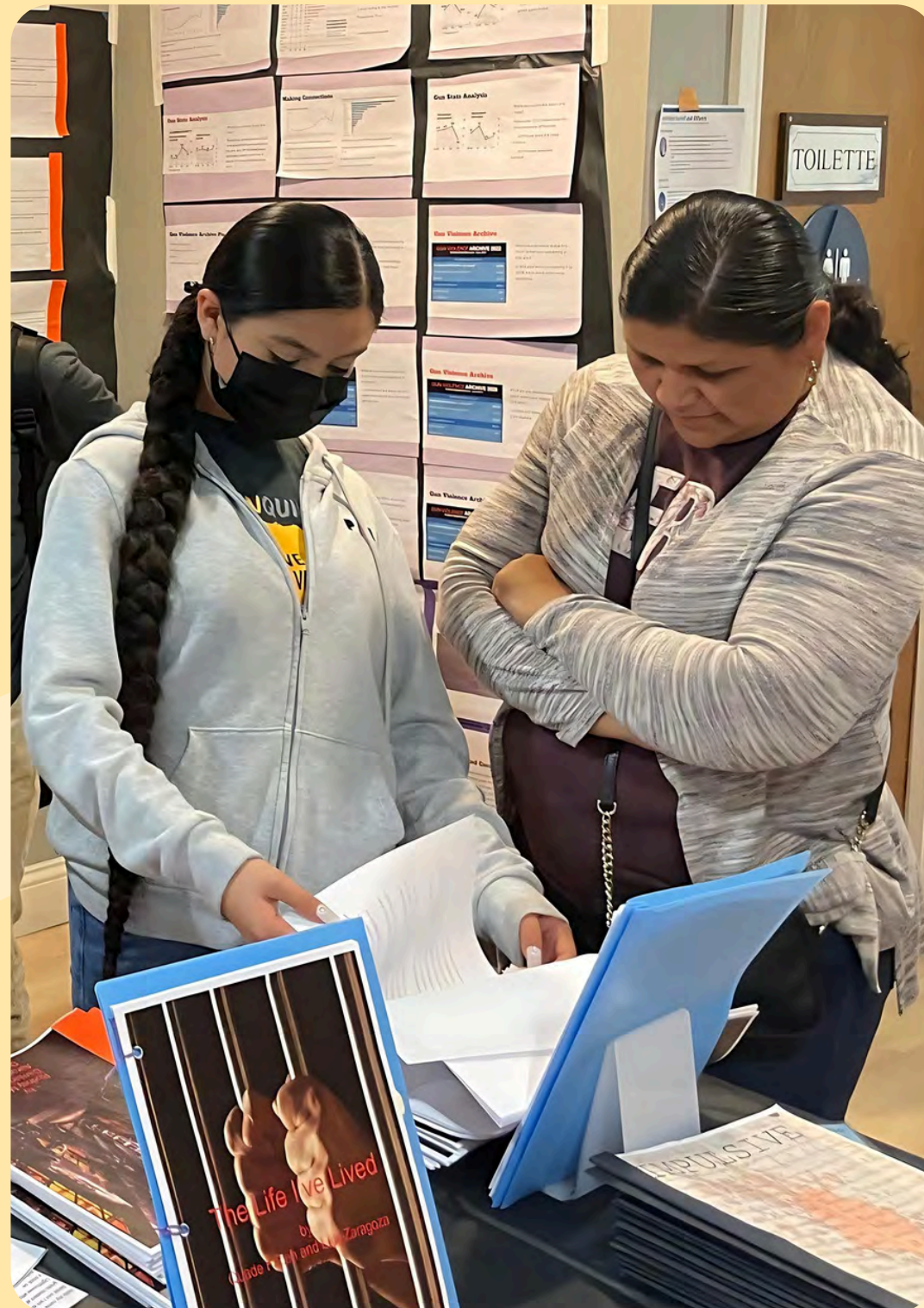


Exhibitions



Community
Conversations

Our Impact Summary



WHAT WE CAN IMAGINE...
WE CAN CREATE.



In 2023, Vision Quilt made significant strides in its mission to empower BIPOC communities and combat gun violence through workshops, exhibitions, and community dialogues. Key achievements include successful partnerships with organizations like Lighthouse Community Public Schools, which expanded our reach and impact in East Oakland. Our collaboration with Youth Alive! resulted in impactful summer workshops. The creation of large panels by Massachusetts artist, Marge Barrett-Mills, served as powerful symbols of community resilience and solidarity. Vision Quilt forged partnerships on Bainbridge Island and in Portland, collaborating with organizations like P:ear to expand its reach and impact. These partnerships facilitated the organization's efforts to engage with new communities and provide support to those affected by gun violence. Additionally, Vision Quilt strengthened its capacity by hiring Diana Garcia, as project manager in Oakland, and welcomed Margaret Hoffman as Outreach Coordinator in Portland, Oregon. These additions to the team have enabled the organization to enhance its programming, increase community engagement, and further its mission of promoting healing and dialogue through art and storytelling in workshops, and exhibitions.



Testimonials

"Art is very powerful, you can speak to so many people through a drawing through a painting, and they might not speak a remotely similar language to yours. I feel like my artist statement will reach somebody's heart to do something I can't do about gun violence."

—Celeste Lopez,
Lighthouse 8th Grader

"Our vision is for our students to be change makers, we say this to the kids, 'you are the change makers of tomorrow,' and this (the implementation of the AGV curriculum toolkit) is it, this is the change."

—Dr. Latora Baldrige,
Principal at Lodestar School Grades 6-12

"I love this project, I would love for this work to be seen by a broader audience, I would love for this to be seen by folks who don't agree with us yet, because most folks want to make the world safe for their children... I like the story that Vision Quilt is sharing, that together we can prevent gun violence."

—Claudia Alick,
Executive Producer of Calling Up Justice





Vision Quilt Oakland, CA

In 2023, Vision Quilt's partnership with Lighthouse and Lodestar successfully implemented workshops, an exhibition, and community dialogues in under-resourced Oakland communities, reaching over 150 youth and survivors. These initiatives provided a platform for participants to explore their experiences with gun violence and express their visions for a safer future. The Lighthouse and Lodestar exhibition attracted over 800 attendees, showcasing the transformative power of art. Following the exhibition, a documentary film was created to highlight the profound impact on parents, students, teachers, and the broader community.

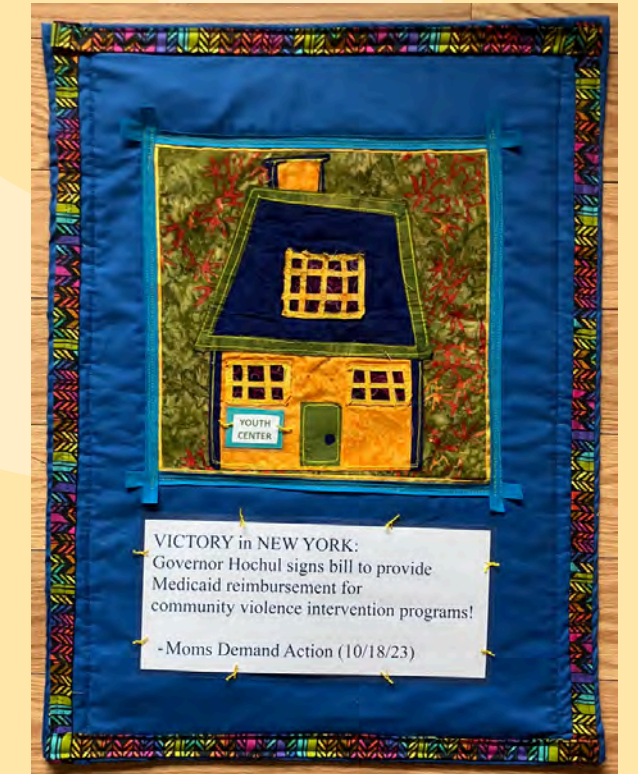
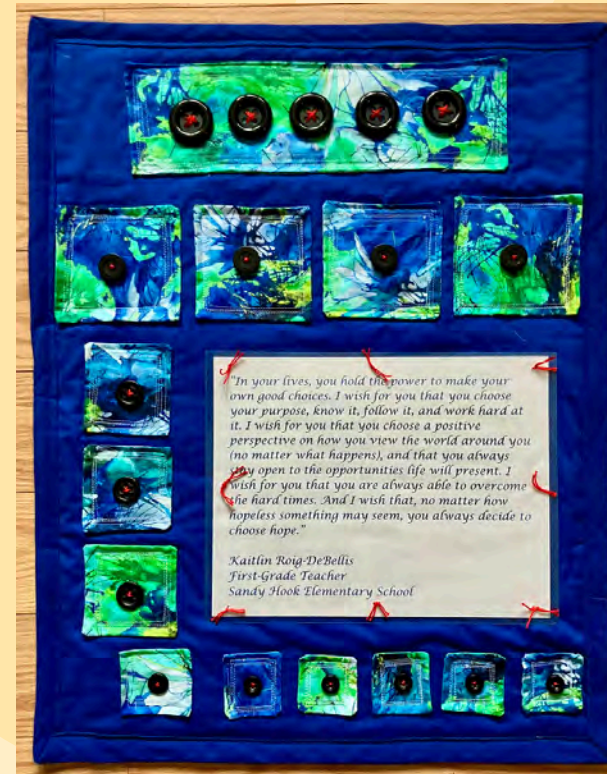
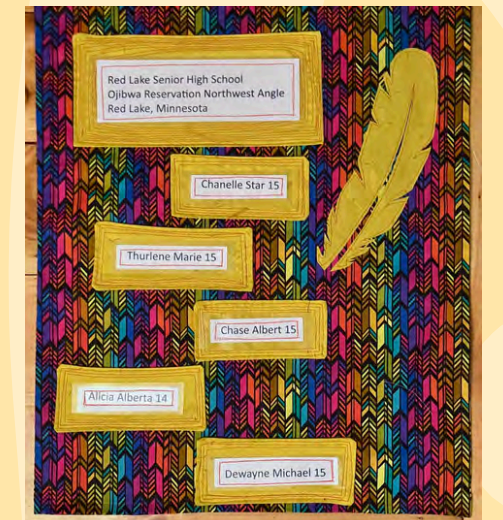
Additionally, the Youth Alive Summer workshops created a safe and supportive space for young people to engage in creative expression, fostering healing and empowerment. To enhance these efforts, Vision Quilt hired Diana Garcia as the Oakland Project Manager to lead and expand initiatives in the Oakland area. Diana's leadership has been instrumental in coordinating programs and strengthening community partnerships.

Vision Quilt has been working diligently to grow its capacity and strategize to better serve the community and address the pressing issue of gun violence. Through continuous efforts, we aim to expand our reach and provide more comprehensive support to those affected by gun violence, fostering resilience and promoting healing through the power of art and dialogue.



Marge Barrett-Mills

Marge Barrett-Mills is a Vision Quilt magic maker from Montague, Massachusetts. Marge documented the children killed in 52 separate school shootings in 2022. Her 18 x 24-inch Vision Quilts not only honor the children whose young lives were lost, but they honor the other children, teachers, school staff, first responders, bus drivers, families, and friends whose lives have been changed forever. Vision Quilt is deeply grateful for her work and will lend these quilts to other organizations who want to offer healing and calls to action to end gun violence in the U.S.



Marge Barrett-Mills



The message that's released should not just be to state the number of casualties after a single school shooting, but also to consider the hundreds of other children, teachers and staff present, the first responders, bus drivers, families, extended families, as well as our entire country as a whole. With each incident, their lives and our lives have changed forever.

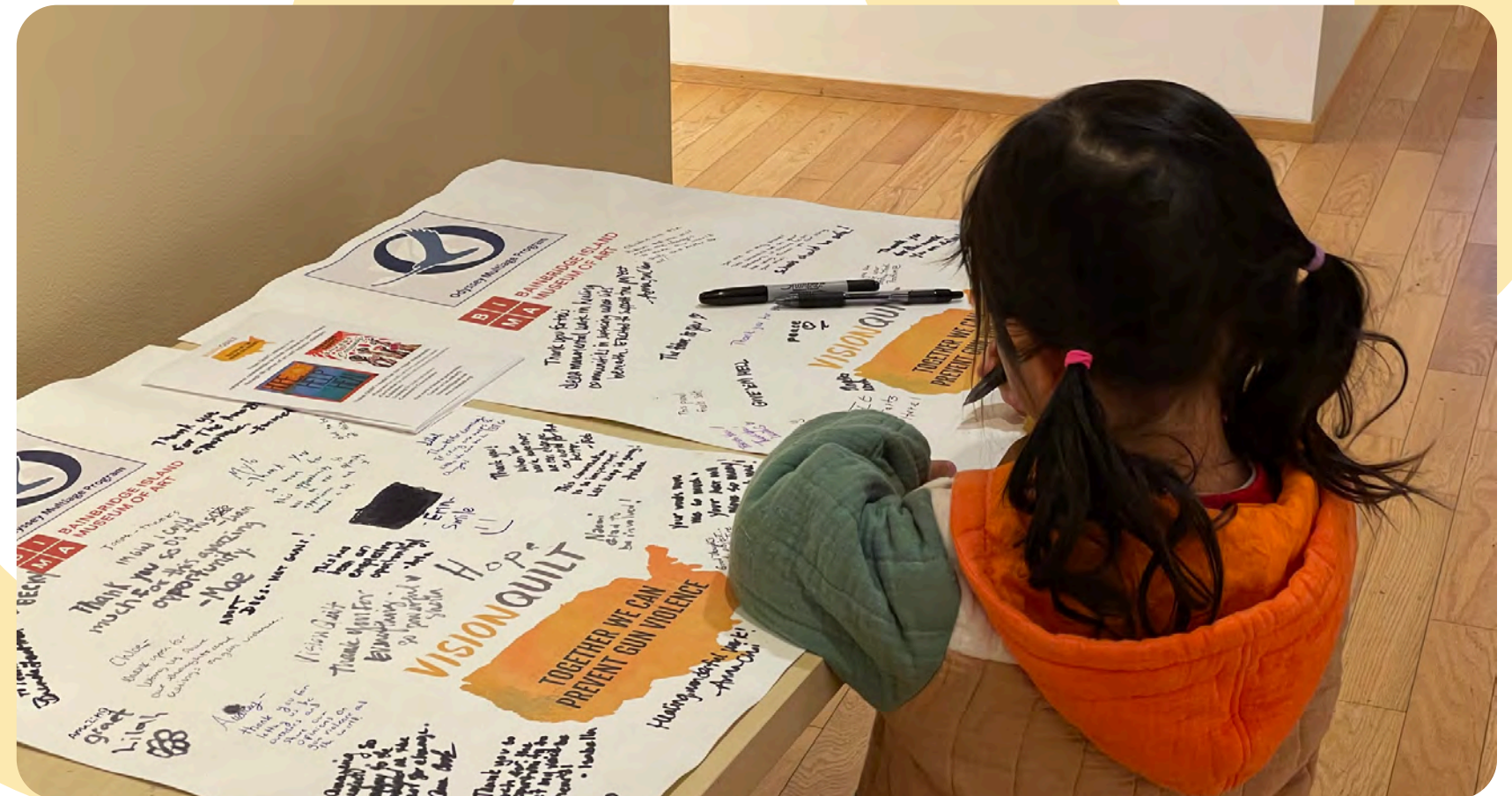
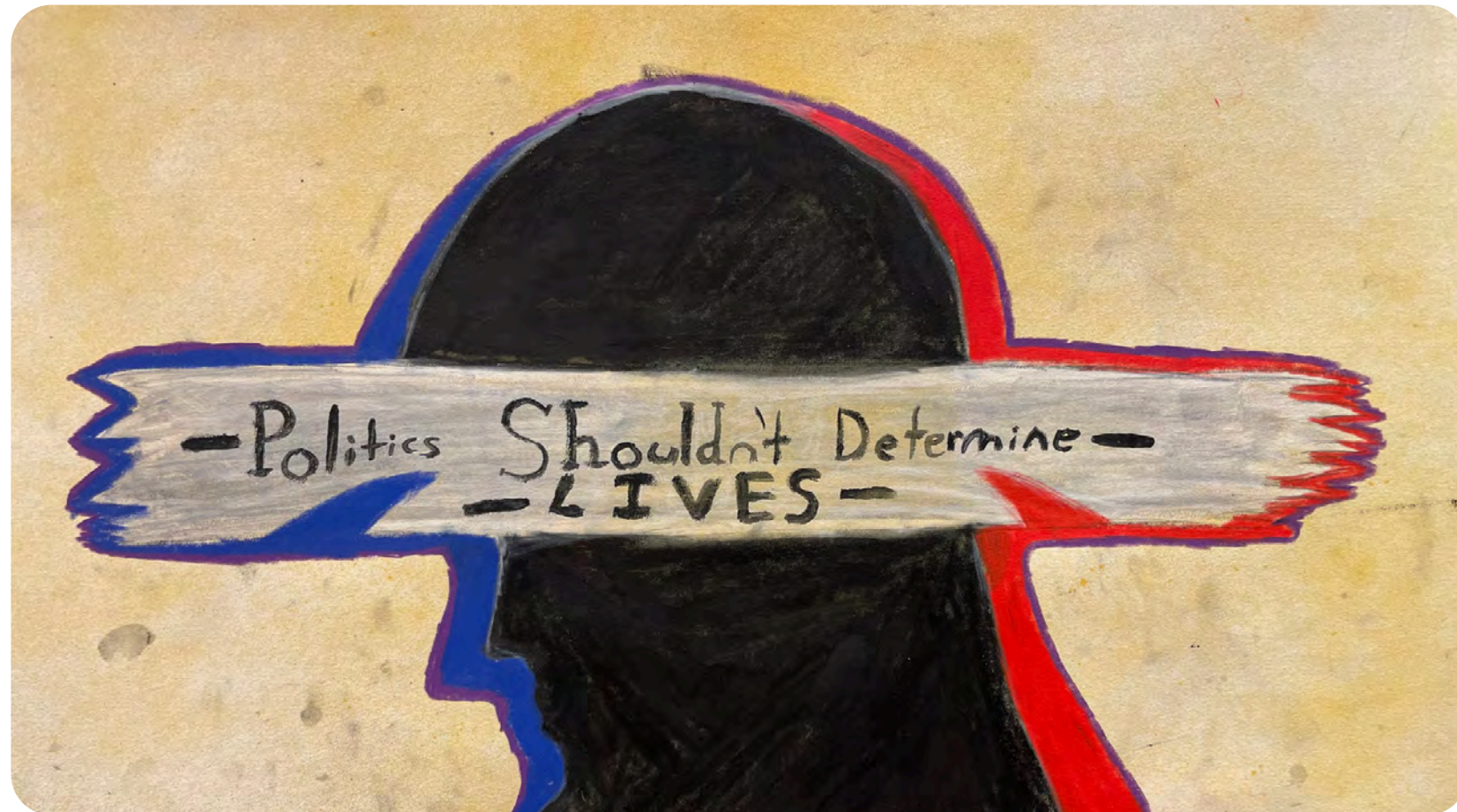
This quilt was made in hopes that it will help somehow with the healing of these continued deep losses that we share. Vision Quilt helps to show others all the support and caring that is coming in from around the country as well as around the world. It helps to give a voice to those who are struggling to speak their mind and help them to stand with others in support of bringing an end to gun violence in America.

Marge Barrett-Mills

Vision Quilt

Bainbridge Island

Thousands of visitors to the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art viewed the work of students from Odyssey Middle School, thanks to the efforts of artist Naomi Spinak and Ryan Abshere, guidance counselor at Commodore Options.





Vision Quilt Portland, OR

In 2023, Vision Quilt moved its offices to Portland, Oregon with its outreach efforts headed by retired attorney, Margaret Hoffmann.

New partners in Portland include BIPOC-led nonprofits including P:ear, an organization that builds positive relationships with homeless youth through education, art, recreation and job training to affirm personal worth and create more meaningful and healthier lives. P:ear's resident artist, Kanani Miyamoto has been engaging the youth in creating Vision Quilt art. The first panel done by one of their youth was a drawing of a hammer and a rose which the artist entitled "Rebuilding Rose City".

Other collaborations are with Don't Shoot Portland (DSP) an arts organization that promotes social justice, founded and run by Teresa Rainford and Taishona Carpenter. Vision Quilt will participate in DSP's Juneteenth weeklong program where local Portland youth learn about Black history, activism, and racism. Vision Quilt is also collaborating with Lines For Life, a group engaged in initiatives to improve crisis services, and advance mental health and suicide prevention.

Financial Summary

In 2023, Vision Quilt received a Direct Community Grant from the City of Oakland and Councilmember Treva Reid, which facilitated workshops with Youth Alive! in 2024. This grant is crucial for expanding our reach and providing safe, creative spaces for young people to express their experiences and foster healing. Additionally, we received funding from Lighthouse Community Public Schools to revise the "Addressing Gun Violence" (AGV) curriculum and produce a documentary film.

The funding from Lighthouse Community Public Schools enabled us to film the process and impact of Vision Quilt at Lighthouse and Lodestar Middle Schools. The documentary showcased our workshops and the resulting exhibition and highlighted the profound effects on parents, students, teachers, and the broader community. The finale exhibition, viewed by over 800 people, demonstrated the transformative power of art in addressing gun violence and promoting community healing.

Overall, these financial contributions have been critical in expanding Vision Quilt's programming and outreach. They allowed us to organize 12 workshops with Lighthouse Community Public Schools, reaching 150 students, and conduct impactful community dialogues. The funds supported curriculum development, film production, and general operational costs, enhancing our ability to empower BIPOC communities in Oakland and beyond. We are deeply grateful for the support from our funders, partners, and the community, which has enabled us to continue our mission of preventing gun violence through art and dialogue.



Please consider making a one-time or recurring donation to Vision Quilt. Any size donation is greatly appreciated, and your support helps us continue our vital work in the community.

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



Acknowledgements

Vision Quilt extends its heartfelt gratitude to the many partners, donors, volunteers, and stakeholders who have contributed to our success in 2023. Your unwavering support and dedication have enabled us to expand our reach and impact, bringing healing and empowerment to communities affected by gun violence.

- **City of Oakland and Councilmember Treva Reid:** Deep gratitude for the Direct Community Grant, enabling impactful Youth Alive! workshops in 2024.
- **Lighthouse Community Public Schools:** Thank you for your partnership and generous funding for the revision of "Addressing Gun Violence" curriculum and creation of a powerful documentary film showcasing work at Lighthouse and Lodestar.
- **Youth Alive!:** For collaborating with us on summer workshops, providing safe, supportive spaces for young people to engage in creative expression.
- **Diana Garcia:** Oakland Project Manager, whose leadership and dedication have been instrumental in coordinating programs and strengthening community partnerships.
- **P:ear:** Thank you for building positive relationships with homeless youth through education, art, recreation, and job training.
- **Don't Shoot Portland:** Gratitude for promoting social justice and collaborating on initiatives to support local youth and communities.
- **Lines For Life:** Appreciation for advancing mental health and suicide prevention through collaborative efforts.
- **Margaret Hoffman:** As our Portland Outreach Coordinator, Margaret leads efforts in Portland, Oregon, fostering new partnerships and expanding our impact. Her dedication and leadership have been vital in connecting with local organizations and communities.
- **Cathy DeForest:** Founder and Executive Director, whose vision and guidance have been the driving force behind Vision Quilt's mission and success.
- **Marge Barrett-Mills:** Heartfelt thanks for your creativity and dedication in documenting the children lost to school shootings. Your powerful quilt panels raise awareness, foster healing, and ensure these young lives are never forgotten.
- **Volunteers & Community:** Tireless efforts and commitment to creating safer, healthier communities through art and dialogue.
- **Attendees & Participants:** Grateful for your engagement in our workshops, exhibitions, and community dialogues. Your stories, creativity, and advocacy are the heart of Vision Quilt.



Thank You

Thank you to all our partners, donors, and community members for your unwavering support and dedication to our mission. Your contributions have been invaluable in making our 2023 successes possible. Together, we are creating safer, more vibrant communities.



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Appendix A: Partners and Collaborators

- Lighthouse Community Public Schools

www.lighthousecharter.org

- Youth Alive!

www.youthalive.org

- City of Oakland

www.oaklandca.gov

- Councilmember Treva Reid

www.oaklandca.gov/officials/treva-reid

- P:ear

www.pearmentor.org

- Don't Shoot Portland

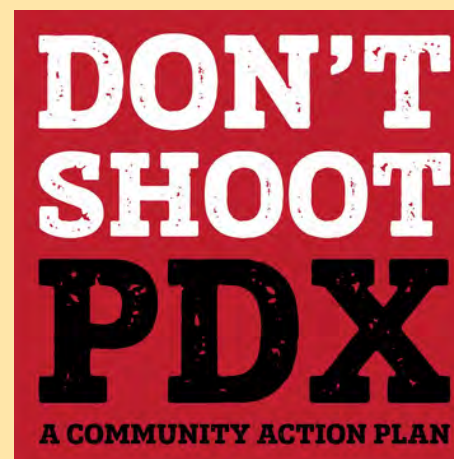
www.dontshootpdx.org

- Lines For Life'

www.linesforlife.org

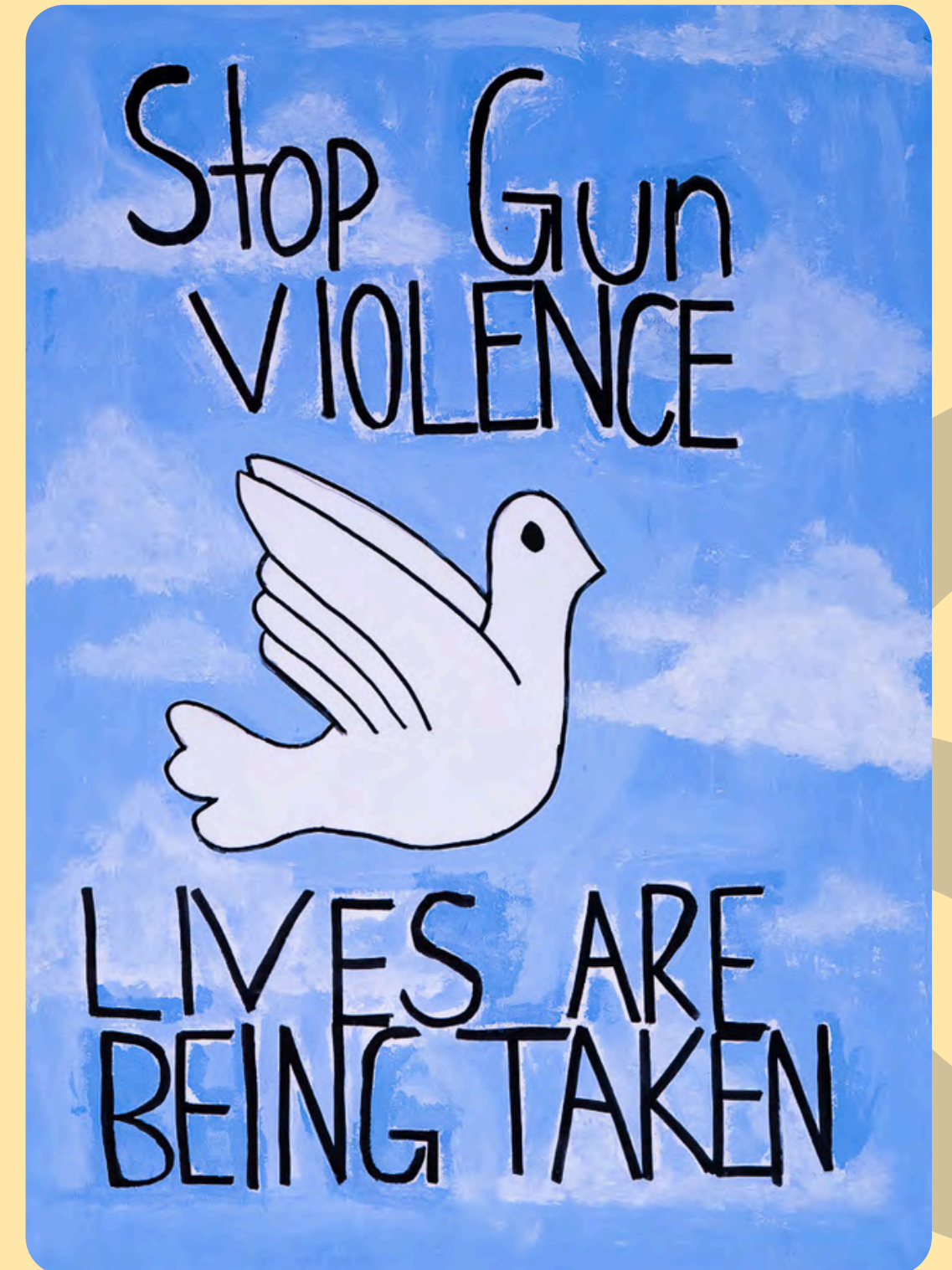
- Know Resolve

www.knowresolve.org



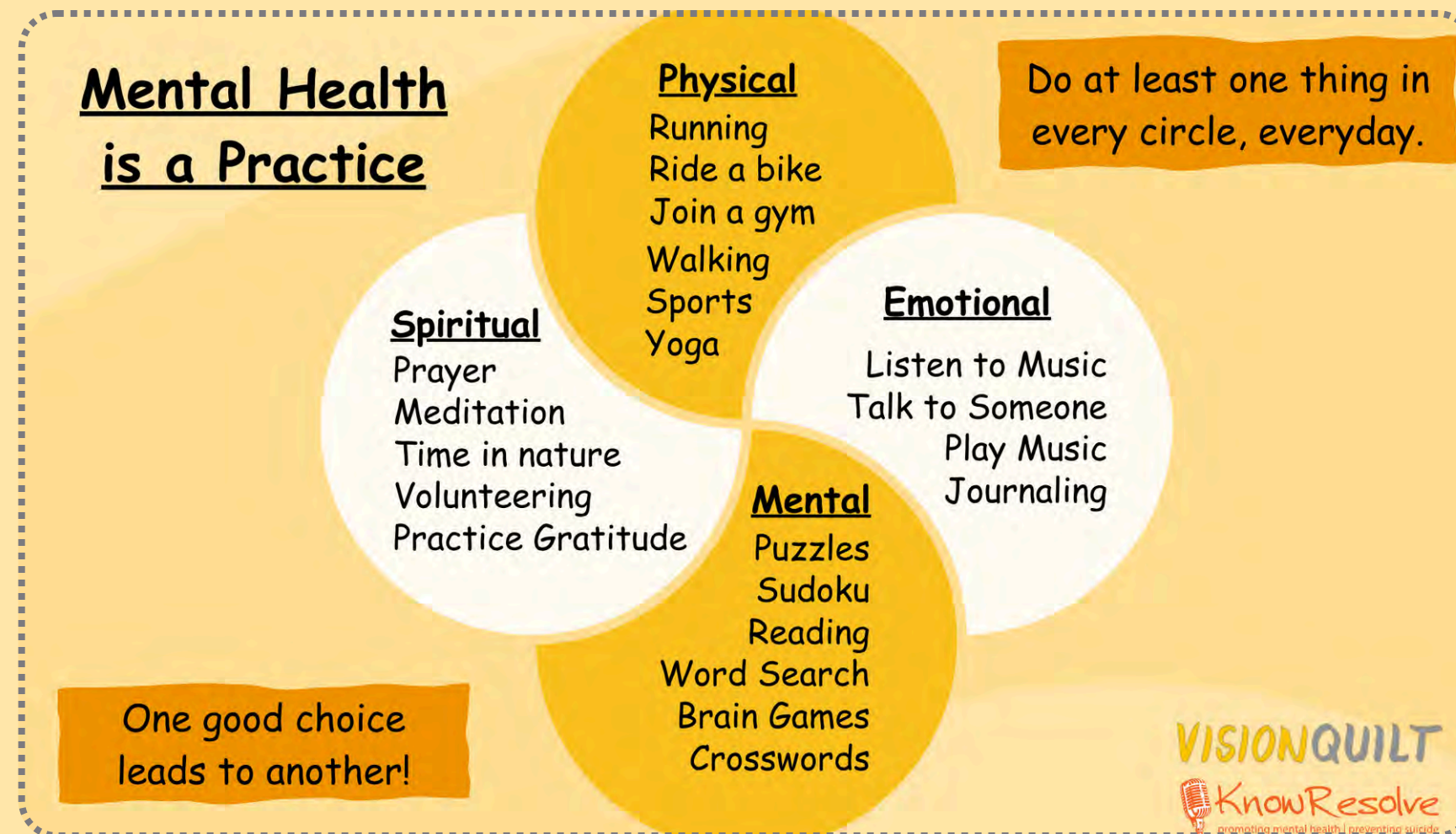
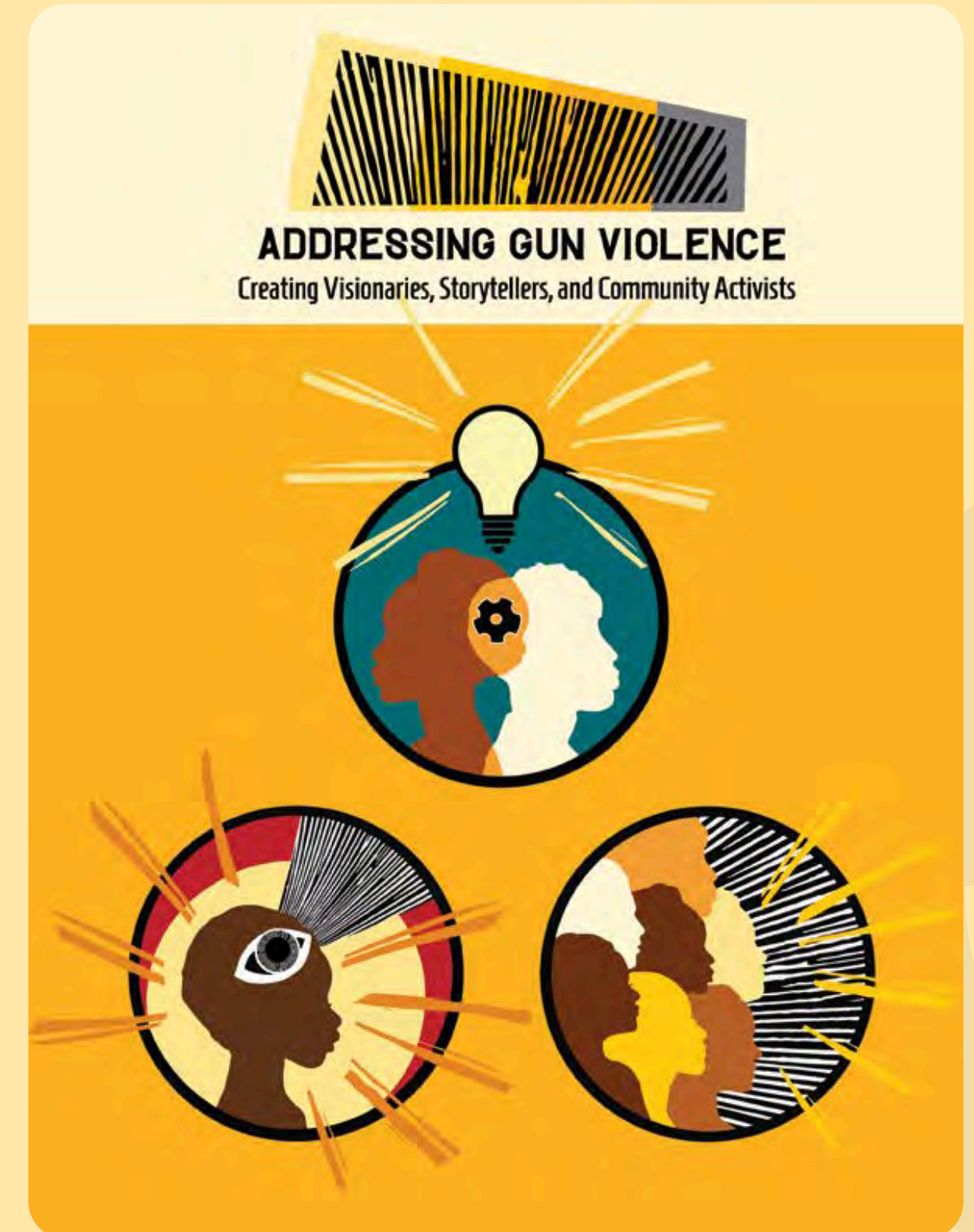
Appendix B: Program Reports and Impact Data

- Impact Report on Lighthouse Community Public Schools AGV Expedition
- Youth Alive! Summer Workshop Report



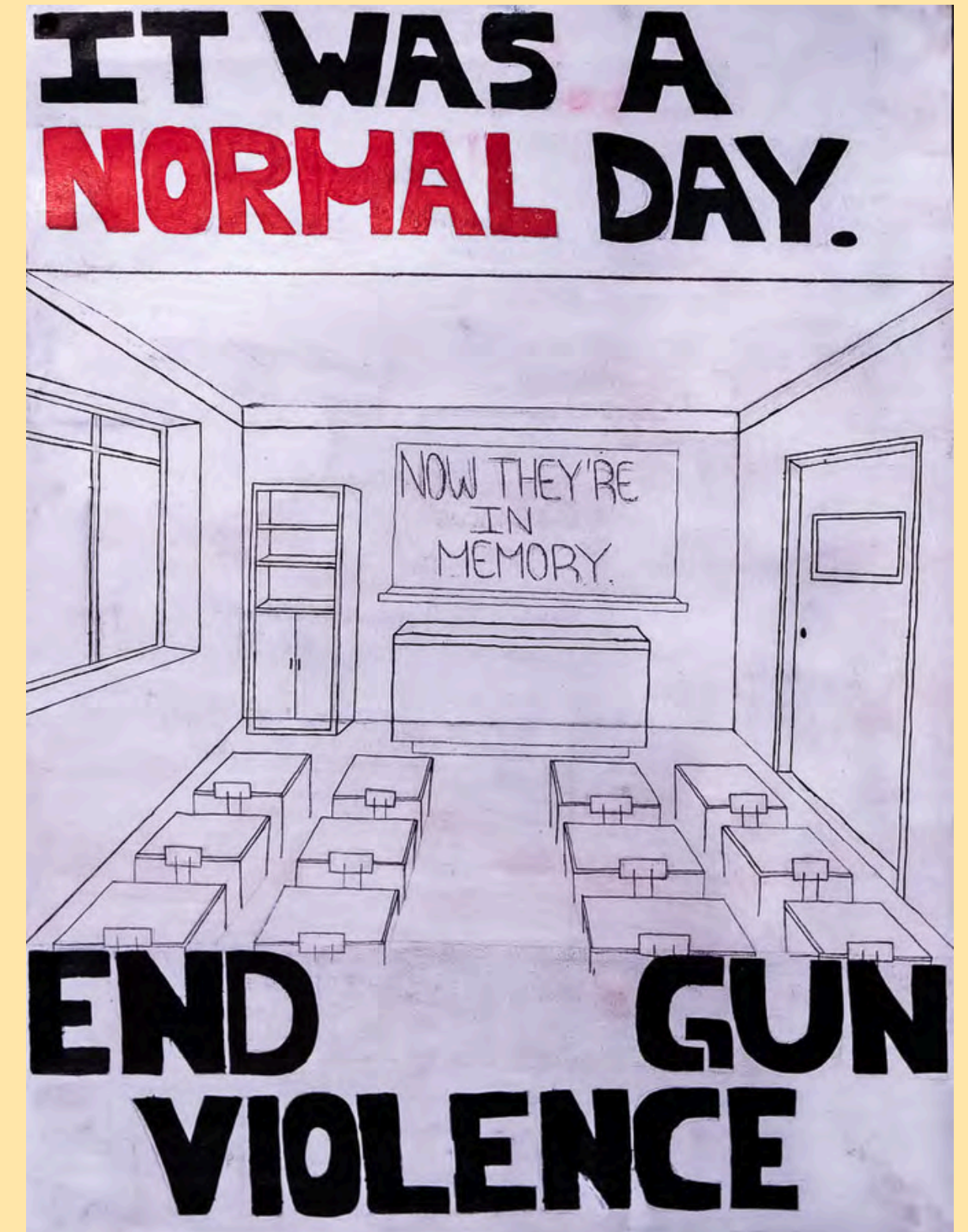
Appendix C: Educational and Health Resources

- Toolkit: "Addressing Gun Violence: Creating Visionaries, Storytellers and Community Activists"
- Four Circle Mental Health Practices



Appendix D: Visual Documentation

- Lighthouse Community Charter School Vision Quilt Panels
- Lodestar Middle School Vision Quilt Panels
- Youth Alive! Vision Quilt Panels
- Addressing Gun Violence: Creating Visionaries, Storytellers and Changemakers (Trailer)
- Addressing Gun Violence: Creating Visionaries, Storytellers and Changemakers (30-min Documentary Film)



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