A vacant lot in a broken neighborhood in the middle of Cleveland can become a lot of things. A garbage dump. A gathering spot for trouble. How could it ever be a source of hope?

In a play *The New York Times* terms “a tour de force,” one actor plays multiple characters, including Ana, the nosey neighbor; Curtis, the weightlifter; and Kim, a young girl who plants six special lima beans. Watch as this one deed inspires many more, with an immersive video landscape that magically brings their intertwining stories to life. As a garden grows, so does the community, blooming into something bigger, better, and beyond all expectations.

**March 8 — March 19, 2021**

*Adapted from the book by* **PAUL FLEISCHMAN**  
*Directed by* **PETER C. BROSIUS**  
**A CHILDREN’S THEATRE COMPANY ORIGINAL PRODUCTION**
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For virtual activities, videos, and more join the creativity on Flipgrid!
https://flipgrid.com/discovery/partners/60

Check out 400+ lessons that can used to bring agriculture into your classroom!
https://minnesota.agclassroom.org
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why do you think some characters were included in the book but not in the play?</td>
<td>Start your own class garden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The garden in Seedfolks lacked access to water. What problems might future gardens face? Brainstorm solutions to those problems.</td>
<td>Write a version of Seedfolks about your neighborhood.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Why do you think the play and book are called Seedfolks?</td>
<td>Write a letter to the actor or review of the performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was each characters motivation for joining the garden? Did they get what they were seeking?</td>
<td>Name an emotion that a character felt in the story. When have you felt that same emotion? How does your body feel when you experienced that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore point of view by analyzing how events are portrayed differently by different characters.</td>
<td>How can one person impact a community or neighborhood?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amir comments that they might not have chased the criminal but did because he was near the garden. What do you think this means? Why does the person’s proximity to the garden matters?</td>
<td>Kim mourns the loss of her father, who she barely knew. She believes that he will see her planting a garden. How do you grieve the things or people you’ve lost?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What prejudice does each of the characters hold over the other members of the garden? How do they overcome those prejudices?</td>
<td>Write a letter to the actor or review of the performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create portraits of each character or make a new cover for the book.</td>
<td>Name an emotion that a character felt in the story. When have you felt that same emotion? How does your body feel when you experienced that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagine you are a resident of the neighborhood and write your own chapter. How would you add to the story?</td>
<td>What prejudice does each of the characters hold over the other members of the garden? How do they overcome those prejudices?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is the neighborhood in Seedfolks similar or different from yours?</td>
<td>Write a letter to the actor or review of the performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Springboard ideas of what to talk about, write about, or explore while connecting ‘Seedfolks’ to your curriculum.
Class Act: Actor’s Tools

Actors use many tools to help them tell a story — three we focus on at CTC are body, voice, and imagination.

Explain that projecting means using a loud voice and enunciating means speaking clearly. Have students practice projecting and enunciating by saying “Seedfolks” as a group, and then individually.

Brainstorm emotions that actors might portray. Try saying “Seedfolks” using those emotions. Students will naturally begin to use their body to portray the emotion as they say the line. Brainstorm how your body looks or feels different when you are feeling these emotions. Allow a few students to showcase their work as a solo.

List some of the characters in the play along with characteristics of each. How would each of those characters say the title? Say the line as a group, using different characters as inspiration. Then, ask for volunteers to perform the line individually.

Class Act: Take a Stand

Objective: This activity encourages students to examine their stance on a topic. This activity works best in an open area.

Directions: Create a line through the center of the space using either painter’s tape or other distinguishers. One side of the line represents “agree” and the other side of the line represents “disagree.” However, the room represents a spectrum with the middle representing “neutral.”

Pose a question to the group and ask them to stand on the point in the agree/disagree spectrum that describes their feelings. After everyone has found their spot, ask select students why they stood where they did. Encourage students to be persuaded by their peers — they can move to different points as their outlook shifts or perspective changes. Spend time unpacking each question and all responses as needed.

Below are a few prompts to get you started. We encourage starting at questions with low stakes and moving to higher stakes as students become comfortable with the activity. Spend time unpacking after the activity concludes.

Example prompts:

- Pizza is the best food ever created.
- I prefer to grow my own food instead of purchasing it.
- I feel connected to the neighborhood I live in.
- I feel connected to my community.
- One person has the ability to change a community.
- One person has the ability to change the world.
- I can be friends with someone who has a different background than me.
- I can be friends with someone who has different opinions from me.
- I can be friends with someone who has different beliefs from me.
**Class Act: Tossing and Translating Lines**

**Objective:** This activity allows students to explore lines from the story and create a kinesthetic anchor to remember the meaning of the line.

**Directions:** Cut up the lines below into strips and place them into a hat for students to choose at random. There should be multiples of each line so that 3-5 students have the same lines. Every student in the class should receive a strip of paper.

After all students have received a line, they should group themselves by line so that everyone with the same line is working together. Groups should work together to create a tableau or frozen image that illustrates the meaning of their line.

When students are finished, allow each group to showcase their tableau and say their line as a group.

| “Why do I need TV when I have 48 apartment windows to watch across the vacant lot?” |
| “There is plenty about my life I can’t change... But a patch of ground in this trashy lot? I can change that.” |
| “The smell’s enough to curl up a crocodile’s nose, especially in summer.” |
| “He had a two-foot-wide smile on his face. A plan started growing in his head just like a plant.” |
| “Just be near people, nice people, feel good, like next to fire in winter. Feel very safe.” |
| “When I came by to check ‘um, my biggest one, the one I’d been watching the most, was gone.” |
| “There were plenty like me who got as much out of seeing that garden grown as the ones in there pulling weeds. It felt like ours, too.” |
| “You’ve seen fishermen mending the rips in their nets? That’s what I do - only with people/” |
| “We gave food away to others, even I did, a businessman, trained to give away nothing, to always make a profit, contributed my biggest eggplant.” |
Class Act: I Dream Of...

**Objective:** This activity allows students to explore their dreams for the future through physicality and gesture. Students will make observations and infer meaning.

**Directions:** Gather students in a circle. One at a time, each student will step forward and say “Hello, my name is (insert name here) and for my future, I dream of...” They will then show their dream for the future through gesture or mime. Allow each student to have a turn showcasing their dream.

When everyone has had a chance, reflect with students about what they observed. What were the similarities they saw? Did any gestures stand out? What emotions did they feel while watching these gestures?

Class Act: This Community Needs...

**Objective:** This activity challenges students to create original dialogue and examine the emotions of characters. Students will use observation skills and defend their observations using evidence from the scene.

**Directions:** Brainstorm with students important moments from the story or play. Choose a specific moment to build a tableau. **Tableau** is an acting word for frozen image. Choose five students to be actors. Have the first student come to the front of the class and say, “This story needs...” For example, if the scene is orphans cleaning the orphanage, a student might say, “This scene needs a bucket.” The student will then use their body to become that character or object. The remaining four students add into the scene, one at a time, until all five students are working together to create the objects or characters in the scene.

Once all the students are frozen in the scene, allow each to make up a line of dialogue their character or object would say. Challenge the students to connect to what the other actors are saying to create a conversation. Ask the rest of the class to make observations about the scene and defend their analysis with evidence from the scene (facial expressions, levels, etc.).

With the actors still frozen in tableau, allow each to say what their character might be thinking or feeling in the scene. Reflect on how what we say and what we think are different. How do you decide what to say out loud and what to keep to yourself?

Write it Out: Role on the Wall

**Objective:** This activity allows students to brainstorm external and internal factors for characters and create deeper, more empathetic understanding of character motivations. Students will consider different character’s point of view.

**Directions:** Draw an outline of a person on the board. Choose a character from the play for your shape to represent. Brainstorm all the external things that impact the character (other characters, incidents we see and those we hear about, societal pressures, etc) and write those around the outside of the figure. Next, fill the inside of the character with ideas of how the character feels about all the things on the outside.

Dismiss students to work individually on the activity focusing on a different character.
**Write it Out: Where I’m From**

**Objective:** This activity uses the poem *Where I’m From* by George Ella Lyon to build community and explore belonging. Students will practice writing skills by creating their own versions of the poem.

**Directions:** Gather students in a circle. One student begins by standing in the center of the circle and saying “Where I’m from everyone eats...” and completing the sentence. If that statement rings true for anyone in the circle, that person also takes a step into the circle. If they feel it is very true for them, they step farther into the circle than if it is only somewhat true for them. Assure students that they only need to share statements that they are comfortable sharing and that they get to decide if something is true for them.

After everyone has a chance to observe the commonalities, everyone re-joins the circle and another student has a turn being the person in the center.

Allow everyone to have a chance to complete the prompt then give them another prompt.

**Example Prompts:**

- Where I’m from everyone says...
- Where I’m from everyone knows...
- Where I’m from everyone believes in...
- Where I’m from everyone smells like...
- Where I’m from everyone feels...

Ask students to return to their seats and reflect on the activity as a group. How did they feel? Were there any moments that surprised them? What connections did you make with classmates?

Read or listen to the poem *Where I’m From* by George Ella Lyon. Using the poem and activity as inspiration, students can write their own version of *Where I’m From*. Students can either free write or use the template available at [https://bit.ly/2kj8XYO](https://bit.ly/2kj8XYO).

Ask for volunteers to showcase their poems for the class.
Team Builder: Hopes & Fears

Objective: This activity allows students to voice their hopes and fears for the future while comparing those with their classmates. This activity aims to give perspective and commonality.

Directions: Instruct all students to put their heads down and close their eyes. Sit for a moment in the silence then instruct students to begin to popcorn out their hopes and dreams for the future. Once the ideas begin to die down, instruct students to think about similarities and differences in those statements.

After the students have had enough time to think silently, instruct them to popcorn out their fears for the future. Assure students that these statements should be ones they are comfortable sharing with the class. Again, give students a moment to think about the similarities and differences.

Invite students to slowly open their eyes. Reflect as a group about similarities and differences they heard with the hopes and dreams. How did they feel when they were hearing the hopes and dreams of their classmates? Reflect on the similarities and differences they heard in the fears for the future. How did they feel while hearing the fears of their classmates?

Team Builder: Town Map

Objective: This activity challenges students to think critically about their community and build special awareness. This activity works best in a large open space such as a gymnasium, classroom with desks to the side, or outside.

Directions: Tell the students that we are going to map the town in this open area using our bodies. Decide collectively where the school should be located on this map. Ask students to identify other locations in the town (post office, park, home, store, etc.) and stand where those are located on your map. You can mark these locations using cones or assign students to play the roles of those locations.

Once your map is established, ask students to step to a place that feels like home. This could be their physical home or it could be a place of home or comfort in the town. If students are comfortable, you can ask them to identify for the class where they choose and why they choose that location.

Next, ask students to step to a place they wish they could spend more time. Again, if students are comfortable, you can ask further questions to help them think deeper.

If you would like to explore deeper, you can ask students to step to a place where they have felt like an outsider or where they have felt unwelcome. This is a prompt where students might not be comfortable sharing but allow space for any that would like to share.

Discuss as a class what you learned in this activity. Did the students learn anything about their fellow classmates?
Team Builder: Mirror

**Objective:** This exercise will explore how we can use our bodies to mirror another person.

**Directions:** Place students into pairs. One student will be the mirror and one student will be the leader. The leader moves very slowly while the mirror tries to copy exactly what the person is doing (just like a real mirror would). Encourage students to mirror not only body movement but also facial expression.

Have students switch roles. Reflect on the experience. What was hard about that activity? What would make it easier? After reflecting, try it again to see if it is easier this time.

Team Builder: Guess Who

**Objective:** This activity is based on the games 20-questions and Guess Who. This is a great activity to explore characters and test knowledge.

**Directions:** Write each character on a slip of paper and place them in a hat for students to pull at random. Choose one student to be the leader. The leader will choose a slip of paper from the hat. The rest of the class will ask yes or no questions about the character in order to guess which **Seedfolks** character the leader chose. When a student thinks they know which character the leader has chosen, they can ask the question “Is it is…” If they are incorrect, questions resume. If they are correct, a new leader is chosen.

Teachers can make any restrictions needed such as limiting the number of times the class can guess which character or limiting the number of questions that can be asked before a guess is required.

Team Builder: Seed, Sprout, Sapling

**Objective:** This activity is based on the popular game of rock, paper, scissors and can be used to build community in your classroom.

**Directions:** As a group, decide on three simple gestures to represent the three instructions of seed, sprout, and sapling. Practise these moves as a group so students are confident and clear in their movements. When you say go, all students will find a challenger. The entire group says “seed, sprout, sapling, go.” When everyone says “go” the students will make one of the gestures (seed, sprout, or sapling). In this version of the game sapling beats sprout, sprout beats seed, and seed beats sapling. Whoever loses becomes the biggest cheerleader for the winner and the winner finds another winner to challenge.

Again, the entire class says “seed, sprout, sapling, go” and makes another gesture. Whoever loses becomes the biggest cheerleader for the winner along with everyone who is in the losers cheerleading section.

Continue this pattern until the competition is down to two competitors and the entire class is rooting for one or the other. Once you have a winner, the entire class becomes a cheerleader for that student.

Reflect on how it felt to be cheered for and how it felt to be a cheerleader for a classmate you may or may not know very well.
**Characterization**

This activity explores characterization and inference. An inference is a conclusion reached based on evidence or reasoning. Choose a character from the novel *Seedfolks*. Write a quote from the book to support each method of characterization. This will act as your evidence. Then, make an inference about the character based on what the evidence (quote) shows about the character.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Characterization</th>
<th>Quote from the text with page number</th>
<th>Inference: What does the quote say about the character?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appearance:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughts/Feelings:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Characters’ Reactions:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many of the characters in *Seedfolks* grow and transform along with the plants in the garden. Describe the characters at the beginning and then at the end. What changed or transformed? What caused this change?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>End</th>
<th>What made them change?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kim</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonzalo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sae Young</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amir</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florence</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Cork Board Conversations

Use the sticky notes below to think critically about *Seedfolks*.

Three adjectives that describe this play are...

1. 
2. 
3. 

This play made me feel...

This play made me think about...

A question I still have is...

This play taught me...

A status I would post on my social media after seeing the show is...

My Rating of *Seedfolks* at Children’s Theatre Company
Further Resources

More About Seedfolks

Chat with Author and Playwright, Paul Fleischman

From Seed to Seedfolks
http://www.paulfleischman.net/bio.htm#fromseedtoseedfolks

Seedfolks in the Classroom

Scholastic Lesson Plan

Bookrags— Seedfolks Classroom Activities
http://www.bookrags.com/lessonplan/seedfolks/funactivities.html#gsc.tab=0

Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom Curriculum Matrix
https://minnesota.agclassroom.org

More About Seedfolks at Children’s Theatre Company

Seedfolks in South Africa

Seedfolks at Children’s Theatre Company Video Trailer
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=86d-Glgw0Cw

Questions? Contact School Engagement Coordinator at schools@childrenstheatre.org