

EDUCATION
WORKSHOP

RAISING THE VOLUME

with Marcus Amaker & Charlton Singleton

Raising the Volume Episode III

*A Conversation
on Awareness
and Action
with Executive
Director of YWCA,
LaVanda Brown.*

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Grades 6th and Up

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CHARLESTON
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CORE SUBJECTS AND 21ST CENTURY THEMES

Mastery of core subjects and 21st century themes is essential for all students in the 21st century. Core subjects include English, reading or language arts, world languages, arts, mathematics, economics, science, geography, history and government, and civics. In addition to these subjects, schools must move forward to include not only a focus on mastery of core subjects, but also an understanding of academic content at much higher levels by weaving 21st century interdisciplinary themes into core subjects.

Global Awareness

1. Use 21st century skills to understand and address global issues.
2. Learn from and work collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue in personal, work, and community contexts.

Civic Literacy

1. Participate effectively in civic life through knowing how to stay informed and understanding governmental processes.
2. Exercise the rights and obligations of citizenship at local, state, national, and global levels.
3. Understand the local and global implications of civic decisions.

Work Creatively with Others

1. Develop, implement, and communicate new ideas to others effectively.
2. Be open and responsive to new and diverse perspectives; incorporate group input and feedback into the work.
3. Demonstrate originality and inventiveness in work, and understand the real world limits to adopting new ideas.
4. View failure as an opportunity to learn; understand that creativity and innovation is a long-term, cyclical process of small successes and frequent mistakes.
5. Implement Innovations.
6. Act on creative ideas to make a tangible and useful contribution to the field in which the innovation will occur.

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OVERVIEW

Everyone has a story. It's our place to take a moment to listen. Once you listen, your eyes open. You can put yourself in someone else's shoes and try to comprehend their experiences. You may be inspired, you may come away with more knowledge, or you may find a bit of yourself in someone else.

Raising the Volume is a series of Black stories. Stories about Black entrepreneurs, judges, authors, artists, and leaders in our community. Stories that need to be heard. Led by the Gaillard Center's Artists-in-Residence, Charlton Singleton and Marcus Amaker, Raising the Volume gives a platform to Black community members and opens us all up to honest discussion.

As you introduce this series to your students, follow the bullet points below for discussion. Your students will find that they are challenged to think about uncomfortable things. Those conversations are what will help us change our world. In the words of Judge McFarland, "To break down racial barriers, start where you are." So, let's start where we are and see what change we can bring to our community.

For each lesson, split your class into small groups for discussion or discuss as a whole. Choose the model that is the most comfortable for your students so they feel free to discuss opinions openly.

Teachers, if you are interested in scheduling a cross-school discussion on Raising the Volume Episode I, please email Sterling deVries at sdevries@gaillardcenter.org. Through cross-school Zoom calls, we can offer students from one school a different perspective on the video with students from a second school. We will schedule class-to-class meetings where whole groups can discuss various topics covered in Episode I.

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EPISODE III VIDEO



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(CLICK THE IMAGE TO WATCH EPISODE III)

VIDEO DISCUSSION

LaVanda Brown is the Executive Director of the YWCA in Charleston, SC. According to the website, “YWCA has been at the forefront of the most critical social movements for more than 160 years—from women’s empowerment and civil rights, to affordable housing and pay equity, to violence prevention and health care.”

The YWCA began as The Young Women’s Christian Society in the 1850s, but over the years the mission and message has evolved, welcoming all women, Christian or not. The most updated mission statement of the YWCA is “YWCA is dedicated to eliminating racism, women and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all.” There are over 2 million women serving as members of the YWCA and the sites are worldwide.

Let’s start our conversation with the changing mission statement of the YWCA. Throughout the years the statement changed; how and why?

In this interview, LaVanda Brown states we must “empower people to be their best self.” Unpack this quote, and discuss in your group. **What does she mean? How do you empower another human being?**

LaVanda Brown also states that change “starts with awareness.” **What is the meaning behind this statement?**

Finally, LaVanda Brown states, “None of us were here when that system was designed, but we are benefactors or victims.” **What system is she referring to? Who are the benefactors? Who are the victims?**

LaVanda Brown discusses the YWCA’s Racial Equity Institute. The purpose of the institute is to change the system. In part one of the training, attendees focus on a better understanding of racism. In part two, trainees create a vision for an equitable society in home and work.

Click [here](#) for more information on the YWCA. Click [here](#) for more information on Racial Equity Institute.

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LESSON

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

How would your team establish a Racial Equity Institute at your school?

What would be the training focus of phase one and phase two?

How would you alter the institute to address issues at your school that require change?

How would you change the system as a student?

ACTION POINTS:

List the issues you want to address at your school; pick three.

Write out the mission of your institute. What is the ultimate goal?

Who is your designated audience?

Name your program and create a logo.

How would you deliver the information: through live student discussion? A series of videos? Town Hall meetings?

PRESENT TO YOUR CLASS:

Once your group has a clear outline of your Institute, present to the class. Plan a 5-10 minute presentation of your Institute. Use the rubric on the next page as your guide for the presentation.

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Rubric for Racial Equality Institute Presentation

	Beginner 1	Developing 2	Accomplished 3	Advanced 4
Dimension 1	You did not demonstrate or describe the mission.	You demonstrated/described the mission somewhat effectively.	You demonstrated/described the mission effectively.	You clearly explained the mission of your institute and stated your goals for systemic change within your school.
Dimension 2	Your plan/action steps are not clear.	You have a vague plan/action steps for implementing your Institute	You have a mostly clear plan/action steps for implementing your Institute	You have a detailed and clear plan/action steps for implementing your Institute.
Dimension 3	You did not name or draw a logo for your Institute.	You have either a logo or a name, but did not establish both	You somewhat created a name and drew out a logo for your Institute.	You established a name and drew out a logo for your Institute.
Dimension 4	You did not define your audience or the delivery of your Institute.	Your audience and the delivery of your Institute in unclear.	You somewhat defined your audience and the delivery of your Institute.	You clearly defined your audience and the delivery of your Institute.
Dimension 5	You never made eye contact with the class.	Your rarely looked at the class and spoke too quickly.	You looked mostly at the class and spoke at a consistent speed.	You looked directly at the audience and used an appropriate voice speed throughout your class presentation.

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ABOUT LAVANDA BROWN



LaVanda Brown joined YWCA Greater Charleston as executive director in February 2016, bringing more than 20 years of experience, leadership, and a passion for serving to the organization.

During her decades of on-the-ground experience in social services focused on underserved populations, she has led and advised multiple nonprofit and for-profit organizations, including Family Promise of Greater Savannah, Union Mission, Greenbriar Children's Center, Gang Alternatives of Miami, Clarke Community Services in New Orleans, and others in the behavioral health, employment, and community services arenas.

A passionate advocate for causes including gender equality, diversity, and racial equity, and a strong ally of under-resourced teens and homeless populations, she envisions a world where differences are not just tolerated but celebrated. "The mission of the YWCA is one that is very much in line with my personal mission of empowering women and celebrating differences," she says.

During her career, LaVanda has developed strategic plans resulting in more positive community interventions, created a homeless case management system, developed a life skills curriculum, designed an after-care program to help the homeless transition to independence, and instituted permanent supportive housing for homeless adults and families.

Her work has garnered awards including the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Best Practices Award for Transitional Housing and Case Management, and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Magnolia Award for Excellence in Housing. She was also the 2018 recipient of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Picture Award for outstanding community service, presented by Charleston Mayor John Tecklenburg and South Carolina Rep. Wendell Gilliard.

LaVanda currently also serves as the housing subcommittee chair for the Mayor's Commission on Homelessness and Affordable Housing, and serves on the board of Enough Pie, an organization dedicated to improving Charleston's upper peninsula.

She holds a dual bachelor's degree in psychology and sociology from Wesleyan College and a master's degree in counseling from Georgia Southern University.

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ABOUT MARCUS AMAKER



Marcus Amaker was named Charleston, SC's first Poet Laureate in 2016. He's also an award-winning graphic designer, an accomplished electronic musician, the creator of a poetry festival, and a mentor to hundreds of students. His poetry has been featured by PBS Newshour, SC Public Radio, Huffington Post, A&E Network, *Charleston Magazine*, and more. In 2019, he won a Governor's Arts award. His poetry has been studied in classrooms across the country and has been interpreted for ballet, jazz, modern dance, opera and theater. Marcus has recorded three albums with Grammy Award-winning drummer and producer, Quentin E. Baxter. His latest book is *The Birth of All Things* (Free Verse Press).

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