RAISING THE VOLUME

with Marcus Amaker & Charlton Singleton

Kj Kearney highlights Black Food Fridays.

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Sixth Grade and Up
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.
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.” 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 XVII, 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 XVII.
Raising the Volume
Episode XVII: KJ Kearney highlights Black Food Fridays.

(CLICK THE IMAGE TO WATCH EPISODE XVII)
LESSONS

KJ Kearney established Black Food Fridays as a response to the pandemic. He states, “During tragedy, Black businesses are more negatively affected.” He wanted to highlight Black-owned businesses to save them, letting people know they are open.

The pandemic has been difficult for the majority of small businesses. Why do you believe Black businesses or businesses of color take a harder economic hit?

Read more about the effect of the pandemic on minority-owned businesses in the article here. Write down three points from the article and discuss with your group.

KJ Kearney states that his parents have supported him in ways many parents would not, because he is always trying something new.

Do you believe you are supported to keep trying different things as you grow and learn who you are? Do you have a strong support system? If not, is this an obstacle you must overcome?

KJ Kearney recalls what he believes to be the lowest point in his life: applying for food stamps.

Do you believe applying for government help, like food stamps should be embarrassing? These programs are set up to support people during difficult times. Why are some ashamed to use these resources?

KJ Kearney has a huge Instagram following, but wants others to know, it is not about the number of followers you have, but what you are putting out in the world. He says, “Create qualitative goals; more goals rooted not in numbers, but in feelings.”

Do you post on social media? If so, are you worried about the number of followers or if what you are posting is meaningful and teaches others? How can you take a fresh look at your social media posts and consider if your content makes a difference?
ABOUT KJ KEARNEY

The founder of @BlackFoodFridays, KJ Kearney, created this initiative to encourage people to support Black owned food and beverage businesses each and every Friday. Started in April of 2020, at the beginning of the global pandemic, the original goal was to highlight Black owned restaurants that were open during COVID-19. It has since evolved into an aggregate landing page for people, all over the world, who are being intentional about spending with Black owned food-based businesses.

KJ is also the creator of the TikTok video series entitled #BlackFoodFact. His 60 second Black food history lessons were featured on the Today Show for making “Black Food History More Accessible.” The Black Food Fridays message has been shared in local, national, and international publications such as: The Charleston City Paper, The Post & Courier, the New York Times, Conde Nast Traveller UK, Mic.com, The Takeout, NBCBLK, Twisted UK, and the aforementioned Today Show.
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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