

Director's
Corner

PENTANGLE ARTS

Celebrating 47 Years!

As seen in the Vermont Standard – May 6, 2021

Poet Rajnii Eddins comes to Woodstock

Since Derick Chauvin's April 20 conviction, there has been a steady uptick in deaths at police hands. Ma'khia Bryant, 16; Daunte Wright, 20; Andrew Brown Jr., 42; and 13-year-old Adam Toledo — all shot by police in the weeks prior, during and after the verdict was handed down. Daunte Wright was shot just a few miles from the courthouse where the Chauvin trial took place. Their names were given to them by those who loved them, names they were known by friends, family, teachers, and mentors. They were living human beings with full lives cut down in mere seconds.

It is with this all too familiar backdrop Pentangle Arts brings Burlington-based poet, Rajnii Eddins, activist and teaching artist to Woodstock Union High School on May 13 and 14, for a series of student engagement events to explore white supremacy, racism, and the need for empathy and humanity through poetry and the spoken word.

On May 14, a small group of English students will have the opportunity to share their impressions and reactions to his latest book of poetry, *Their Names are Mine*.

Many thanks to Michelle Fountain at the WUHS for coordinating all the programs for the entire middle and high school student body, and WES principal Maggie Mills and Billings Farm and Museum for coordinating and hosting the engagement event for the 5th and 6th grade. We are also grateful to Jill and Tony Amato, Blue Horse Innkeepers, for their sponsorship for this relevant and timely Youth in Arts program.

Rajnii Eddins moved from Seattle to Burlington 10 years ago. He is the founder of the Poetry Experience at Fletcher Free Library and the artistic director

for the Young Writers Project. Eddins co-coached the internationally acclaimed Muslim Girls Making Change, the first team to represent Burlington in the Brave New Voices International Youth Poetry Slam Festival. Eddins says he sees art and youth engagement as a dynamic, transformative tool for social change.

Major Jackson, Poetry Editor of the *Harvard Review*, writes of *Their Names are Mine*: "Rajnii's tongue is ancestral, and his spirit is free. In the tradition of sacred word-warriors, he names the fallen and the martyrs with extraordinary grace and a humbling consciousness that manifest light in all directions. His fiery poems ration out eternal wisdoms that call forth simply a substitution of love for hate and a spiritual reckoning so that we all can breathe. Sing on, dear brother."

On the lighter side of Youth in Arts programming, registration is open for our 12 annual Performing Arts Camp, July 26-30. Register at pentanglearts.org/event/performing-arts-camp/all/#content.

Sharon Groblicki and Nancy Boymer direct Pentangle Arts Summer Performing Arts Camp, with musical direction by Bob Merrill. This year's program features songs and scenes from classic Broadway Musicals and will continue to focus on vocal technique and presentation, drama, improvisational theater, singing, and choreography. Classes are for children ages 8-16. Activities are indoors and outdoors. In addition, there will be some time allocated for swimming at the Woodstock Recreation Center, weather and social distance guidelines permitting, after lunch most days. The cost of the camp includes a \$10 Camp T-Shirt and a \$15 weekly pass to the Woodstock Recreation Center pool.