

**For Immediate Release**  
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## Lima Senior High Dialogue Project Case Study Published

Animating Democracy, a program of Americans for the Arts, has published *A Time of Crisis, A Moment for Art: Sojourn Theatre and the Lima Senior High Dialogue Project*, a case study written about Lima City Schools use of arts-based civic dialogue in the winter of 2008.

Lima Senior High School administrators recognized students needed to have a safe and thoughtful way to talk about community unrest after a Lima Police SWAT drug raid resulted in the inadvertent killing of an innocent biracial mother of six.

Lima City Schools approached Allen County Common Threads, a locally based volunteer group promoting civic dialogue and Sojourn Theatre Company, a group of professional artists based in Portland, Oregon with expertise in arts-based civic dialogue, to partner and produce student dialogues as quickly as possible. Sojourn is familiar with Allen County having worked on several prior dialogue projects. In three weeks, the partners created: six monologues based on 60 student interviews, trained 100 facilitators, and hosted small group dialogue over four days with 1,200 high school students. Everyone recognized the urgency. They dropped their routine schedules and donated their time to the project. "Often their [students] voice isn't heard. The community was having this conversation and the youth were looking on," recalls Daniel Hughes, steering committee member.

The case study, commissioned by Animating Democracy, details the steps involved in the design and production of each partners' contribution to the project: the student monologues, the dialogue design and training and the logistics of each day. Based on interviews of educators, administrators, facilitators, artists, and students — 27 in total — the case study shares their reflections about factors of success, challenges, and the role of arts, that can be considered by other communities facing their own crises and issues.

Americans for the Arts is the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America. For 48 years, the organization has been dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts.

Animating Democracy, a program of Americans for the Arts Institute for Community Development and the Arts, fosters arts and cultural activity that encourages and enhances civic engagement and dialogue.

\* [http://www.artsusa.org/animatingdemocracy/pdf/reading\\_room/TimeofCrisis\\_MomentforArts.pdf](http://www.artsusa.org/animatingdemocracy/pdf/reading_room/TimeofCrisis_MomentforArts.pdf)

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*"From our national vantage point at Americans for the Arts, we see Lima as a model in terms of its commitment to fostering dialogue among citizens on issues that matter to the community and doing so by tapping the power of the arts....Although the arts have been used toward healing after crisis, Lima's ability to draw upon past experience and move into immediate action around the tragedy in their community offers yet another illuminating case for the arts field and for civic and school leaders across the country," Pam Korza, co-director, Animating Democracy, a program of Americans for the Arts.*