WELCOME TO NIGHT VALE

THIS IS NOT A TOOLKIT

CHAPTERS
THE HARRY POTTER ALLIANCE
THEHPA.ORG

Fandom Forward is a project of the Harry Potter Alliance Chapters Program. Founded in 2005, the Harry Potter Alliance is an international non-profit that turns fans into heroes by making activism accessible through the power of story. This toolkit provides resources for fans of Welcome to Night Vale to think more deeply about the social issues represented in the story and take action in our own world.

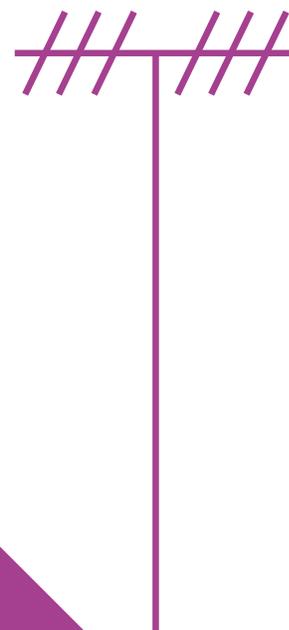**Contact us:**
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#FandomForward

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

LOOK we really shouldn't be talking. And by talking I mean communicating over vast distances of space and time through a particular set of lines and circles we've all agreed (or, you know, begrudgingly accepted, whatever) mean the same things. Talking, right? So weird.

But that's not important. What is important is this particular document in this particular time. There's a chance that this particular document is not entirely City Council sanctioned. There's a chance that the City Council doesn't want us to have this document at all, because this particular set of lines and circles is a guide to taking charge of our town. (And it's Tuesday, so per the announcement last week everything with a chance today has been upgraded to definitely for sure - free of charge. What a deal!)

All we're saying is that Tamika Flynn and her army risked a lot to get this particular document for you. Risked so much. Risked it all. Risked more than I would have recommended, to be totally transparent with you, I mean honestly there's courage and then there's...anyway, just use it well, citizens of Night Vale.

USE IT WELL.

INTERN SAFETY

Social issues can be tough to talk about, and the issues in this toolkit are no exception. As a Community Radio Intern and therefore a respected leader in this community, it's important that you follow some basic guidelines when leading any group through this kit:

1. PROTECT YOUR LISTENERS

Before you start, make sure everyone on your team feels safe and included. You never know what a particular issue may mean personally to someone, or how a discussion may impact them. A great way to start is to set some guidelines as a group for what is and is not acceptable on your team. If things start to get too uncomfortable, don't be afraid to end a line of discussion or steer it to another topic. Remember that not all of us are ready to go on this kind of journey — make sure you let your team know you'll be participating in a discussion or action beforehand so that everyone can choose whether or not to participate.

2. LISTEN TO EACH OTHER

There's a reason that we can't solve social issues overnight: they're complicated. Different viewpoints are okay — take time to listen, let everyone speak, and challenge each other without devaluing each other's opinions or resorting to personal attacks.

3. TALK FIRST

It's important to discuss issues before immediately taking action. Use the Talk It Out sections to think about these issues before deciding how you want to tackle them.

4. DON'T JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS

Don't assume you know everything about an issue, especially if there are people on your team who have personally experienced an issue or whose identity you are discussing. Allies are awesome, but it's more important for the voices of those who have lived these experiences to be heard. The best way to be an ally is to make sure they have space to speak.

5. TAKE ACTION

When you and your listeners feel ready to jump in, use the Action suggestions to get started. If your team comes up with a different idea, that's awesome — don't be afraid to get creative!

6. KEEP LEARNING

We've only begun to scratch the surface — like our home of Night Vale, social issues are highly complex and constantly evolving. Take what you learn from this kit and continue to educate yourself on the issues.

Need Backup?

That's okay, there's a whole team of volunteers ready to help. Just send us an email at : fandomforward@thehpalliance.org — we're happy to answer questions or help you with facilitation or action items.

All Characters Are Flawed

We've done our best to represent the issues in this toolkit as accurately as possible, but because these issues are so complex, there are bound to be things we missed or things you have different views on. If you find factual errors in this toolkit, please let us know!

REPRESENTATION IN
WELCOME TO NIGHT VALE

Representation of diverse identities is a huge issue in media – so before we talk about anything else, we're going to talk about that, because first on our minds is where it should be.

One of the core relationships in the story of Welcome to Night Vale is Cecil and Carlos, and the writers have attributed this storyline with some of the seemingly overnight success of the podcast, particularly in the Tumblr community. When Carlos is first introduced, Cecil immediately develops a crush on him and speaks openly with both the in-verse and real-world audience about his feelings. From these beginnings to the couple's now long-standing relationship, the fact that it is a same-sex relationship is never commented upon. As Dylan Marron said: "Carlos and Cecil's relationship is the least weird thing about Night Vale. I think a ton is being said about it by not saying something about it."

The story of Carlos is key to the importance Night Vale places on diversity and representation. Originally voiced by writer Jeffrey Cranor, he was almost immediately recast as Dylan Marron after the writers felt that a straight white male was not the appropriate voice actor for a Latino gay character. Cranor said: "It sucks that there's a white straight male (me), playing a gay man of color (Carlos). Look, I know it's a voiceover, but it's not just that. We do live stage shows, and that's a visible role for a PoC. Plus, fans often google the actors who play each character, and what does a Latino/Latina teen think when my face might pop up (or worse, no image pops up) as the actor playing Carlos?"

This kind of representation is present throughout the series, and is handled seamlessly with the rest of the story with characters like young rebel leader Tamika Flynn, football coach Nazr al-Mujaheed, and Dark Owl Records owner Michelle Nguyen. Even their names reflect a consideration for their diverse backgrounds, something that is particularly important on a show with few, if any, visual clues. As Cecil Baldwin explains it, "It's important to remember [Night Vale] is an American community that has many different kinds of different people. Why call a character David Jones when you can call him Nazr al-Mujaheed? That brings an evocative image into the listener's mind. My task then is giving Nazr al-Mujaheed a distinctive personality and a voice that is a character rather than a caricature." Furthermore, like Carlos, these characters are voiced by a representative cast (like Symphony Sanders, who voices Tamika Flynn).

Welcome to Night Vale is not a typical story when it comes to representation, as Dylan Marron has highlighted in his project Every Single Word, which emphasizes just how little representation there is in some of the most popular movies. Night Vale is a testament to how simple it can be for our stories to truly represent all of the people who are a part of our communities.

In Night Vale a person's (or other sentient creature's) gender isn't considered that big of a deal — they are who they are, and little comment is made about it. Unfortunately, that kind of gender identity acceptance is treated in our world in much the same way a belief in the existence of mountains is treated in Night Vale.

Some basic terms to know when thinking about gender identity are:

GENDER IDENTITY

is one's own sense of their gender. This is distinct from a person's biological sex and from their sexual and/or romantic orientations. You can learn more about the differences between these in this video.

Cis/cisgender is used to describe people who, for the most part, identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. For example, if the doctor said "it's a boy!" when you were born and you identify as a man, then you might be described as cisgender.

Trans/transgender is used as an opposite to 'cisgender.' It's used to describe people who, for the most part, identify with a gender other than what they were assigned at birth. This includes people who identify outside of the gender binary, no matter what gender they were assigned at birth, provided they choose to identify with this label.

Intersex refers to a variety of conditions in which a person is born with reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit traditional definitions of male or female. Intersex isn't a biological condition, but rather a social condition that describes natural biological variation in something that has been socialized as something with no variation.

Non-binary is a catch-all term that refers to people who identify somewhere outside of the gender binary of male/female. It has nothing to do with what their gender was assigned at birth. A non-binary person might identify just as non-binary or as a more specific label within that catch-all. A non-binary person might identify as somewhere between male and female or somewhere entirely elsewhere on the spectrum. Genderqueer and genderfluid are some examples of non-binary identities.

Agender describes someone who does not identify with any gender, binary or otherwise.

In the context of gender identity, pronouns represent one way in which trans people get the short end of the stick. We often assume people's gender in order to refer to them, even though that might not correspond to who they are or how they want to be referred to. It's important to ask what pronouns people use, even if you think it can be assumed. For example, in Night Vale characters like Alicia (member of the desert world army) are genderless or agender and use they/them/theirs pronouns, and characters like Megan (whose body is a detached adult man's hand) are female and use she/her/hers pronouns.

Some commonly used pronouns are:

- he/him/his/himself
- she/her/hers/herself
- they/them/theirs/themselves
  (no, it's not bad grammar)
- ey/em/eirs/emself
- ze/hir/hirs/hirself
- fae/faer/faers/faerself
- xe/xem/xyrs/xemself
- vis/vis/vers/virself
- nounself pronouns
  (a good overview here)

Please note that **she/her pronouns aren't female pronouns** and **he/him pronouns aren't male pronouns** even though we tend to associate them that way. Calling them male/female pronouns erases people who aren't male/female and use these pronouns and male/female people who use other pronouns. (For instance, an agender person might use he/him pronouns and a woman might use they/them pronouns.)

A NOTE ON "PREFERRED": You may notice that we're not using the term "preferred" pronouns in this kit. That's because a person's pronouns aren't just what they would *prefer* – it's an element of their identity, and shouldn't need any qualifiers.

Why does all of this matter? Well, besides gender being an important part of a person's identity that should be celebrated and respected, those who do not conform to traditional concepts of male/female gender roles tied to sex are overwhelmingly at greater risk for discrimination and violence.

Issues faced by trans people include:
- Limited access to medical care
- Unemployment and workplace discrimination
- Homelessness and Housing Discrimination
- Police harassment (especially towards trans women of color)
- Domestic Violence (especially towards trans women of color)
- Erasure in media and even activism work, such as transphobia within the LGBTQ community
- Suicide (especially in trans youth)
- Anti-trans legislation and exclusion from anti-discrimination legislation
- Lack of family support for trans youth

TALK IT OUT

When Alicia, the genderless member of the giant army, was introduced, how did them being genderless affect your first impression of them? Did it subconsciously add to the otherness of the giant army for you? How does the traditionally feminine name affect your mental image of them?

Megan's whole body is a detached adult man's hand, but she is a girl. How do you think the mocking of her peers affected her? How would she have felt if even one of the other children had accepted her?

Larry Leroy, in the orange grove episode, says "Yes sir. ... Or ma'am. ... Or neither." That he acknowledges non-binary genders is wonderful, but how do you think being constantly referred to by terms such as 'other' and 'neither' makes non-binary people feel? Can you think of different wordings that could include non-binary people without the undertone of otherness?

Pamela Winchell, Tamika Flynn, Lauren Mallard, and Dana are examples of round, fleshed-out female characters in the Night Vale universe. Does this representation of women feel like another surreal or out-of-this-world element of Night Vale because it is so unusual to see in media? What ideas do you have to make gender representation like this more mainstream?

The Faceless Old Woman is interesting to think about because she is faceless. Even though she has no appearance, do you have a picture of her in your mind? Can you pinpoint any subconscious stereotypes or judgements that may have affected your mental image of her?

Many characters in Night Vale actively defy gender stereotypes and roles – for example, Cecil tends to be more nurturing while Tamika Flynn is more of a warrior. Are there other ways you can think of that gender roles have been broken down?

You often hear arguments like "Bringing up gender issues detracts from the horror/sci-fi/fantasy genre writing" or "Gender issues is just not what the story is about" in defense of media that lacks diversity. How does Welcome to Night Vale go against these arguments?

Women in media are commonly described by their physical attributes, often in a sexualizing way. How do Cecil's descriptions of women compare to this? And what about his descriptions of Carlos, a male character? Why do you think it is that you rarely see men in media describe other men with sentences like "Why his perfect and beautiful haircut?" or "Carlos, perfect and beautiful, came into our studios…"?

TAKE ACTION

EDUCATE

- Investigate organizations in your community that work on gender identity issues and see if they offer educational materials — your library is a great place to start looking for this. You can go on your own or with a group.
- Organize a discussion about gender at your school or in your community, focussing on things like: what could help you feel safer, what changes would you like to see at school or in your community regarding (people's perceptions of) gender, or more generally helping others to understand the concept of gender identity. Watching videos like this one is a great way to educate.
- Submit an article, poem or short story about gender identity, trans and non-binary inclusivity, or how to tackle gender issues to your school paper or local paper.

CREATE NEW NORMS

- Make asking about pronouns normal in your chapter or group — encourage members to introduce their pronouns when their introduce themselves, and make it a habit of your own to ask new members.
- Host a Pronouns Social! Decide on a fun activity and provide nametags where attendees can write both their name and their pronouns to help break down the stigma around different gender identities.
- Start using more inclusive gender language — think about words that use specific genders and alternatives to those words. When referring to groups of people, avoid using phrases like "guys," "gals," or "ladies and gentlemen," and try out alternatives like everyone, all/y'all (hey all!), friends, folks, or peeps.

ADVOCATE

- Help make your school a more welcoming environment for trans and non-binary youth by asking teachers to show their support by putting up a poster or sticker in their classroom. You can do this in your community as well, by asking community members, librarians, business owners, etc. to do the same thing.
- Become educated about the laws around gender in your area. In some places for instance, the law states that you have the right to participate in sex-segregated activities (such as sports and competitions) as is consistent with your gender identity. Make yourself and your school/community aware of these laws and use them to your advantage!
- Organize a Trans Day of Remembrance at your school/community space in honor of trans people who have been victims of violence.
- Advocate for gender neutral language in handbooks/dress codes/etc. For example, if your dress code has specific sections for men vs. women, talk to your principal or supervisor about removing these specifying labels.
- Advocate for gender-neutral bathrooms and other spaces at your school/work/library/event/etc.
- Check to see if there are any anti-trans laws impacting your community and see how you can help stop or overturn these laws.

« Citizens be alert! But not too alert,»
there is much that you should not see.
- Barks Ennui, Secret Police Mascot

These words from Barks Ennui tell you a lot about government control and censorship in Night Vale. The City Council frequently reminds its citizens that they are not allowed to know about the tiered Heavens, or that Angels exist (they don't) and even the knowledge of what Barks Ennui himself looks like is classified by the Secret Police. This kind of suppression of information, speech, and communication by institutions such as governments, media outlets and other authorities is called **censorship**.

In Night Vale censorship is often used by the City Council to control what Night Vale citizens can learn, whether that's information about the world around them (angels, for example) or what's happening in their own town. Of course sometimes this doesn't come from the City Council, but from Station Management or Strexcorp, who would often restrict what Cecil was supposed to say in his role as community radio host. Luckily for us, Cecil is often brave enough to subvert these kinds of orders – it's a good thing he does, because community radio plays such an important role in communities.

In the rest of the world, big media companies do control dozens of smaller media outlets in a manner that would probably remind you of Strexcorp. **Media consolidation** is when large companies buy out smaller companies or merge with other large companies. Freepress lists which companies control which media outlets – in fact just six companies control most of the mainstream media in the United States. Why does this matter? Well, when Strexcorp took over Night Vale Community Radio, it was clear that the company had a huge impact on how NVCR was run and the kinds of stories that were covered – namely, stories that reinforced how great Strexcorp was for the community. Many people are concerned that when a few big companies own most of the media, a diversity of voices and reporting is less likely to reach the masses.

Of course media like television, radio, and news outlets aren't the only things that face censorship – books are constantly under attack. In Night Vale there's the twice-annual *Cleaning of the Books*, which Cecil describes as "our way of double-checking that the librarians are keeping a clean stock of municipally-approved books". This way, the City Council and the Secret Police control what books the citizens of Night Vale are allowed to read. Luckily, Tamika Flynn, book lover and teenage leader extraordinaire, fights against this book-banning practice.

Outside of Night Vale, books are banned around the world for all kinds of reasons, and the American Library Association keeps track of challenged books and helps promote Banned Books Week every year as a time to celebrate the right to read these stories.

When the censoring of books and the control of media by governments and corporations come together, what you get are situations like the government deciding how history should be written in school textbooks. History has a huge impact on how people view their culture and government, have pride in their nation, and sometimes even how they envision a nation's "enemy". Because of that, those who get to tell history hold a lot of power, and by falsifying, manipulating and leaving parts out of historical accounts, they can control public opinion and even influence politics.

TALK IT OUT

The governing body of Night Vale (along with the Vague But Menacing Government Agencies and Strex Corp) often censor what Cecil can say on the show. How do government and corporate pressures affect what is portrayed by the media in our world? What are the consequences of this form of censorship?

Cecil is the voice of Night Vale, and a very influential figure in the town. He's directly responsible for what happens to Telly the Barber and has been seen in other ways strongly influencing the town. What is the role of the media in your life/your community/the world? How do the media influence society? Are the media important?

The Night Vale powers that be also censor the individual citizens, including their ideas and thoughts. Have you ever run up against censorship? What was that experience? How did it make you feel? If you haven't had specific experiences on an individual basis, can you come up with any examples? How does this impact society as a whole?

Cecil tries to use his platform to spark the revolution against Strex Corp. What is the role of the media in social change? How does media coverage influence people's views on relevant issues? What does bias in the media's presentation change what people think about important problems? Can you think of any examples in your world?

How does one combat censorship? How can communities work against unjust censorship?

How do you think it would feel to live in Night Vale, where thought crimes exist and governmental censorship is everywhere? Can you think of any real-life examples (from history and/or the modern world) of oppressive regimes and society?

Night Vale and Desert Bluffs both have public radio stations that deal with and interact with censorship in different ways. Compare and contrast the two. Can you make real world connections to Night Vale? To Desert Bluffs?

Because Welcome To Night Vale gets to make its own content rules, the relationship between Cecil and Carlos can be explicitly stated as opposed to veiled or hidden in subtext. Unfortunately, that is not the case for a lot of mainstream media, and often, stories featuring LGBTQ+ relationships are not able to be told. Can you think of examples in any other media where this is the case? How do you think this feels to people whose personal identities are considered "inappropriate"?

Cecil is not only the voice for people in Night Vale, but also for us, outside of the town. In fact, Cecil is our only source of news about Night Vale. What effect does this have on our perception of the town? Why is it important to get your news from different outlets?

Do you think such a thing as "unbiased news" exists? Even if you are just stating facts, you have to choose which facts you cover and which you don't. How does this affect bias? And at what point does choosing what to cover become problematic censorship?

The *Cleansing of the Books* is something all too familiar. From governments outlawing books criticizing their regime, to schools banning books for dealing with controversial topics, these all affect people's intellectual freedom. Why is the freedom to read so important? Do you think there is ever a valid or justifiable reason to keep a book off the shelves?

Strex Corp Inc. quickly becomes the owner of many businesses in Night Vale, including the Night Vale radio station. Can you think of any real-world companies that own and control a large amount of other businesses and media? What is the danger of that? How can we combat this?

TAKE ACTION

SUPPORT INDEPENDENT MEDIA

- Research local, independent news and entertainment sources in your community and make an effort to support them by listening to/watching/reading what they produce.
- Consider going on a group trip to a local theatre or ask a local radio station if you could go on a tour of their studio.
- As an individual, make a personal goal to diversify your news sources and investigate potential biases. Work with a group to help each other find new news sources.
- Is your community lacking local media? Create your own! With your group or chapter, consider creating your own community radio (a podcast would work great), newsletter, zine, etc.

FIGHT BACK AGAINST BOOK BANNING

- Do you know which books are banned in your local schools or libraries? Find out, and consider raising awareness about the books your community is denied access to.
- Talk to your school administration about why particular books have been banned and express your concern about these actions.
- Take a look at these ideas for Banned Books Week activities.

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR OWN EDUCATION

- Do you know how the history lessons in your schools are decided? Check with your local government to see how education standards are passed, or ask your principal or school board how decisions about curriculum are made.
- How much attention do you pay to your school's administration? Consider attending any open meetings for your school board or other administrators – or set up a schedule to send reps from your group or chapter and report back to each other.
- Are there events in your community or nation's history that you're curious about? Ever wondered if you got the whole story? Take some time to research them for yourself and fact check your textbooks.
- What myths or misconceptions do you think exist about historical events in your community? Host a "teach in" event or create a mini museum for the public to help deconstruct some of these myths.
- What do you think people in other places have learned about the same historical event? Post online or get in touch with a chapter from another state, country, or even another continent and ask them! Compare notes about what you were taught vs. what they were taught. Where are the similarities and differences?

ISSUE N°3
SCIENCE IN COMMUNITIES

When Carlos arrived in Night Vale, he didn't just bring with him truly beautiful, *perfect* hair, he also brought a new appreciation for science to the community. Despite all of the...shall we say unique things that happen in Night Vale, there had been very little, if any, scientific exploration of it before Carlos arrived. But he inspired people like Cecil to be more curious about the community. In a way, he brought his own version of science education to the citizens of Night Vale.

But even in more usual communities, science isn't necessarily a top priority. In the U.S. science education isn't always readily available or well-supported, and is often lacking in diversity, and a great lack of representation for women and people of color in scientific endeavours is a problem around the world despite the fact that a diversity of backgrounds and ideas is essential in scientific investigation and problem solving. Unfortunately, education is only a piece of a much larger puzzle, in which women and people of color are systematically overlooked for positions in scientific fields (Can you imagine someone turning away a scientist like Carlos just because he's Latino? Ridiculous.) – but we can start by ensuring that everyone is encouraged to learn about science and has access to that education.

Besides general education, there are other ways to bring science to your personal life and your neighborhood. Big issues like climate change and sustainability require everyone to be a little scientifically-orientated to make a difference – like making more sustainable choices and learning how to reduce waste or conserve resources. By making personal changes and encouraging others in your neighborhood to do the same, you can use the power of science to help make big changes in the planet's future.

Of course, it's going to take some big steps to solve the biggest issues, like climate change, for the whole world. Scientists like Carlos are working around the globe (and maybe around the clock, in places where time matters) to identify causes of climate change and develop solutions, but unfortunately our world's City Councils are about as receptive to their work as Night Vale would be to Carlos suggesting mountains are real. Both denial of climate change as a problem and inaction on the issue are rampant in governments around the world. As citizens, we can help by educating ourselves on the issue and asking our governments to take action.

TALK IT OUT

As we see in WTNV, the definition of science, straight out of Webster's Dictionary is: "I don't know, but I'm trying to find out, okay?" What's your simple definition of science? How do you define something so massively important and yet still broad and somewhat mysterious?

Discuss the different fields of science, the different areas of sustainability, and how they relate to each other.

In Night Vale, uncertainty is common and curiosity is often not followed up with exploration and research (except for Cecil and Carlos). Do you think the people in Night Vale value science and discovery? What about in your own community?

While talking about science, perhaps the most obvious form of sustainability is that of the environment. What other types of scientific sustainability are there? What are some forms of sustainability that seem important in Night Vale and other fictional or real communities?

Is science always the key to advancements in sustainability? Can science be both a friend and enemy of sustainability?

The people of Night Vale seem to be somewhat afraid of change. They wish to hold on to tradition and sustain the community that they have created. It is important to remember the past and hold on to our core values, morals, and culture. How can we grow and make the world a better place using scientific advancements while maintaining our culture and ensuring that the idea of sustainability grows and expands as well?

Many fields of science help to sustain the world, its resources, and its inhabitants. Some of these experiments and projects are controversial, such as cloning and artificial intelligence. When does technology and efficiency become too much? Is there such a thing as too sustainable?

Essentially, sustainability means being able to maintain something indefinitely. What are some things you think are worth sustaining?

Not much is known about Carlos and his fellow scientists of Night Vale. However, they are a very dedicated, tight-knit group of researchers. Are you a part of a community of people that you feel are helping to make a difference in the world? How do you use curiosity and science in your projects? If you are not part of a research group, would you like to start one? What do you want to research?

Carlos first came to Night Vale because it was "the most scientifically interesting community in the U.S.". Carlos and his fellow scientists study and explore all the bizarre happenings of Night Vale. But Night Vale's citizens remain uninterested in the strangeness of town. Why do you think that is? In your opinion, what makes Night Vale so scientifically interesting? Does the disinterest of many of the Night Vale citizens seem like a parallel to so many people in our own society that are not interested in science or sustainability?

What do you think are some of the most prominent fields of science explored in Night Vale? Do you consider the podcast itself an exploration in social sciences, such as psychology and sociology? What are some ways that WTNV is an important form of media, representing social and scientific issues? What can you do to help represent these issues?

TAKE ACTION

SUPPORT SCIENCE EDUCATION

- Do your local school science programs have the tools they need? Ask some local classrooms what kinds of supplies they may be missing and host a school science supplies drive.
- Children's Fun Fact Science Corner is a recurring Night Vale Community Radio segment. Consider working with a local teacher, librarian, or other education to bring a Children's Fun Fact Science Corner to your own community, whether through an in-person event or social media like YouTube or Tumblr.
- Keep learning yourself! Channels like CrashCourse, SciShow, ViHart, and MentalFloss have plenty of scientific knowledge in easy-to-understand (and free!) segments. Even NetFlix has quite a few scientific shows available.
- Are there science museums or learning centers near you? Consider a group trip!

MAKE YOUR COMMUNITY MORE SUSTAINABLE

- Start with yourself — what actions can you take in your own life to live more sustainably? There are some simple action steps here and The Story of Stuff has a collection of information here.
- If you're in school, are there ways your school could reduce waste or be more sustainable? Talk with your school administration about current practices and see if you can work together to make positive changes (Carlos would be proud). You could also do this in your workplace!
- Do you have local recycling, composting, or other sustainability/waste-reduction programs in your community? Visit your local representatives, community center, or library to find out — if not, make sure your community leaders know this is something you care about.

ADVOCATE

- Take a look at some of the sustainability campaigns from The Story of Stuff and see how you can get involved.
- The National Resources Defence Council also has a list of ongoing campaigns you can get involved in.
- How is your government doing on climate change? Find out what your local or national government's stance on the issue is — if they're not taking action yet, consider ways you can voice your concern as a citizen and encourage them to make it a priority.

RESOURCES

REPRESENTATION
Every Single Word - a project by Dylan Marron that highlights the lack of diversity in film
How 'Welcome to Night Vale' is setting the standard for diversity in fandom - Daily Dot article
Welcome to Night Vale: Where Queer Is Normal and Normal Is Bizarre - Advocate interview

GENDER IDENTITY
After being discriminated against by doctors, 4 transgender people came up with a brilliant idea - article on MyTransHealth
Domestic Violence: A Resource for Trans People - in depth information and resources for trans people facing domestic violence
Employers with Transgender Friendly Policies - list of known employers with trans-friendly policies
Gender Justice League - an organization working on equality initiatives for trans people
Grammar of Nounself Pronouns - an explanation of the use of nounself pronouns
Half of young people believe gender isn't limited to male and female - interesting article on the changing views of gender
'He or she' vs 'they' - an explanation of why using they as a pronoun is not grammatically incorrect
Human sexuality is complicated… - a video explaining some of the basics of gender identity, bio sex, orientation, etc.
Nonsexist Alternative Language: Handbook for Conscious Writers - examples of gender inclusive language
QPoC Housing Resources and Initiatives - list of safe housing resources for LGTBQIA
Trans Lifeline - hotline for trans people experiencing crisis
Trans Youth Family Allies - TYFA empowers children and families by partnering with educators, service providers and communities, to develop supportive environments in which gender may be expressed and respected.
Transgender Law Center - Transgender Law Center changes law, policy, and attitudes so that all people can live safely, authentically, and free from discrimination regardless of their gender identity or expression.

MEDIA CENSORSHIP
Banned Books Week - an annual event that brings attention to banned books
Frequently Challenged Books - the American Library Association's list of books that are banned or challenged
How Textbooks Can Teach Different Versions Of History - NPR article on a case in Texas that highlights how history can be manipulated by the government and textbook writers
List of books banned by governments - list of books banned around the world
These 6 Corporations Control 90% Of The Media In America - infographic showing the breakdown of big media control (as of 2012)
Who Owns the Media? - Freepress project that tracks which companies control which media outlets
Why Is Community Radio Important? - some thoughts on the importance of community radio

SCIENCE IN COMMUNITIES

CrashCourse - YouTube channel with free educational videos

Diversity in Science: Where Are the Data? - Scientific American article on the lack of attention to this issue

Diversity in Science: Why It Is Essential for Excellence - Scientific American article on the importance of diversity in scientific working teams

Global Climate Change Resources - NASA's list of resources on climate change

Live a More Sustainable Life - some basics from Dartmouth University

MentalFloss - YouTube channel with free educational videos

Natural Resources Defense Council Action Center - list of ongoing campaigns related to environmentalism

SciShow - YouTube channel with free educational videos

STEM Education Data - the National Science Foundation's data on factors that impact STEM education

The Story of Stuff- an organization that focuses on the impact of physical items on the environment

The Story of Stuff Pinterest - has suggestions and ideas for sustainable living

ViHart - YouTube channel with free educational videos (primarily related to math)

HEY THANKS

This toolkit would not have been possible without the work (and extreme bravery — have you seen the City Council lately?) of our esteemed interns:

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Do you have fandom expertise to share? Want to help us make toolkits like this one? You could be our next Fandom Consultant – just email fandomforward@thehpalliance.org to ask about upcoming projects.