



This preparatory guide accompanies a virtual program inspired by *Maybe Something Beautiful: How Art Transformed a Neighborhood*, an award-winning book written by F. Isabel Campoy and Theresa Howell, and illustrated by Rafael López. This program, featuring bilingual narration by Jasmin Cardenas, is a collaboration between the Negaunee Music Institute at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chicago Children's Theatre.

The video can be found on the websites of the [CSO](#) and [Chicago Children's Theatre](#).

#### HOW TO ENGAGE WITH THE VIRTUAL PROGRAM

Have your children listen to the music featured in the CSO for Kids video:

- [Quinteto Sinfónico](#) by Miguel del Águila
- [Son de la Bruja](#) by Jose Luis Hurtado
- [Libertango](#) by Astor Piazzolla, arr. Jeff Scott

Introduce the story to your children by purchasing the book at your local bookstore or checking it out of the public library. You can learn more about the book at this [website](#).

- Read the story and then ask your children what music they would use to help tell the story.
- Ask your children how would they use the music in the video to tell the story?
- Give your children arts and crafts materials so they can make paper puppets to help recreate the story.

Listen to *Libertango* by Astor Piazzolla in this [video](#). Using scarves, streamers, handkerchiefs, etc., move the way the music makes you feel, following these prompts:

- Have children listen to each piece of music and express how the music moves them as they dance with a scarf, streamer or handkerchief.
- Sit or stand face to face with your child and make eye contact.
- Choose who is the leader and who is the follower.
- Ask the leader to move in a way that expresses how the piece makes him/her feel. Is it slow or fast? Do you feel it in your arms, legs, hips or neck? The point is not to throw off or trick your partner, but to move as one.
- Ask the follower to mirror exactly what the leader is doing.
- Switch roles and repeat the activity.
- Ask children and adults to choreograph a dance that has a beginning, middle and end.

## CREATE YOUR OWN PUBLIC ART PIECE

Public art is art in public spaces: Any art of any size, in any style, in any place. [The Association for Public Art](#) also declares that "Public art is a reflection of how we see the world — the artist's response to our time and place combined with our own sense of who we are."

In *Maybe Something Beautiful*, we experience the making of public art when we meet a girl named Mira whose heart is full of joy and who lives in a gray city. Mira decides to do something to change her grey city, so she draws a glowing sun. She wants to make her city less grey.

Explore these questions with your children:

- Is there something you want to change in the world?
- Is there something that makes you happy, that you want to celebrate?
- Can you draw a picture of what makes you happy and want to celebrate?

Create your own public art piece to say something to the world.

- You can draw it and/or paint it like Mira and hang it in your window.
- You can create a sculpture out of clay or found objects at home and put it outside on the grass.
- You can use chalk and color your sidewalk with a message to the world.

Artists use symbols to express their feelings and ideas. In this story, the pictures we see were painted by Illustrator Rafael López. Along with community members, he painted a public mural that you can see in Chicago at Addison and Avondale. [Here](#) he speaks about some of the symbolism he included in that mural:

- What do you think Mira was trying to express when she added one more bird way up in the sky?
- What would you draw to express hope, freedom or possibility?
- Where are all of the beautiful murals in Chicago? Explore them by using this [map](#).

## CREATING COMMUNITY: BEING INCLUSIVE. BE KIND.

Public art is all about including everyone. In our story Mira and the Muralist include the entire community in making this mural. The whole neighborhood is given paint brushes: mamas, teachers, even babies, too! When the artist creates something, they put it in a location where everyone can see it. They don't tell the viewer what they want them to think; they let the person looking at the art feel their own feelings as they interact with the piece.

At one moment in the story, someone comes along, and Mira thinks they will be in trouble.

- Do you have an idea about what she had decided about this person before she even got to know him?
- Do you ever feel a certain way about someone because of what they are wearing?
- Do you ever feel a certain way about someone because of the color of their skin? Or the language they speak?
- Has anyone ever surprised you and then you changed your mind?

Mira is a little nervous when the police officer approaches them. But he surprises her by asking if he can join them. He paints along with them, too!! Mira shows kindness when she shares her paint brushes with the police officer.

- Talk with your children about ways they are kind with others.
- Ask your children how they can show kindness to someone today.
- Ask your children to draw a picture, write a poem or mail someone a note with some kind words.

## EXPLORE THE WOODWIND FAMILY WITH YOUR CHILDREN

The musicians in this video are playing woodwind instruments; however, the horn is a member of the brass family, but its sound blends so well with woodwinds that it often plays with them. Ever since the heyday of classical music when wind ensembles were most popular, horns have always performed together with woodwinds.

- Watch the video again and listen closely to the music, then ask your children to identify the instruments they hear in the ensemble.
- Introduce your children to the names and instruments of the following CSO musicians:

Jennifer Gunn *flute*  
Scott Hostetler *oboe*  
Jonathan Gunn *clarinet*  
Keith Buncke *bassoon*  
David Griffin *horn*

- Watch this [video](#) of the CSO musicians as they explain their instruments.
- Ask your children what their favorite woodwind instrument is and why.

The Negaunee Music Institute at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chicago Children's Theatre acknowledges with gratitude the contribution to these materials by Jasmin Cardenas, Colombian American award-winning bilingual Storyteller, Actress, Educator and Social Activist.

This program is co-produced with Chicago Children's Theatre.

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