

news galleryweek

October 2, 2024

Stage and Space Collaborative to hold special The War of the Worlds production October 25 and 26



TCOE's Stage and Space Collaborative is holding special live, fully immersive productions of *The War of the Worlds* on October 25 and 26. There will be five showings of the production.

Broadcast from New York's Mercury Theatre in 1938, the infamous radio play – based on the novel by H. G. Wells – had some terrified listeners convinced that an actual alien invasion of Earth was taking place. The community is invited to come, sit back, and enjoy this frightening tale of an extraterrestrial takeover.

Theatre Company Director Bethany Rader said the second annual production will be different this year. The audience begins their experience with a new, never-before-seen planetarium show, *One Day on Mars*. Audiences will learn about that evening's night sky and receive an informational tour about Mars.

Afterwards, they'll take a seat and be transported back to 1938 for a fully immersive retelling of the infamous radio drama. *The War of the Worlds* is complete with sound effects, original art projections, and exciting live performances from six talented TCOE student actors.

The production will be held on October 25 and 26. General admission for the show is \$15 and the total run time is approximately 120 minutes. The production is suggested for ages 12 and up, but all are welcome. Tickets can be purchased at tcoe.org/TheatreCo/Tickets or tcoe.org/Planetarium/PublicShows.

The production will premiere at 5:30 p.m. on October 25 with another showing at 7:00 p.m. The final three showings will be on October 26 at 2:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m., and 7:00 p.m.

All performances will be held at the Planetarium & Science Center at 11535 Ave. 264 in Visalia.

Teachers and students launch VOICES project for civic engagement, others invited to join



Earlier this week, over 100 students and teachers from University Preparatory High School, Monarch River Academy, and high schools in Lindsay Unified, Visalia Unified, and Porterville Unified came together to kick off the VOICES project. Organized by Educational Resource Services (ERS), VOICES stands for The Valley Opportunity for Inclusive Civic Engagement and Service, and it's a new program designed to empower students and educators with strategies for active citizenship. "Through this event, we're showing teachers and students what a civically engaged classroom can look like," said Laura Gunning, ERS history/social science curriculum specialist.

The event began with an inspirational presentation by Olympians Amanda Longan and Tara Prentice of the U.S. Women's Water Polo Team. The women shared their journeys to make the Olympic team and emphasized the importance of teamwork in accomplishing any goal.

Following the keynote presentation, students and teachers attended a variety of breakout sessions. Among the breakouts was a session conducted by students from Harmony Magnet Academy in Strathmore, who shared their work in increasing campus energy efficiency. Their work in creating a Zero Energy School plan was a critical part of Porterville Unified winning a \$5 million U.S. Department of Energy Renew America's Schools Program grant – one of 24 grants awarded in the nation.



Following the breakout sessions, students visited with more than a dozen community partners, including law enforcement, county children's services agencies, and service clubs such as Rotary International and Kiwanis. Students collected contact information to connect with representatives in the future.

This year, VOICES will have three additional network meetings – November 21, 2024, January 16, 2025, and March 6, 2025. The network meetings are designed to support teachers in their work to develop comprehensive civic engagement plans, integrate civic learning into curriculum, increase student understanding of community roles, and create meaningful service projects.

Gunning encourages high school teachers who are still interested in participating in VOICES to contact her at laura.gunning@tcoe.org. As a member of VOICES, high

school teams will receive four coaching sessions this year to build their civic learning programs.

VOICES is funded by the California Serves Grant Program, which provides a \$1,500 stipend to participating Tulare County teachers.

CHOICES Programs launches VIDA Project in partnership with California Highway Patrol



Last month, TCOE's CHOICES Programs launched the VIDA Project with pop-up events at Tulare Union and Mt. Whitney High Schools. VIDA, which stands for Virtual Impaired Driving Activities, is funded by the CHP Cannabis Tax Fund Grant Program.

The Project is specifically designed to inform and engage teens, young adults, and their families about the dangers and consequences of driving while impaired by drugs and/or alcohol. CHOICES saw a need for the Project in Tulare County, considering that nearly half of all fatal car crashes occur on rural roads, according to a 2022 report from the *Governors Highway Safety Association (GHS)*. In addition, the expanding access to cannabis through legalization increases the urgency for educating the public on the dangers of driving impairment resulting from cannabis, alcohol, and other drugs.

The VIDA Project pop-up events help spread the message about the negative consequences of impaired driving and the Project's ultimate goal is to create long-lasting memories to inform participants' behavior and decision-making throughout their lifetimes. To achieve this, the Project delivers immersive experiences that are not just informative but life-changing – vividly depicting the challenges and dangers associated

with impaired driving and providing life-saving information on how to leave safely from events where drinking and drug usage occur.



The centerpiece of the pop-up events uses adult-size pedal karts paired with impairment simulation goggles, allowing participants to experience what it feels like to drive and complete everyday activities while drunk or high on marijuana. Traveling on a course marked by cones indicating whether drivers should be turning, swerving, or stopping, participants will navigate the course two times—once with no impairment (goggles off) and a second with alcohol/THC impairments (goggles on). These activities can create memorable experiences that dramatically illustrate the dangers of impairment on the road, both for the participants and the audience.

The CHOICES Programs will conduct VIDA pop-up events across the county from now until the end of June. For more information, contact CHOICES Project Coordinator Jeff Lynch at jeffl@tcoe.org.

Photos above:

~ Students at Mt. Whitney High School in Visalia stop by the CHOICES Programs' VIDA Project pop-up. Wearing impairment goggles, a student (top) attempts to drive a pedal kart with impairment goggles. Later at the event, two students wearing impairment goggles (bottom) attempt different types of high fives.

Editor: [Robert Herman](#), Communications Director

Contributors: Nayirah Dosu, Marlene Moreno, Jennifer Fisher, Bethany Rader, Laura Gunning, Jeff Lynch, Amy Harris

To receive the News Gallery Week, sign up [here](#), or contact Jennifer Fisher at jenniferf@tcoe.org or (559) 733-6172.