Learn how to be a Create-A-Raiser by creating something original and raising funds towards the cause.
Join us and tap into your creativity while raising funds towards our critical work! In the name of the arts, we invite you to write something original or record an original performance or our student’s work and share it with your friends and family, raising funds along the way.

Visit create.theunusualsuspects.org/createathon to get started!
Get some of your frequently asked questions answered about how you can support the Create-A-Raise fundraiser.
Q: Can you tell me more about The Unusual Suspects Theatre Organization?

A: The Unusual Suspects Theatre Company (US) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with the mission to mentor, educate, and enrich underserved youth through the creation of collaborative, original theatre. Our mission supports our vision of a world where all youth are given the opportunities & support they need to succeed. For nearly 30 years, our award-winning, participant-driven theatre-arts programs, centered around storytelling through the page and stage, have empowered underserved youth and families in Los Angeles with lifelong skills, going beyond the reach of a typical arts education workshop to provide vulnerable participants with the hope and confidence to overcome their difficult surroundings and develop a strong sense of agency over their own lives.

Founded in the wake of the 1992 L.A. Uprising, US has evolved from a small, volunteer-led youth intervention program into a collaborative leader in the fields of arts education, youth development, mentorship, and community building, embedded in underserved neighborhoods and juvenile detention facilities throughout Los Angeles County. Founder Laura Leigh Hughes established US to give strength to our vulnerable youth, deter them from acting out in harmful ways, all through a powerful and constructive tool for communication — the theatre. US has since grown into a collaborative, community-based theatre-arts organization with a presence in underserved neighborhoods and juvenile detention facilities throughout L.A. County. Serving over 1,600 individuals annually, US’s seven complementary programs provide a well-rounded impact on underserved Los Angelinos — including underperforming students, students with special needs, foster youth, struggling parents, English Language Learners, adolescents suffering from PTSD, incarcerated minors, and members of rival gangs. Los Angeles is home to some of the highest rates of youth incarceration, high-school dropout, teen pregnancy, and gang violence in the nation. A major tenet of US’s model is to meet youth where they are – as such, we maintain a presence in areas with high youth crime/incarceration rates, and offer programs on site at under-resourced schools, community centers, and juvenile detention facilities. In conjunction with county and state approved curriculum custom-developed in-house, US teaches youth to write, direct, and perform their stories, uncensored and in their own voices. The outcomes for participants are lasting and life-changing, including fostering academic, social, and emotional growth, all through the theatre stage. A majority of our youth live in poverty in regions with little to no arts funding, have visions of futures shaped by violence and loss, struggle with reading and writing skills, and as a result, have low self esteem and broken relationships. Our team uses the stage as a vehicle for confidence, hope, reconciliation, and belonging.

Visit theunusualsuspects.org for more information.
Q: Why are the arts so important?

A: Demand for US programming continues to rise as the factors that negatively impact the well-being and future prospects of the youth and communities we serve are inversely proportionate to their access to quality arts education and mentorship. This is especially true of the system-engaged youth we serve, the majority of whom struggle to heal from trauma induced by violence, abuse, and/or neglect. Similarly, bleak is the outlook of the LAUSD student population, 88% of whom have experienced at least three traumatic events in their short lifetimes, with 55% of those students displaying symptoms of depression, anxiety, or PTSD. Research demonstrates that trauma increases the likelihood for school failure, juvenile delinquency, and recidivism.

Unfortunately, LAUSD students and system-engaged youth lack consistent exposure to arts education and access to services, resources, and opportunities to explore their innate strengths, none more so than African American and Latino students — the majority of our target population. Yet, long-term developmental studies have shown that high-quality, curriculum-based, TA-led arts education programs like ours help build the very kinds of protective factors youth need to overcome risk factors and build healthy personal, family, and community lives. By providing arts education and mentorship that improves well-being at both the individual and social levels, US has successfully disrupted these patterns of inequality via utilizing our unique curriculum to mitigate the underlying family and community risk factors that threaten the healthy development of underserved Los Angelinos: We provide youth in underserved communities with access to enriching arts education — regardless of income, race, gender, or ability; offer a physically, virtually, and emotionally safe space where they are encouraged to discover their creative voice, develop self-respect, and explore non-violent solutions to conflict; and help prepare them for successful engagement in education, work, and community. US has achieved measurable success in serving youth and families with our program data confirming significant gains in 21st Century Skills such as academic and social skills, as well as emotional growth. Many of our participants have gone on to lead successful personal and professional lives working in the creative industry, serving on our Board or Advisory Council or joining the executive ranks within other industries.

Q: Many of my friends and family might not have heard of The Unusual Suspects. How will they know this is a good cause?

A: When your friends and family see how passionate you are about The Unusual Suspects, they will be excited too! You can also share with them that The Unusual Suspects is committed to being ethical stewards of the resources entrusted to us, with $0.81 of every dollar going directly to program services. We have a responsibility to maintain integrity in our financial practices, and accountability and transparency are an integral part of our culture.

Additionally, The Unusual Suspects has been featured in numerous, reputable media outlets including the LA Times, Hollywood Reporter, ABC, Spectrum News and much more. View more about US in the news HERE. Further, US has received several accolades for our work over the years, including The National Youth Arts and Humanities Program Award, The National Juvenile Justice Award, and more. You can view more about the rewards we have earned HERE.
Q: What will the funds raised be used for?

A: Funds will continue to fuel our mission and go toward continuing our impactful, award-winning programs at no cost to partnering schools or participants, thus helping to fill a critical gap in access to arts-education at high-needs, arts-poor public schools and juvenile detention centers.

Current US Programs include:

YOUTH THEATRE RESIDENCY PROGRAM (YTRP): Our flagship program – and focus of this request – offers experiential theatre-arts education and mentoring to improve the well-being of at-risk and incarcerated youth via a series of two sequential 10-week after-school workshops, wherein youth collaborate to create and perform an original play born out of their shared hopes and fears. US’s best-practice methodology has been honed over 26 years and our nearly 3:1 youth-to-adult ratio gives students the opportunity to learn and grow via an approach not typically provided by traditional education systems. The YTRP’s ultimate goal is to empower underserved youth with the skills to maintain a healthy mental outlook and pursue a positive path forward, making them more likely to decrease truant behavior, stay in school, complete community service hours, and avoid gang involvement.

VOICES FROM INSIDE PROGRAM (VIP)): As a founding member of the Arts for Incarcerated Youth Network, US works in tandem with 14 arts-intervention organizations to provide interdisciplinary arts programming for youth offenders to build resiliency/wellness, eliminate recidivism, improve reintegration and transform the juvenile justice system.

VAST (Voices for Arts & Social Theatre) ENRICHMENT PROGRAM: VAST adapts our successful after-school curriculum to provide in-class arts education to improve students’ language, communication and teamwork skills.

ALUMNI RESIDENCY PROGRAM: The launch of our new Alumni Residency could not be timelier, as it fills gaps in the support system for opportunity youth (ages 14-26). Open to alumni from all US programs — including youth returning from incarceration — our newest multi-week playwriting & performance residency offers a vital bridge between high school and adulthood. The program incorporates our unique, core theatre-arts curriculum to provide continued engagement, mentorship, camaraderie, and connections to postsecondary resources for youth who lack the social/financial support networks that allow them to participate in educational & career opportunities crucial to their future success. Our newly-established Alumni Leadership Committee — made up of US staff and alumni — began weekly virtual meetings on March 17th in preparation for the residency, which recently launched at the end of June.

THEATRE & CULTURE ACCESS PROGRAM (TCAP): TCAP reduces disparities in arts access by introducing low-income youth and adults to professional theatre for free.

PARENT PRACTICA PROGRAM (PPP): Piloted in late 2016, our new parenting-focused program tailors our core curriculum to a series of therapeutic workshops designed to enhance communication skills and strengthen the bond between struggling parents and their children.

NEIGHBORHOOD VOICES PROGRAM (NV): Designed to decrease social isolation and increase protective factors for reducing child maltreatment, NV engages intergenerational community residents (ages 11-65+) in creating and performing an original modernized fable/morality play through an intensive 12-week workshop... continued
On March 16, US transitioned to remote operations in the midst of the global COVID-19 crisis. The full severity of impacts from the pandemic will remain unknown for some time, but like everyone, US is also feeling the effects. We immediately responded swiftly to the rising needs of our isolated youth. In the past few months, we have successfully developed and launched distance learning alternatives for all program models to virtually deliver exceptional theatre-arts education and vital mentoring to marginalized Los Angelinos—and with it, the tenacity to transcend hardship. This year alone, we will have already served close to 500 individuals, offering over 110 remote workshop sessions, including virtual performances and our participants have benefited greatly. Continued funding will enable US to maintain the high quality of our programs — virtually or in person, fortify organizational infrastructure, and set the stage for future growth.

Q: What is the Virtually UnUSual Create-A-thon?

A: Tied to our mission, the Create-A-Thon is a unique, virtual marathon fundraiser enlisting your creative talent and your fundraising support, while also raising awareness and vital funds for our work! You can select to: write something original; or perform something original or perform a scene from our students work, sharing your progress with your friends and family as you ask for their support to continue our critical programming. Below are suggestions for what to create if you need some direction, but feel free to create ANYTHING you like - the visual arts, such as photography, painting, and more are also encouraged. The sky is the limit!

Writing:
If you choose to write something, you can select anything you want, but we suggest the following formats:
- Script
- Play
- Poem
- Song
- Letter
- Article
- Speech
- Book or Memoir (or Recipe Book)

Tips and suggestions on getting started with your writing goal and keeping pace can be found in the ‘Writing and Performing Tips’ section of this Toolkit.

Performing:
If you choose to perform from students’ original work, you may select from any of the following options HERE. Tips and suggestions on getting started with your performance goal and keeping pace can be found in the Writing and Performing Tips’ section of this Toolkit.

Q: How do I participate in the Virtually UnUSusal Create-A-Thon?

A: You can support the Create-A-Thon by either of the following methods:

- Become a Create-A-Raiser and establish an individual fundraising goal along with your creative goal. To do this, sign up HERE and follow the instructions.

In deciding to become an individual fundraiser, you can select to be a Prime Suspect, and commit to raising a minimum of $2,000, or a Creative Suspect and raise a minimum of $1,000, or a Spotlight Suspect and raise a minimum of $500.

Don’t forget to contribute towards your own goal!

- If you would like to fundraise with the help of others, you may wish to become a team captain and set up a team page and fundraising goal. As a team, you can select to be a Prime Suspect, and commit to raising a minimum of $2,000, or a Creative Suspect and raise a minimum of $1,000, or a Spotlight Suspect and raise a minimum of $500. To set up your team page, sign up HERE.

Don’t forget to contribute towards your own goal!
Q: What’s the difference between raising money as a team and as an individual?

A: Some supporters prefer to raise money as part of a team, maybe with their family, co-workers or friends. We welcome this and it’s easy to set up! If you would like to raise money as an individual, this is also easy to do! See above for how to set up your fundraising page - whether it’s a team page or an individual page - today!

Q: Why do I have to set up a fundraising page?

A: To demonstrate commitment to potential donors, we recommend that every fundraiser set up a fundraising page, to illustrate their commitment to their friends, family members and co-workers.

We’ve found that online fundraising is currently our fastest and most effective method raising money. Statistics show that people donate 3 times as much using their credit card as they do writing a check. So make sure you customize your personal fundraising page today.

Contact us at alexa.nieblas@theunusualsuspects.org for assistance.

Q: What is a Create-A-Raiser at the Prime Suspect, Creative Suspect and Spotlight Suspect level?

A: Prime Suspects commit to raise a minimum of $2,000 through an e-mail and social media campaign, and establish a creative writing or performance goal.

*Prime Suspects who raise $2,000 will:
· Receive US swag
· Be featured in campaign highlight videos
· Receive 10 complimentary entries to raffle drawing
· Receive opportunity to zoom with our students
· Receive the chance for their finished work to appear in final e-book of content

Creative Suspects commit to raise a minimum of $1,000 through an e-mail and social media campaign, and establish a creative writing or performance goal.

Creative Suspects who raise $1,000, will:
· Receive US swag
· Receive 5 complimentary entries to raffle drawing
· Receive the chance for their finished work to appear in final e-book of content

Spotlight Suspects commit to raise a minimum of $500 through an e-mail and social media campaign, and establish a creative writing or performance goal.

Spotlight Suspects who raise $500, will:
· Receive US swag
· Receive 2 complimentary entries to raffle drawing
· Receive the chance for their finished work to appear in final e-book of content

Q: What’s the difference between raising money as a team and as an individual?

A: Some supporters prefer to raise money as part of a team, maybe with their family, co-workers or friends. We welcome this and it’s easy to set up! If you would like to raise money as an individual, this is also easy to do! See above for how to set up your fundraising page - whether it’s a team page or an individual page - today!

Q: Why do I have to set up a fundraising page?

A: To demonstrate commitment to potential donors, we recommend that every fundraiser set up a fundraising page, to illustrate their commitment to their friends, family members and co-workers.

We’ve found that online fundraising is currently our fastest and most effective method raising money. Statistics show that people donate 3 times as much using their credit card as they do writing a check. So make sure you customize your personal fundraising page today.

Contact us at alexa.nieblas@theunusualsuspects.org for assistance.
A: The team captain should be the logical leader of the effort and the person who is willing to give the most time to the project. Often, the captain is a loyal supporter of US or their close friend/family member. In many cases team captains are themselves a passionate believer in the healing power of the arts.

Q: Can I participate if I don’t fundraise or do something creative?
A: Yes! You can support US by contributing to the cause or to a friend’s, colleague’s or family member’s fundraising goal. You can also help by simply spreading the word on social! You can find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Q: How can I double my donation?
A: If available, take advantage of your employer’s Matching Gift Program. Simply pick up the applicable form from your HR Department, fill it out, and send it to:

The Unusual Suspects to Hedi Jalon at hedi@theunusualsuspects.org

Q: If I’m creating a team page, how do I name my team?
A: Many teams get their name from an individual name connected to the campaign. For example, “Team Tessa”. Others use their family name (The Hughes Family Team) or their business name (Team Boeing).

Q: Do you need campaign volunteers as well as fundraisers and donors?
A: Yes, all help is appreciated. If you know someone who wants to help but doesn’t want to or isn’t able to contribute or fundraise, we can always use assistance with spreading the word, managing the campaign and more! If you want to volunteer, or if you know someone who would like to volunteer, please contact us at alexa.nieblas@theunusualsuspects.org.

Additionally, we are always looking for in-kind contributions. If you have the access to such items or know someone who does, please contact us at hedi@theunusualsuspects.org.

Q: My family, school, or company is interested in organizing a Virtually UnUSual Create-A-Thon team. Who should be our team captain?
A: The team captain should be the logical leader of the effort and the person who is willing to give the most time to the project. Often, the captain is a loyal supporter of US or their close friend/family member. In many cases team captains are themselves a passionate believer in the healing power of the arts.
Q: What if I know a company that would like to help sponsor the event?

A: We would be honored to be connected to a company that you know for sponsorship support. Please have them click HERE for more information or have them contact us at hedi@theunusualsuspects.org.

MORE QUESTIONS?

CONTACT DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR, HEDI JALON.

HEDI@THEUNUSUALSUSPECTS.ORG
Find out what a Create-A-Raiser is and the different levels of suggested participation.
**Prime Suspect**

**INDIVIDUALS COMMIT TO RAISE** a minimum of $2,000 through an email and social media campaign and establish a creative writing or performance goal.

**Commit to CREATE**
- Determine your writing or performance goal. Write something original (and perform it if you dare), or perform something original or from our students’ original work.

**Make your personal or team FUNDRAISING PAGE**
- Set up your individual or team fundraising page, and customize your goal and connection to our mission.

**Announce your goal and SHARE**
- Share your fundraising page link with your friends, family and co-workers via email and on your social media pages.

**Create and RAISE!**
- Keep working towards your goal and share updates daily, weekly, or mid-way through!

*Fundraisers who raise $2,000 will:*
- Receive swag
- Be featured in campaign highlight videos
- Receive 10 complimentary entries to raffle drawing
- Receive opportunity to zoom with our students
- Receive the chance for their finished work to appear in final e-book of content

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**Creative Suspect**

**INDIVIDUALS COMMIT TO RAISE** a minimum of $1,000 through an email and social media campaign and establish a creative writing or performance goal.

**Commit to CREATE**
- Determine your writing or performance goal. Write something original (and perform it if you dare), or perform something original or from our students’ original work.

**Make your personal or team FUNDRAISING PAGE**
- Set up your individual or team fundraising page, and customize your goal and connection to our mission.

**Announce your goal and SHARE**
- Share your fundraising page link with your friends, family and co-workers via email and on your social media pages.

**Create and RAISE!**
- Keep working towards your goal and share updates daily, weekly, or mid-way through!

*Fundraisers who raise $1,000 will:*
- Receive swag
- Receive 5 complimentary entries to raffle drawing
- Receive the chance for their finished work to appear in final e-book of content

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**Spotlight Suspect**

**INDIVIDUALS COMMIT TO RAISE** a minimum of $500 through an email and social media campaign and establish a creative writing or performance goal.

**Commit to CREATE**
- Determine your writing or performance goal. Write something original (and perform it if you dare), or perform something original or from our students’ original work.

**Make your personal or team FUNDRAISING PAGE**
- Set up your individual or team fundraising page, and customize your goal and connection to our mission.

**Announce your goal and SHARE**
- Share your fundraising page link with your friends, family and co-workers via email and on your social media pages.

**Create and RAISE!**
- Keep working towards your goal and share updates daily, weekly, or mid-way through!

*Fundraisers who raise $500 will:*
- Receive swag
- Receive 2 complimentary entries to raffle drawing
- Receive the chance for their finished work to appear in final e-book of content
Learn how to create an individual or team fundraising page, or how to join a team.
FOUR WAYS TO JOIN OUR VIRTUALLY UNUSUAL CREATE-A-THON

OPTION 1
DONATE

OPTION 2
CREATE AN INDIVIDUAL FUNDRAISING PAGE

OPTION 3
JOIN A TEAM

OPTION 4
CREATE A TEAM

CREATE & RAISE TO SUPPORT OUR YOUTH
OPTION 1
HOW TO DONATE WITHOUT CREATING A PAGE IN 2 STEPS

STEP 1 | Click “Donate Now” to be directed to the donation form

STEP 2 | Donate your desired amount and follow the prompts!
OPTION 2
HOW TO CREATE AN INDIVIDUAL FUNDRAISING PAGE IN 6 STEPS

STEP 1 | Click “Become a Fundraiser”

STEP 2 | Choose to fundraise “As an individual”

STEP 3 | Create account or log-in if you have an account already.
**STEP 4 |** Fill out the details such as your fundraising goal (set it to $2,000 if you are a Prime Suspect, $1,000 if you are a Creative Suspect, $500 if you are a Spotlight Suspect) and headline (your name will auto-fill at the top of your page, so you may wish to choose something tied to your goal. Example: If your name is Jane Smith, you may choose Jane’s Writing Journal Create-A-Thon), and add a photo or use what we have provided.

**STEP 5 |** Click the “manage” button to edit your page, change the story content to include your creative goal and tell others why you are supporting US, and post updates.

**STEP 6 |** Share your page with family, colleagues and friends via email and on social media! Suggested language you can use is in the ‘Outreach’ section of this Toolkit.

**STEP 7 |** Continue to update your contacts with your progress towards your creative goal, enlisting their support to help you get there. You can share video updates, images and more by clicking the ‘Manage’ button and then editing the ‘Updates’ section of your page!
**OPTION 3**

**HOW TO JOIN A TEAM IN 8 STEPS**

**STEP 1** | Click “Become a Fundraiser”

**STEP 2** | Click “Join a team”

**STEP 3** | Enter the team you are looking for under “Search for a fundraiser or team to support”

**STEP 4** | Select team and click “Join Team”
**STEP 5** | Create account or log-in if you have an account already.

**Create an account**

- [f] Continue with Facebook
- Or use your email

  **Email** *

  Enter your email address

  **Create password** *

  Create your password

  By clicking I agree to the [Terms](#) and [Privacy Policy](#)

  [NEXT](#)

  Log into your account

**STEP 6** | Fill out the details such as your fundraising goal and headline (your name will auto-fill at the top of your page, so you may wish to choose something tied to the team goal), and add a photo or use what we have provided.

**Create your page**

- **Set your fundraising goal** *
  
  [USD] $500.00

- **Fundraising end date** *

- **Your Page's Headline** *

  By typing 123 characters

- **Set your Fundraising Page's Short URL (optional)**

  https://give.classy.org/ExampleShortUrl

- It's okay to contact me in the future.

  [FINISH](#)
**STEP 7** | Click the “manage” button to edit your page, change the story content to include your creative goal and tell others why you are supporting US, and post updates.

**STEP 8** | Share your page with family, colleagues and friends via email and on social media! Suggested language you can use is in the ‘Outreach’ section of this Toolkit.

**STEP 9** | Continue to update your contacts with your progress towards your team’s goal, enlisting their support to help you get there. You can share video updates, images and more by clicking the ‘Manage’ button and then editing the ‘Updates’ section of your page!
OPTION 4
HOW TO CREATE A TEAM IN 7 STEPS

STEP 1 | Click “Become a Fundraiser”

STEP 2 | Click “Create a team”

CREATE & RAISE TO SUPPORT OUR YOUTH

STEP 3 | Create account or log-in if you have an account already

Create an account

Continue with Facebook

Or use your email

Email *

Enter your email address

Create password *

Create your password

By clicking I agree to the Terms and Privacy Policy

NEXT

Log into your account
**STEP 4** | Fill out the details such as your fundraising goal (set it to $2,000 if you are a Prime Suspect, $1,000 if you are a Creative Suspect, $500 if you are a Spotlight Suspect) and headline (your name will auto-fill at the top of your page, so you may wish to choose something tied to your goal and team oriented. Example: If you are Jane Smith, creating a team with your friends, you may choose The Awesome Crew’s Comedy Create-A-Thon), and add a photo or use what we have provided.

**STEP 5** | When you see your team name pop up, click “Join Team” to become the first member!

**STEP 6** | Click the “manage” button to edit your page, change the story content to include your creative goal and tell others why you are supporting US, and post updates.
**STEP 7** | Invite your possible ‘team-mates’ to join your team by sharing your link and asking them to join your team. Then SHARE your team page with family, colleagues and friends via email and on social media! Suggested language you can use is in the ‘Outreach’ section of this Toolkit.

**STEP 8** | Continue to update your contacts with your progress towards your team’s goal, enlisting their support to help you get there. You can share video updates, images and more by clicking the ‘Manage’ button and then editing the ‘Updates’ section of your page!
Learn how to create a fundraising page and sign up with a team or as an individual
Whether you are an individual or a team, you’ll need to announce to your friends, family and colleagues why you support The Unusual Suspects and what you plan to create!

Share your fundraising page link via email and on social. You can even record/share a quick (3 minutes or less) video revealing what The Unusual Suspects means to you and what you plan to create! This should be completed on or before Thursday, August 13th!

We would like to see and share your progress throughout the Create-A-Thon! On or before Thursday, August 27th, please upload: samples of your written work, or images of what you’ve written and/or a 3 minute or less video of your creative or rehearsal process. We would love to see you upload and share more often, weekly, bi-weekly or even daily – which keeps the campaign fun and will help it succeed! We can’t wait to see what you create, and share what you’re doing!

REMEMBER: The more videos, pics, screen shots, gifs and memes you upload to your page and email, tweet and post, the more donor support you’ll earn to accomplish your goal and the more funding we will raise towards our programs!

Don’t forget! We ask you to complete at least one update whether it’s an image or status update or video, on or before Thursday, August 27th.

Congratulations, you did it, now show it! Your final piece, whether it’s your performance video of our students’ work or your work, or your completed written piece, is due on your fundraising page webpage, by Monday, September 28, 2020!

Our Virtually UnUSual Create-A-Thon Fundraising Campaign officially ends, 4 days later, that Thursday, October 1st. Uploading your content on Monday, September 28 will give everyone, who supported your creative endeavor, a chance to see your finished product!

Also, if you’re running short of your financial goal, your final preview of your work might just give you that inspirational push needed to get you over the finish line.
HOW TO
SHARE YOUR PROGRESS
CHOOSE YOUR MEDIA

A. UPLOAD A VIDEO
IN 11 STEPS

STEP 1 | Step 1: If you’ve created a vanity/personal URL, type that directly into your browser. If you haven’t, go to create.theunusualsuspects.org/ createathon, and select “My fundraising pages” under the “Go To” menu-drop down in the upper-right
STEP 2 | Click “Manage” in the upper right section of your page
STEP 3 | Click on “Story”
STEP 4 | Click on “Updates”
STEP 5 | Click on “Create New”
STEP 6 | Where it says “Enter you update’s title here...Begin your story here...” is where you’ll write your update title such as, “My scene progress,” and your update such as, “I’ve started rehearsing the scene I’m working on, check it out you all!”
STEP 7 | Click the little video camera icon in the toolbar at the bottom of the text box you’re writing in
STEP 8 | Upload your video link
STEP 9 | Click “Publish”
STEP 10 | Click “View” in the upper right section of your page to see what your page looks like now with the update
STEP 11 | Share your page with the update via email and on social. Tips for sharing are below!

VIDEO UPLOAD TIPS!
In order to upload your video link – you will want to put your video on Vimeo, YouTube, and then grab the link from there.
To use Vimeo, download their app to your phone and select the free option and follow their prompts! To use YouTube, download their app to your phone and follow their prompts!

B. UPLOAD A IMAGE
IN 11 STEPS

STEP 1 | If you’ve created a vanity/personal URL, type that directly into your browser. If you haven’t, go to create.theunusualsuspects.org/ createathon, and select “My fundraising pages” under the “Go To” menu-drop down in the upper-right
STEP 2 | Click “Manage” in the upper right section of your page
STEP 3 | Click on “Story”
STEP 4 | Click on “Updates”
STEP 5 | Click on “Create New”
STEP 6 | Where it says “Enter you update’s title here...Begin your story here...” is where you’ll write your update title such as, “My Script,” and your update, such as, “I’ve started writing my script, check out the first page you all!”
STEP 7 | If you want to share an image of your work, click the little image icon in the toolbar at the bottom of the text box you’re writing in.
(Alternatively, you can include your actual writing as part of your update in Step 6 above).
STEP 8 | Upload your image
STEP 9 | Click “Publish”
STEP 10 | Click “View” in the upper right section of your page to see what your page looks like now with the update
STEP 11 | Share your page with the update via email and on social. Tips for sharing are below!
HOW TO SHARE YOUR PROGRESS
SHARE YOUR UPDATES

STEP 1
You’ve uploaded your progress/update via image/video to your page…NOW WHAT?

STEP 2
Share on Social Media by either:

• Sharing right from your Fundraising Page -
  o If you are already on your fundraising page, click the social media buttons off to the right-hand side and a post will be started for you – you just need to complete the copy. (If you are not currently on your fundraising page, go to create.theunusualsuspects.org/createathon, select “My fundraising pages” under the “Go To” menu-drop down in the upper-right, and then click the social media buttons off to the right-hand side and a post will be started for you – you just need to complete the copy)
  • Sample copy you may use could be something such as, “Guess what? I’m writing a script and raising money for @The Unusual Suspects to help keep the arts alive as part of their #UnUSualCreateAThon and I’ve actually completed a few pages already, THANK YOU to everyone who has donated to keep me going. Check out my progress so far!! I need to raise $1,000 {insert your needed funds to goal here} more to keep going so I can help them reach their overall goal of raising $275,000 which will ensure they continue offering vital theatre arts education to vulnerable youth and families in Los Angeles. Let me know what you think!”
  o -OR-

• Logging onto your Social Media pages and including your fundraising page link -
  o Create new post where you’ll include your fundraising page link with copy suggestion below:
  • Sample copy you may use could be something such as, “Guess what? I’m writing a script and raising money for @The Unusual Suspects to help keep the arts alive as part of their #UnUSualCreateAThon and I’ve actually completed a few pages already, THANK YOU to everyone who has donated to keep me going. Check out my progress so far!! I need to raise $1,000 {insert your needed funds to goal here} more to keep going so I can help them reach their overall goal of raising $275,000 which will ensure they continue offering vital theatre arts education to vulnerable youth and families in Los Angeles. Let me know what you think!”

STEP 3
• Logging onto your preferred email account/provider and including your fundraising page link -
  o Create new email which will include your fundraising page link with copy suggestion below:
  • Sample copy you may use could be something such as, “Dear Friends, I’m writing to you today to share some exciting news! I’m writing a script and raising money for The Unusual Suspects to help keep the arts alive as part of their #UnUSualCreateAThon and I’ve actually completed a few pages already, THANK YOU to everyone who has donated to keep me going. I would LOVE for you to check out my progress so far!! I need to raise $1,000 {insert your needed funds to goal here} more to keep going so I can help them reach their overall goal of raising $275,000 which will ensure they continue offering vital theatre arts education to vulnerable youth and families in Los Angeles. Let me know what you think! Every little bit helps and your contribution is much appreciated.” {Insert your personal fundraising page link}

STEP 4
Continue to share your progress regularly! If you need help or more tips and suggestions, please reach out to Alexa Nieblas at alexa.nieblas@theunusualsuspects.org.
Learn how to create a fundraising page and sign up with a team or as an individual
“Dear Friend,

I am writing to you as a proud supporter of The Unusual Suspects Theatre Company (US), a Los Angeles based, theatre-arts driven 501c3 nonprofit organization on the front lines of social justice.

I [or “we are” if a team] am so excited to be participating in their inaugural Virtually UnUSual Create-A-Thon Fundraiser as they attempt to raise $275,000 for their vital work! I’m getting creative in order to raise funds to fuel their mission to mentor, educate, and enrich underserved youth through the creation of collaborative, original theatre. For nearly 30 years, their award-winning, participant-driven theatre-arts programs, centered around storytelling through the page and stage, have empowered underserved youth and families in Los Angeles with lifelong skills, going beyond the reach of a typical arts education workshop to provide vulnerable participants with the hope and confidence to overcome their difficult surroundings and develop a strong sense of agency over their own lives.

I will be [INSERT YOUR CREATIVE GOAL HERE, WHETHER IT’S WRITING SOMETHING ORIGINAL, DRAWING SOMETHING OR PERFORMING] to raise money to cover the cost of these worthwhile programs that serve over 1,600 underserved individuals annually — including underperforming students, students with special needs, foster youth, struggling parents, English Language Learners, adolescents suffering from PTSD, and incarcerated minors. Los Angeles is home to some of the highest rates of youth incarceration, high-school dropout, teen pregnancy, and gang violence in the nation. A major tenet of US’s model is to meet youth where they are — as such, they maintain a presence in areas with high youth crime/incarceration rates, and offer programs on site at under-resourced schools, community centers, and juvenile detention facilities. In conjunction with county and state approved curriculum custom-developed in-house, US teaches youth to write, direct, and perform their stories, uncensored and in their own voices. The outcomes for participants are lasting and life-changing, including fostering academic, social, and emotional growth, all through the theatre stage.

in honor of [xxx (name) or because xxx (your personal connection to the mission, such as ‘because I believe in the power of the arts to heal which is vital to our underserved youth at this time’)], I would be so grateful if you would click the link below to make a TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION to help me meet my personal fundraising goal of $2,000 - - and stay tuned as I share my progress towards my [CREATIVE] goal!

Please join me in making YOUR gift TODAY at [YourPersonalURL].

I know there are many worthy causes to donate your money too, but I’m asking that you contribute to this because of the difference it makes in the lives of disadvantaged youth and families in LA. On March 16, US transitioned to remote operations in the midst of the global COVID-19 crisis. The full severity of impacts from the pandemic will remain unknown for some time, but like everyone, US is also feeling the effects. Part of the transition included cancelling their Annual Gala, which is their primary source for program funding. Yet, US immediately responded swiftly to the rising needs of LA’s isolated youth. In the past few months, they have successfully developed and launched distance learning alternatives to virtually deliver exceptional theatre-arts education and vital mentoring to marginalized Los Angelinos— and with it, the tenacity to transcend hardship. This year alone, they will have already served close to 500 individuals, offering over 110 remote workshop sessions, including virtual performances, and participants have benefited greatly.
View a video [HERE] that showcases their work during the pandemic.

Together, we can make an impact. In the past 27 year, US has served 10,300 disadvantaged Los Angelinos at over 47 sites, creating over 110 original plays, presenting over 200 public performances to over 22,000 audience members. With your generosity, US can maintain the high quality of their programs — virtually or in person, fortify organizational infrastructure, and continue setting the stage for future growth.

Please take a moment to make a TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION right now!

Select a Gift Level or make a custom donation of your choice:

$2000 approximately covers the cost of providing US’s flagship theatre arts programming to 1 student helping them with academic, social and emotional growth, and you will receive:
• US swag
• The opportunity for Melissa Peterman to host the zoom session of your choice
• Receive opportunity to zoom with US students
• Be thanked on social media, in campaign highlight videos and in final DONATE e-book of content

$1000 helps fund each Theatre and Culture Access Outing to cover pre & post workshop expenses for underserved youth and families providing them critical exposure to professional theatre and culture, and you will receive:
• US swag
• 5 complimentary raffle entries
• Be thanked on social media, in campaign highlight videos and in final DONATE e-book of content

$500 funds approximately one hour of an Alumni Program workshop session connecting opportunity youth to postsecondary opportunities and continued mentorship, and you will receive:
• US swag
• 2 complimentary raffle entries
• Be thanked on social media, in weekly campaign highlight video and in final DONATE e-book of content

$250 covers a portion of the cost of supplies for US’s youth such as printing & distribution of scripts, community service certificates, food and more, and you will receive:
• 2 complimentary raffle entries
• Be thanked on social media

$100 helps pay for the cost of our highly skilled teaching arts that guide and mentor US’s youth
• $ 50 goes towards providing youth the tools for a professional performance
• $ 25 assists with technical costs for US’s virtual programming

Thanks so much for taking the time to read this and for donating generously! Remember, no donation is too small or too large. Every little bit gives a child or parent in need the chance to participate in US’s programs.

With endless gratitude,
[Your Name]

P.S. – Don’t Forget! You can make your gift at [YourPersonalURL] and help us reach our goal to raise $2000 [or other goal] for The Unusual Suspects! For a video highlighting how their after-school program has positively impacted one special participant, Roberto’s life, click [HERE]

Click [HERE] to view their 2018 Annual Report”
I’m committed to the arts and that’s why I’m participating in @The Unusual Suspects #UnUSualCreateAthon to continue providing vital theatre-arts education to underserved youth and families, including incarcerated youth. In support of The Unusual Suspects, will you help me reach my goal of raising $2,000 to help fund their transformative theatre arts programming that empower participants with academic, and emotional growth and social skills – all through the theatre stage? To help reveal the healing power of the arts, I’m going to be [“writing a play” - insert creative goal here] and with every donation I receive, the more I will [“write and reveal what I’ve written” – relate this to what your creative goal is]! Donate today and read more at [insert your personal fundraising page].

THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS SOCIAL MEDIA HANDLES/PAGES:

Facebook | facebook.com/theunusualsuspectstheatrecompany

Instagram | @ustheatreco

Twitter | @USTheatreCo

DON’T FORGET TO USE THE HASHTAG

#UNUSUALCREATEATHON
Learn how to create a fundraising page and sign up with a team or as an individual.
FUNDRAISING TIPS

YOU’VE CREATED YOUR FUNDRAISING PAGE AND SET YOUR CREATIVE GOAL....NOW WHAT?
READ BELOW FOR HOW TO FUNDRAISE AND SUGGESTIONS ON WHO YOU CAN REACH OUT TO!

STEP 1
TELLING YOUR UNUSUAL SUSPECTS STORY!

• YOUR PERSONAL STORY. Let people know why you’re participating.
  Your personal story is the most powerful tool you have when it comes to raising funds for The Virtually UnUSual Create-A-Thon. Whether you are a perfumer or just a strong believer in the healing power of the arts, relating your passion, such as why theatre has meant so much to you in your life, or in the life of a friend/family member, or how having a mentor changed your life and how much you’ve seen The Unusual Suspects transform our participants’ lives, your personal story changes The Unusual Suspects from an abstract arts organization to something that is personally meaningful to you and/or someone you love.

• When you’re customizing an email, a fundraising web page or posting to social media, consider making these elements part of your appeal. Email alexa.nieblas@theunusualsuspects.org for help or guidance!

• YOUR PERSONAL STORY.
• INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS. See the sample email and FAQ included in this toolkit for more information.
• YOUR FUNDRAISING GOAL. Ask for their support in helping you meet that goal.
• YOUR CREATIVE GOAL. Let them know that you are doing something creative to help the cause.
• THE DONATION PROCESS. Tell them how easy it is to make a donation to your fundraising page. Supporters can use their phone, computer, or any mobile device! Donations can be made in under 30 seconds.
• SIMPLY ASK FOR THEIR SUPPORT. You’ll be surprised how many people are willing and want to help if you just ask.
• ASK YOUR BEST SUPPORTERS TO FORWARD YOUR EMAIL. Ask the grandparents, aunts/uncles, siblings in your family to FORWARD your email to their friends and family. Simply by forwarding your emails, extended family can help you meet your fundraising goals.

We’ve started the process for you, by creating sample language you can find in the ‘Outreach’ Section of this Toolkit - now all you have to do is easily customize it to tell YOUR story!
STEP 2

FUNDRAISING TIPS AND GUIDANCE!

Now, that you’ve got your story down…it’s time to SHARE!
Share your story by email or social media. Then ask people to help you make a difference.

• **SET A GOOD EXAMPLE.** You should be your own first donor! If you created a team - encourage team members to do the same.

• **REMEMBER: IT NEVER HURTS TO ASK!** Enthusiasm and commitment are contagious. If you keep asking for help, people will respond.

• **START AN EMAIL CAMPAIGN.** Send your message to your family, friends, coworkers and everyone you know and ask them to forward your email to people they know. Remember to tell your Unusual Suspects story!

  *Sample email message is located in the ‘Outreach’ section of this Toolkit.*

• **POST YOUR FUNDRAISING LINK ON SOCIAL.** Here are The Unusual Suspects social pages & handles:
  
  Facebook: facebook.com/theunusualsuspectstheatrecompany
  Instagram: @ustheatreco
  Twitter: @USTheatreCo

  *Don’t forget to use the hashtag # everywhere: #UnUSualCreateAthon*

  Post your message and fundraising link on social media – don’t forget to ask them to SHARE your link/post to people they know. Remember to tell your Unusual Suspects story!

  *Sample Message might be: “I’m committed to the arts and that’s why I’m participating in @ The Unusual Suspects #UnUSualCreateAthon to continue providing vital theatre-arts education to underserved youth and families, including incarcerated youth. In support of The Unusual Suspects, will you help me reach my goal of raising $2,000 to help fund their transformative theatre arts programming that empower participants with academic, and emotional growth and social skills – all through the theatre stage? To help reveal the healing power of the arts, I’m going to be [“writing a play” - insert creative goal here] and with every donation I receive, the more I will [“write and reveal what I’ve written” – relate this to what your creative goal is]! Donate today and read more at [insert your personal fundraising page].

• **ASK YOUR SUPPORTERS TO FORWARD YOUR EMAIL.** Have the grandparents, aunts/uncles, siblings, etc. in your family forward your email request. They can add on a simple comment and send to everyone on their list, such as “My daughter is raising much needed funds theatre-arts education in Los Angeles. Would you consider supporting our efforts? See the details below.”

• **TALK ABOUT THE CREATE-A-THON EVERYWHERE.** Spark a conversation. Be prepared to talk about The Unusual Suspects whenever and wherever you go. Practice talking about it with a friend or family member if that helps.

• **ASK FOR DONATIONS INSTEAD OF GIFTS.** Have a birthday, holiday, or special occasion coming up? Let people know you’d prefer a donation to The Unusual Suspects rather than a gift.
• **RECRUIT VIRTUAL CREATE-A-RAISERS.** Not everyone will be able to donate. But they can still join your team and raise funds towards your goal or even become their own Create-A-Raiser. Team members can be in any state!

• **PROMOTE THE VIRTUALLY UNUSUAL CREATE-A-THON IN ALL YOUR ELECTRONIC MESSAGING.** Add a Create-A-Thon signoff to your emails. Don’t forget to share fundraising appeals and updates using social media.

• **ENLIST YOUR EMPLOYER’S HELP.** There are all kinds of ways that employers can help you recruit and reward coworkers without it costing the company any money. Top fundraisers can be awarded a premium parking spot for a week, or a special casual day. We find that businesses are excited to support a good cause!

• **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF CORPORATE MATCHING GIFT PROGRAMS.** See if your employer has a matching gift program. Encourage any team members to do the same. This is an easy way to potentially double your fundraising total!

Here are a few more ways that you can support the cause by keeping the FUN in fundraising...

• **SET ACHIEVABLE GOALS.** Set a goal that you can reach and if you created a team, challenge your team members to reach it. Goals could be as simple as sending an email each day one week.

• **MAKE IT A FRIENDLY COMPETITION.** Tap into the competitive spirit. Are you committing to a writing goal along with your fundraising goal? Challenge an actor or someone you know to commit to the Create-A-Thon as a performer and see who can raise the most and get the most reactions on social!

• **MAKE IT A SOCIAL EVENT.** Consider hosting a virtual, social get-together/ happy hour for friends and contacts, and share with them info about the Create-A-Thon and what you are doing - keep the atmosphere light-hearted and social.

• **DON’T FORGET:** Each week, set a fundraising goal for yourself!!

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**REACH YOUR FUNDRAISING GOAL USING THE “50+ CONTACTS IN 50 MINUTES” TO GUIDE WHO YOU ASK!**

**Make a Phone Call to:**

1. Parents  
2. Siblings  
3. In-laws  
4. Sisters-in-law  
5. Brothers-in-law  
6. Aunts/Uncles  
7. Cousins  
8. Children  
9. Nieces/Nephews  
10. Grandparents
Call or Email your:
11. Work Colleagues
12. Athletic League teammates
13. Gym or Yoga acquaintances
14. People you know through Childcare
15. Place of Worship contacts
16. Friends from a Coffee house
17. Regulars at the Neighborhood Café
18. Camp friends
19. Golf buddies
20. People from your Favorite Restaurant
21. Anyone where you donate items

22. Those you volunteer with
23. Pet Groomer/Vet
24. Drycleaner
25. Florist
26. Barber/Stylist
27. School
28. Supermarket
29. Manicurist
30. Bartender
31. Gym/Yoga Studio
32. Pharmacist

Others you might call or email:
33. College friends
34. Fraternity/Sorority friends
35. High school friends
36. Facebook/Social Media friends
37. Children’s friends
38. Children’s teachers
39. Neighbors
40. Parents’ friends
41. Former Co-workers
42. Coach(es)

Send an Email to:
43. Accountant
44. Attorney
45. Babysitter/Nanny
46. Dentist
47. Chiropractor
48. Real estate agent
49. Physical therapist
50. Physician
51. Wedding planner
52. Business/Talent Representation
53. Clients
54. Physical Trainer

Don’t forget….
55. YOU can make a Personal Donation
56. Ask if your employer matches donations

Share the good news! Promotion is KEY
Post via Facebook Share on Twitter Post on Instagram, including a link to your donation page!
HERE IS HOW YOU CAN RAISE $250 IN JUST 5 DAYS!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>TOTAL RAISED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Day 1: Sponsor yourself for $25+</td>
<td>$25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Day 2: Post link on Social Media to all contacts asking for minimum of $25</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Day 2: Email link to all contacts asking for minimum of $25</td>
<td>$175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Day 3: Call and ask a family member for $25</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Day 4: Call and ask a coworker for $25</td>
<td>$225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Day 5: Call and ask a friend for $25</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learn how to create a fundraising page and sign up with a team or as an individual.
COMING SOON