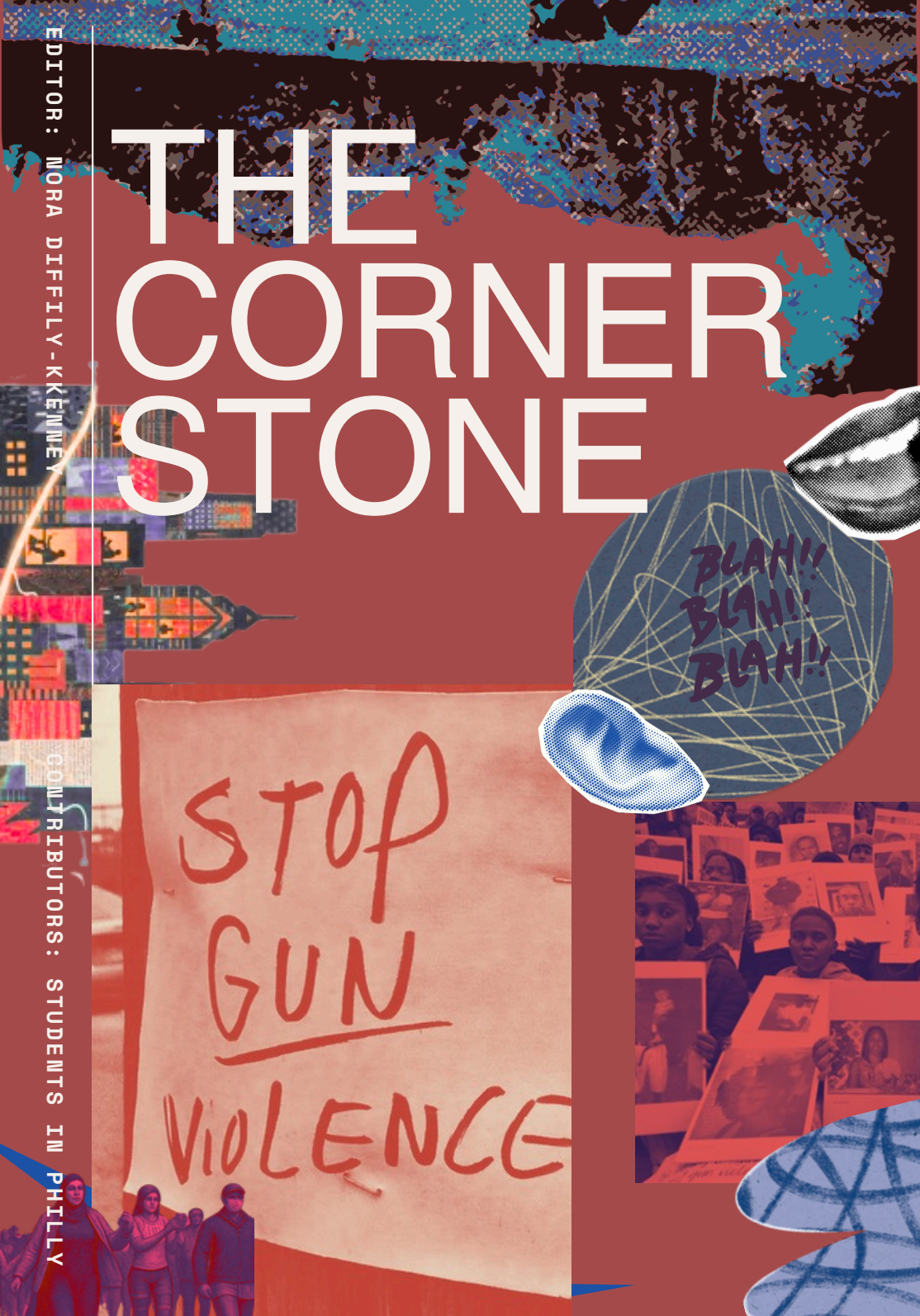


THE CORNER STONE

EDITOR: MORA DIFFILY-KEMMENY

CONTRIBUTORS: STUDENTS IN PHILLY



AUTHOR'S EDITORIAL:



My Story:

Growing up in Philadelphia has been an experience I am grateful for almost every day. Philly has life, and spirit, and grit, and so much love. It represents all types of people, classes, personalities, and lives, including my own. That being said, Philadelphia has qualities that aren't so full of life and fun, and rather host experiences that are life changing in the wrong way. I thought that those aspects of Philly created resilience, and exposure to the "real" world, something that not everyone gets. But, on **October 17th, 2025** this abstraction of what the city means, and how it alters someone's upbringing became a physical reality in a way I had never previously endured, and something that no amount of

physiological buffering could soften. I was on my way to school, just getting off the trolley and on my way to the orange walls of the Broad Street line, a playlist still blaring in my ears. The morning air was crisp and snappy. The kind of autumn day that feels full of potential. Then, the rhythm of the street shattered. I didn't just hear the loud pop echoing over my music - the sound I often subconsciously coin flip between a firecracker and a handgun - I saw the flash, the fall, the run, and the heavy silence that follows after a gunshot. I found myself palms to the sidewalk, hearing only the sound of my breathing, and the soft melody of the song still playing on my airpods, now scattered to both sides of my hips. My fingers trembled as I looked around, and dialed 911.

Every person I turned to was, like me, pinned to the ground with that same terrified and hoping look in their eye. Slowly, everyone rose from the ground, looking reluctantly at each other, the surroundings, and the person lying helplessly on the ground, each of us watching a life slip away before a single siren could sound. Blood pooled and traveled quickly into the pores of the City Hall sidewalk, as if reaching and calling out for help.

A few people, a woman dressed in a large checkered scarf and a red coat, a man in a security guard uniform, a young man in a grey hoodie and sweatpants, and me, in my blue jeans, purple flowered and lacey tanktop, and my grey backpack with a CAVA pita chip stuffed animal hanging off the zipper, all collectively rushed to the man's aid. He was lying there, eyes glossy, and white tanktop changing color slowly as he continued to bleed helplessly. I spoke to the 911 operator, and stood back, blood hitting the toe and soles of my white New Balances.

I stared, blankly, without a second thought going through my head until minutes later a police officer grabbed my shoulder and asked me questions rapidly. The man was hoisted by three other police officers up the stairs of the City Hall vestibule, shedding blood on each stair, and was thrown into the back of a police car which sped away with the front driver side door still open.

Days later, I was sent an NBC10 Philadelphia article titled *“Police Investigating after man killed on SEPTA platform in Center City.”* I sat in the blue trolley seat, trimmed in fading white paint and cried. Though the experience I had days prior was heavy, and intense, I didn’t expect a death from it. I had naive trust in the doctors that they could save this man like they had saved others like him before. But that wasn’t his reality, and now it wasn’t mine either.

That day changed the way I view my role as a student, journalist, and a human being. I realized that when we hesitate to jump at the sound of violence, or go immediately to the thought that it’s just a false alarm, we are trading a piece of our humanity for a survival instinct. True resilience shouldn’t require us to be numb. Agency begins with our refusal to be “used to it.” It begins with the decision to document the truth not as a witness of a crime, or a tragedy, but as a chronicler of our community.

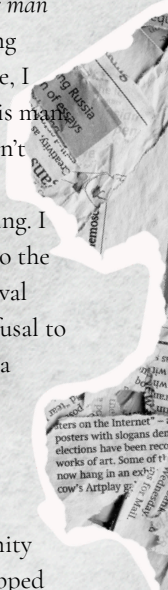
The Statistical Wall and the Human Record:

Philadelphia as a city is often defined by the statistics of gun violence. Our community and our neighbors are tracked by zip codes, categorized by “clearance rates,” and mapped by frequency of incidents within different parts of the city. Research from the Stoneleigh Foundation suggests that this continuous and constant exposure to community trauma fosters a profound and difficult to break cycle of powerlessness in our youth. While the data of our city is an essential aspect of investigating, understanding and attacking the problem, it often lacks the soul required for advocacy, which is equally as important. *Numbers can tell us where a bullet went, but cannot capture the weight of an empty chair in a classroom.*

This gap is where **“The CornerStone”** comes to exist. As a senior capstone this zine is designed to be a functional and foundational record of Philadelphia Youth Agency. By moving in a direction away from the detached, and clinical perspective of news headlines, and towards a more human connection, we reclaim our identities. We are not variables, we are not numbers; we are authors, we are artists, and we are activists.

The Architecture of Real Safety:

The traditional response to our city and nation’s fear is often in the direction of technology and hardware. More surveillance cameras, more metal detectors, higher fences, etc. Yet, for individuals living and breathing in these neighborhoods and realities,



they know, and we know genuine security is a perimeter that you cannot build, yet it's a presence you have to nurture.

Data from the **City Controller's** office often correlates shooting incidents with neighborhood level neglect and general resource allocation. If we look to the areas most affected by gun violence, and violence as a general matter, we see a consistent, and everlasting lack of investment. Real safety therefore looks like;

1. **Investment in Potential:** Supporting recreation centers where the lights stay on late into the night, and the staff knows everyone's name.
2. **Economic Opportunity:** Creating summer jobs that can pay a living and real wage.
3. **Creative Agency:** Empowering students through Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) allows us to safely and effectively identify safety issues and propose real changes to city leaders, or those who can make more widespread change.

When we give a teenager a camera, a canvas, a microphone, a piece of paper and a pencil, or a seat at a policy table, we are giving them the tools to shift the same narrative of them, that the cameras always miss.

The Radical Ethics of Joy & and Call to Collective Action:

As I have worked this year on **curating, editing, and finding submissions** for the zine, I have realized that if I only document the trauma, then I am in fact doing the same as the news, and only telling half of the story. There is a radical, and sensitive ethic in documenting joy, and documenting pain. In a city where we are often told *"nothing grows without city permission or a developer's large check book,"* seeing beauty, and creating something like The CornerStone, is a direct act of defiance.

"The CornerStone" is intended to be a safe, vulnerability friendly space for every student, and every teenager from every corner of the city. We are looking for the prose, the poems, the sketches, the sculptures, the photos, and the writing that explores every inch on the spectrum of our experience. Whether it's a story of a lockdown, an op-ed on solutions, or a tribute to a loved one, every contribution is a brick in the foundation of... a cornerstone.

If you are a student in Philadelphia, whether that be in middle school, high school, or college, your voice belongs here. **Don't let the headlines tell your story for you.**



SIGNED,
NORA DIFFILY-
KENNEY

Приведи в по-
вс





Title: Their Lives, Not Yours
Creator: Aasya Monroy

191XX Frequency

1. "Dreams and Nightmares" – Meek Mill
2. "Summertime" – DJ Jazzy Jeff & The Fresh Prince
3. "The Sound of Silence" (Cover)
4. "On My Block" – 215 Collective
5. "Keep Ya Head Up" – 2Pac
6. "Alright" – Kendrick Lamar
7. "Philadelphia Sunrise" – Local Lo-fi Artist
8. "Concrete Jungle" – Bob Marley
9. "Gonna Fly Now" (Bill Conti) – The Bill Conti Orchestra
10. "Everyday People" – Sly & The Family Stone
11. "Sirens" – (Field Recording/Ambient Track)
12. "Umi Says" – Mos Def
13. "Optimistic" – Sounds of Blackness
14. "The Choice is Yours" – Black Sheep
15. "Victory" – (Instrumental)

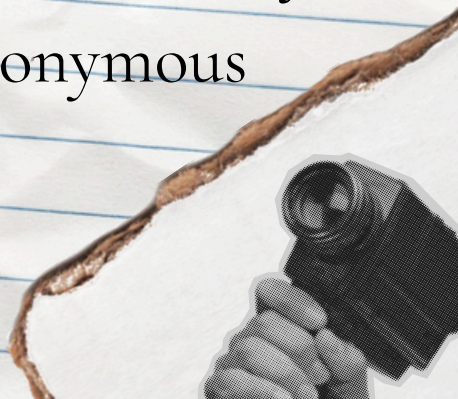
Title: 191XX Frequency

Creator: 10th Grade student



Title: A film reel of Philly

Creator: Anonymous

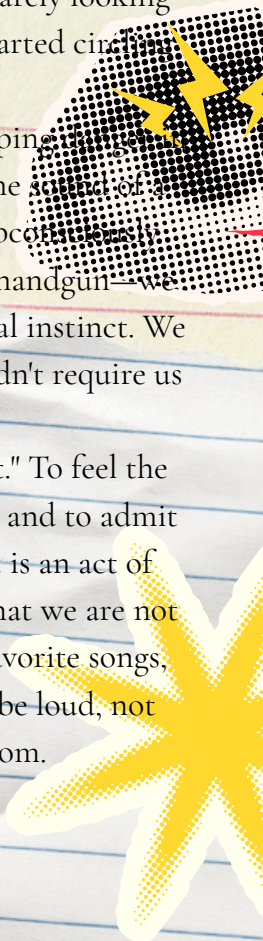




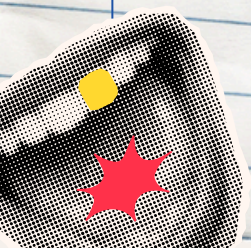
The notification sound for the Citizen app is a low, digital chime that has become the unofficial soundtrack of a Philadelphia childhood. For a long time, I thought resilience meant not flinching when that chime rang three times in an hour. I thought I was being "Philly strong" by barely looking up from my homework when the helicopters started circling low enough to rattle the windows.

But lately, I've realized that there is a quiet, creeping becoming a stone. When we stop jumping at the sound of a loud pop—because we spend three seconds subconsciously debating the acoustics of a firecracker versus a handgun—we have traded a piece of our humanity for a survival instinct. We are told to be resilient, but true resilience shouldn't require us to be desensitized.

Agency begins with the refusal to be "used to it." To feel the weight of every headline, to mourn every name, and to admit that we are scared is not a sign of weakness; it is an act of defiance. It is the only way to remind the city that we are not just figures in a report. We are students with favorite songs, unfinished essays, and futures that deserve to be loud, not hushed in the corner of a dark classroom.



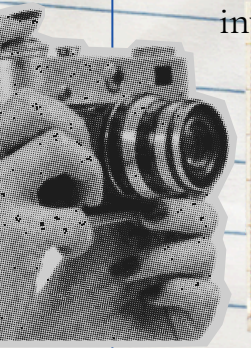
Title: My Citizens App
Creator: 11th Grade Student



If you look at the corner of my block at 10:00 PM, you see the flicker of blue lights reflecting off the asphalt.

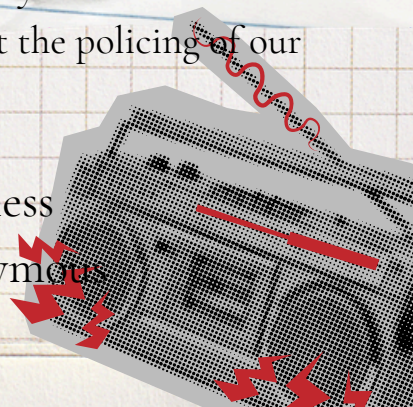
The city's answer to our fear has always been more hardware: more cameras, more sirens, more fences. But for those of us walking these streets, we know that safety isn't a perimeter you can build; it's a presence you have to nourish.

Real safety doesn't look like a patrol car; it looks like a Recreation Center where the lights stay on late and the staff knows your middle name. It looks like a summer job that pays a living wage and teaches you that your hands are meant for creating, not just defending. We are often asked what "solutions" we want, as if the answer is a complex mathematical formula. It's actually quite simple: stop funding the aftermath and start funding the afternoon. When you give a teenager a camera, a basketball, or a microphone, you aren't just "keeping them off the streets." You are giving them the tools to author a narrative that the news cameras always seem to miss. True public safety is found in the investment of our potential, not the policing of our existence.



NOTES

Title: Nameless
Creator: Anonymous



DON'T FORG

A temple of plexiglass and neon, where the air smells like grease and Dutchies. The bell chimes—a greeting for the aunties, a warning for the weary. “Let me get a Cooper sharp, salt-pepper-ketchup,” the liturgy of the hungry. Behind the counter, a nod that says I see you. Outside, the sirens might be wailing a block away, but in here, under the hum of the refrigerator, we are just neighbors trading quarters for juice, holding the door for the elders, finding a pocket of peace between the shelves of chips.

Title: The Classics

Creator: Anonymous

In the middle of a lot on Diamond Street where the rowhomes used to stand—their ghosts marked only by the jagged outlines of brick on the neighboring walls—Elijah wasn't looking for trouble; he was looking for topsoil. Everyone calls it a "vacant" lot, a word that implies emptiness, but to those of us who live here, it's just a space waiting for an invitation.

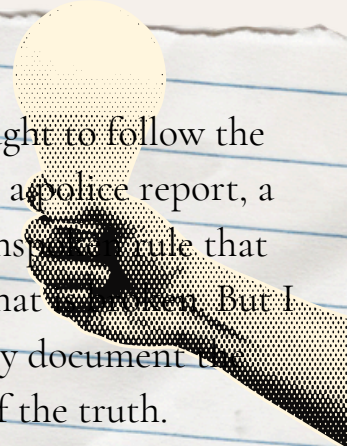
Elijah spent his Saturdays hauling bags of mulch on the back of a rusted mountain bike. He planted marigolds because an old head told him they keep the pests away, but mostly he planted them because the orange was so loud it drowned out the grey of the cracked sidewalk. When the older guys pass by, the ones the news tells us to fear, they don't mock him. They stop. They lean over the makeshift wire fence and ask about the irrigation or how he got the zinnias to take in such stubborn dirt.

In a neighborhood where we are told nothing grows without city permission or a developer's checkbook, Elijah is building a forest out of pure defiance. He is proving that the soil here isn't dead; it was just waiting for someone to stop walking past it and start kneeling down to meet it.



Title: Diamond Street

Creator: Charlie



As a journalist in this city, I am taught to follow the "lead." Usually, the lead is heavy. It's a police report, a budget cut, or a vigil. There is an unspoken rule that "serious" journalism must focus on what's broken. But I have started to realize that if I only document tragedy, I am only telling half the truth.

There is a radical ethics in documenting joy. When I interview the senior who spent four years perfecting their jump shot, or the freshman who just published her first poem, I am performing an act of resistance. By pointing my lens at a block party where three generations are dancing to the same song, I am contradicting the narrow, grey narrative that the rest of the world tries to pin on Philadelphia youth.

Our joy is not a distraction from our reality—it is the core of it. It is the proof that we are more than what has happened to us. My job isn't just to report on the survival of my peers, but to celebrate their thriving. Because in a world that expects us to be a statistic, being happy is the most revolutionary story I can write.

Title: Namless
Creator: Journalist



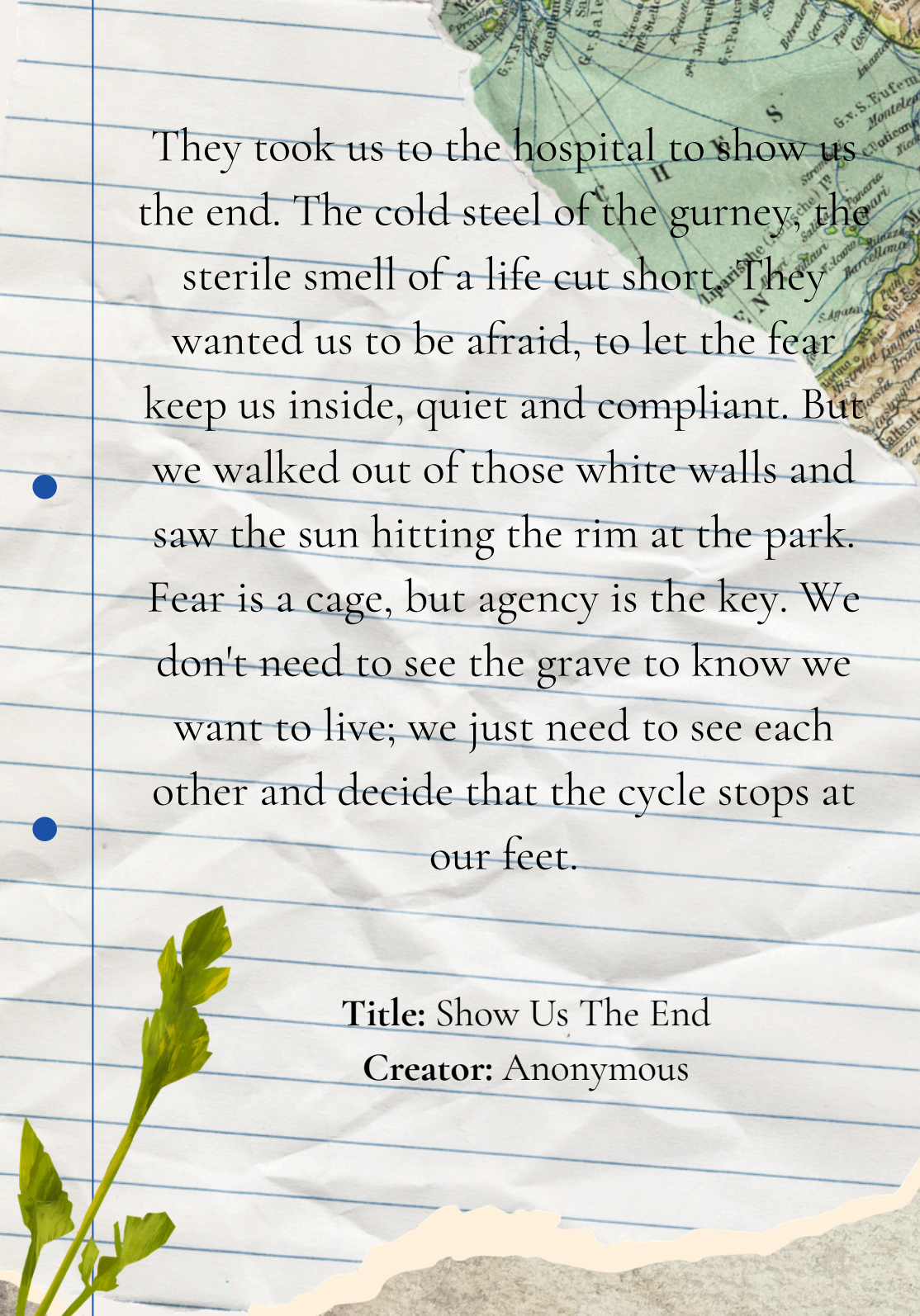
The Broad Street Line is a sliding vein,
pumping us through the city's chest. We
lean against the orange plastic seats, heads
bobbing to beats that drown out the
screech of metal on metal at Erie, at
Girard, at Cecil B. We see the headlines
on the discarded papers rolling across the
floor like tumbleweeds— *Another one gone.*
A neighborhood in mourning. But then the
doors open at City Hall, and a group of
kids bursts in with a speaker, dancing
between the poles, gravity-defiers,
turning a commute into a stage. They are
the agency the news forgets. They are the
rhythm the city cannot quiet.

Title: The BSL's Heart
Creator: 12th Grade Student



Title: The “Normal” Look
Creator: CAPA student






They took us to the hospital to show us the end. The cold steel of the gurney, the sterile smell of a life cut short. They wanted us to be afraid, to let the fear keep us inside, quiet and compliant. But we walked out of those white walls and saw the sun hitting the rim at the park. Fear is a cage, but agency is the key. We don't need to see the grave to know we want to live; we just need to see each other and decide that the cycle stops at our feet.

Title: Show Us The End

Creator: Anonymous



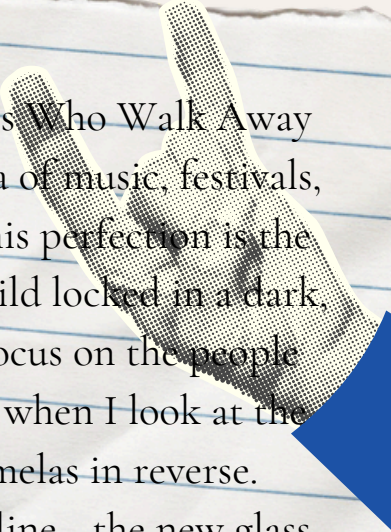
The final bell rings at 3:04 PM, and the city instantly transforms into a labyrinth of "if" and "then." If the 33 bus is late, then I have to walk past the block where the tension is high. If I wear this hoodie, then I might be misread. For many, the "safe route" is a long, winding detour. But for me, sanctuary is found in the basement of the local library, where the "Youth Participatory Action Research" group meets under the hum of a flickering fluorescent light.

We aren't just sitting in a circle complaining about the sirens; we are mapping them. We are taking the "grey area" of our daily anxiety and turning it into a spreadsheet of demands. We cross-reference the City Controller's data on gun violence with the city's records of broken streetlights and abandoned lots. We are proving that neglect is a choice made by the city, and safety is a right that is being withheld. This is what youth agency looks like: a group of teenagers with lukewarm pizza, cracked laptop screens, and a shared refusal to be a footnote in a budget report. In this basement, we aren't "at-risk"—we are the experts.

Title: Who Are We?

Creator: IIth Grade Student






In Ursula K. Le Guin's "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas," the city is a utopia of music, festivals, and sunshine. But the price of this perfection is the calculated suffering of a single child locked in a dark, basement room. Most readers focus on the people who "walk away" in protest. But when I look at the map of Philadelphia, I see Omelas in reverse.

The "joy" of the Center City skyline—the new glass towers, the rooftop bars, the pristine parks—seems to depend on the calculated neglect of the neighborhoods just ten minutes north. We are the children in the basement rooms of underfunded schools and high-crime blocks, kept there so the "economic engine" of the city can keep humming for everyone else. However, the youth of Philly aren't just waiting for someone to feel guilty and walk away. We are breaking the door down. We are writing, creating, and advocating to prove that no one's safety should be the "unfortunate price" for someone else's peace. We are demanding a city where the light isn't a limited resource, but a shared reality.

Title: Analytical Essay

Creator: 12th Grade Student





The lockdown alarm blared at 1:47 PM. I was in the bathroom, scrolling through my phone, when the text came in:

“You good?”

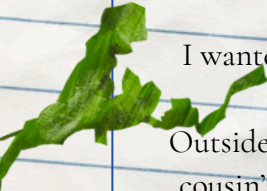
I didn't answer. Instead, I stared at the screen, my thumb hovering over the keyboard. Yeah. Yeah, I'm good. But the words felt like a lie, even to me.

I thought about the last time I'd seen my cousin. It was at my abuela's house, the smell of sofrito and fried plantains filling the air. He'd laughed, slapping my shoulder so hard I nearly dropped my plate. “Stay out of trouble, primo,” he'd said. That was two weeks ago. Two weeks before the news said he was “caught in the crossfire.”

Now, locked in the bathroom, I could hear the muffled voices of my classmates outside, their laughter replaced by nervous whispers. The PA system crackled to life: “This is not a drill.” My phone buzzed again.

Another text, this time from my mom:

“Mijo, where are you? Are you in the bathroom?”



I wanted to scream. No, Mom. I'm not in the bathroom. I'm in a war zone. But I typed, “Yeah, I'm here,” and hit send.

Outside, the sound of sirens wailed. I closed my eyes and imagined my cousin's laugh, the way he'd always say “Te amo” before hanging up. I typed a message to him—one I'd never send—and hit save as a draft.

The all-clear finally came at 2:30. I walked out of the bathroom, my hands shaking. My friend Jamal clapped me on the back. “You good?” he asked.

I looked at my phone. The draft message to my cousin glowed on the screen.



“I miss you,” I typed. Then I deleted it.

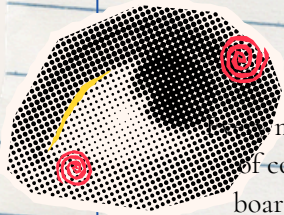
“Yeah,” I said to Jamal. “I'm good.”

But we both knew it wasn't true.

Title: The LockDown

Creator: Anonymous





morning, I walk past the mural on 52nd and Spruce. It's a splash of color in a neighborhood that's seen too much gray—too many boarded-up windows, too many sirens, too many headlines about “another violent weekend.”

The mural is of a girl with a crown of sunflowers, her arms outstretched like she's hugging the sky. Below her, in bold letters, it says: “We are still here.”

I don't know who painted it. Maybe it was Ms. Rivera's art class. Maybe it was a group of strangers who just wanted to say something beautiful into the void. But every time I see it, I stop. I take a deep breath. I remember that this block—my block—isn't just a statistic. Last week, my little brother, Mateo, asked me why the mural was there. I told him it was for the people who didn't make it out. For the ones who are still here. For the ones who are fighting to stay.

He frowned. “But what about the people who hurt others?”

I didn't have an answer. Not one that made sense, anyway.

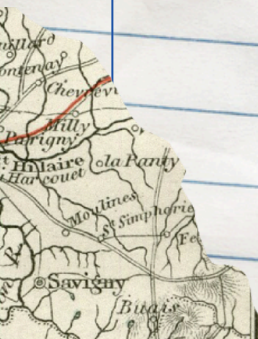
That night, I dreamed of the girl in the mural. She reached down and pulled me up, her hands warm and steady. “You have to tell the story,” she said. “Not just the bad parts. The good ones too.”


When I woke up, I grabbed my notebook. I wrote about the mural. I wrote about my abuela's cooking. I wrote about the way my friend's little sister, Sofia, dances in the street when she thinks no one's watching. I wrote about the way the sun sets over the El tracks, painting everything gold for five minutes before the city turns gray again.

I don't know if anyone will read it. But I know it's important to write it.

Because the mural on 52nd isn't just paint and plaster. It's a promise. And so is this story.

Title: The Mural on 52nd Street
Creator: Mellissa





The lockdown alarm is a sound I know by heart now. It's the same one that blared when I was in 7th grade, when my friend Amir got jumped on the way home from school. It's the same one that echoed through the halls last year when someone brought a gun to the football game.

But this time, it's different.

This time, I'm in 11th grade. This time, I'm the one holding the phone, typing "You good?" to my friends like it's nothing. Like it's normal.

The lights flicker. Someone's phone buzzes. A girl in the back of the room starts crying, but no one looks at her. We've all learned to look away.

I close my eyes and think about the poetry unit in Ms. Rivera's class. We read "Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou, and she asked us what resilience looked like. I wrote about my mom, who works two jobs but still finds time to ask about my day. I wrote about my little sister, who draws rainbows on her notebooks like they're shields.

Now, in the lockdown, I think about those words. Still I rise. Still. I. Rise.

The all-clear finally comes. We walk out like nothing happened. But the sky is too blue, the air too still. I wonder if the building remembers the way we held our breath.

Later, at home, I open my notebook. I write:

They say we're at risk.

But we are the risk-takers.

The ones who walk home late

because we're too stubborn:

to let fear win.

We are the ones

who turn the music up

when the sirens start.

We are the ones

who still laugh

in the face of the algorithm of fear.

I don't know if it's good poetry. But it's true.

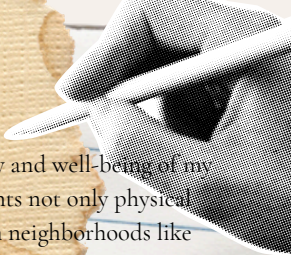
And that's enough.



Title: We, Us

Creator: 10th Grade Student





Gun violence, to me, is a painful reality that threatens the safety and well-being of my community and countless others across the nation. It represents not only physical danger but also emotional trauma and a barrier to progress in neighborhoods like Philadelphia.

The Gun Violence Archive reports that in 2023 alone, there have been thousands of gun-related incidents in the United States, many involving young people (Gun Violence Archive, 2023). This ongoing crisis disrupts education, families, and the social fabric of communities. Studies have found that children exposed to gun violence often face difficulties concentrating in school and are at higher risk for behavioral problems (Sharkey et al., 2018).

Personally, gun violence means fear that lingers in everyday moments—walking home from school, attending community events, or simply sitting in my own house. It means the grief of losing friends and neighbors to preventable violence. But it also means the strength of those who refuse to be silenced. I see this strength in community organizers, in youth activists demanding gun reform, and in families supporting each other through loss.

Gun violence is a call for comprehensive solutions: better mental health resources, community investment, and sensible gun laws. The American Psychological Association emphasizes the importance of trauma-informed approaches to support survivors and prevent further violence (APA, 2021).


Ultimately, gun violence is a challenge that requires collective action, empathy, and hope. It means recognizing the humanity behind the headlines and committing to a future where safety is a right, not a privilege.

References:

- Gun Violence Archive. (2023). Gun Violence Statistics. <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/>
- Sharkey, P., Tirado-Strayer, N., Papachristos, A. V., & Raver, C. C. (2018). The effect of local violence on children's attention and impulse control. *American Journal of Public Health*, 108(6), 792-797. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2018.304320>
- American Psychological Association (APA). (2021). Trauma-Informed Care for Survivors of Gun Violence. <https://www.apa.org/topics/violence/gun-violence>



Title: Analytical Essay
Creator: 11th Grade Student





Title: The TV Glow
Creator: Anonymous



Dear Me, Before the Bell Rang,
The hallway smelled like floor wax and teenage
sweat.

We laughed about the pop quiz, ignored the PA
system's static.

Gun violence was a word on a screen, not a
shadow in the stairwell.

Dear Me, When the Lockdown Started,
The lights flickered. Someone's phone buzzed—a
text from a cousin:

“You good?”

I wrote back: “Yeah.” (Lie.)

The silence was louder than the fire drill we'd
practiced last month.

Dear Me, After the All-Clear,
We walked out like nothing happened.
But the sky was too blue, the air too still.
I wonder if the building remembers the way we
held our breath.

Title: Dear me

Creator: Anonymous



What the News Won't Tell You

They'll show you the crime scene tape,
but not the mural on the corner of 52nd and Spruce—
the one where the artist painted his little sister's smile
after she beat cancer.

They'll count the shootings,
but not the number of times I've seen a sunset from the El
train,
how the sky turns pink over the Schuylkill like God dipped
His brush in cotton candy.

They'll ask, "*Why do you stay?*"
as if love is a math problem
with a single, logical answer.

They won't tell you about the way my abuela's empanadas
taste like home,
or how my best friend's laugh is the only sound that can make
me forget

the sound of gunshots two blocks away.

So here's the headline you won't see:

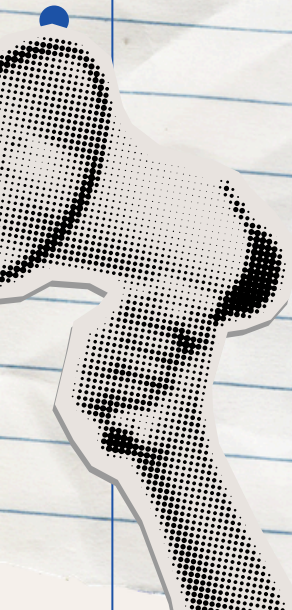
Philly youth are more than statistics.

*We are the art on the walls,
the late-night diner debates,
the hands that rebuild what's broken.*

We are the city's heartbeat.

And we're still dancing."^{*}

Title: What The News Won't Tell
You; We're Still Dancing
Creator: 12th Grade Student



I used to think you were just a place I passed through—
sidewalks cracked like my mom's hands after a double shift,
the bodega on the corner where Mr. Tony always saves me a
sour patch kid,
the abandoned lot where my friends and I play basketball
until the streetlights flicker on like a bad joke.

But you're more than that.

You're the smell of jasmine in the summer,
the way the old men play dominoes outside the barber shop,
the sound of Ms. Johnson's gospel music drifting from her
window

on Sunday mornings.

You're the place where I learned to ride a bike,
where I got my first kiss
where I cried when my dog died,
and where I laughed until my stomach hurt
with my cousin Tasha after she got her braces off.

They'll call you "dangerous."

They'll say we're "at risk."

But you're my first home.

And I love you.

—

P.S. Don't let anyone tell you you're not enough.

Title: You, it's You

Creator: TRK

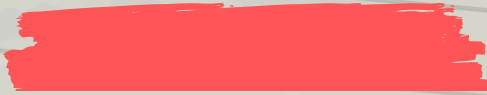
SLA'S GUN VIOLENCE STATISTICS - THE DEMOGRAPHICS



Grade:



9th



10th

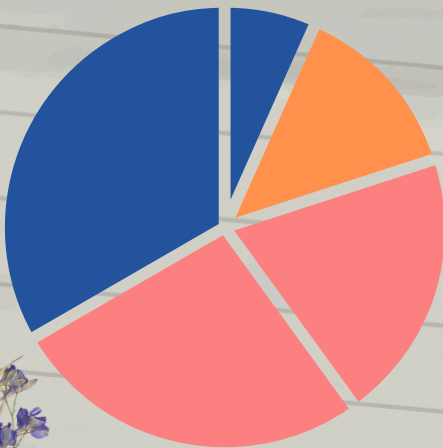


11th



12th

Gender Identity
















- Female
- Male
- Non Binary



SLA'S GUN VIOLENCE STATISTICS - THE DEMOGRAPHICS

Zip Code

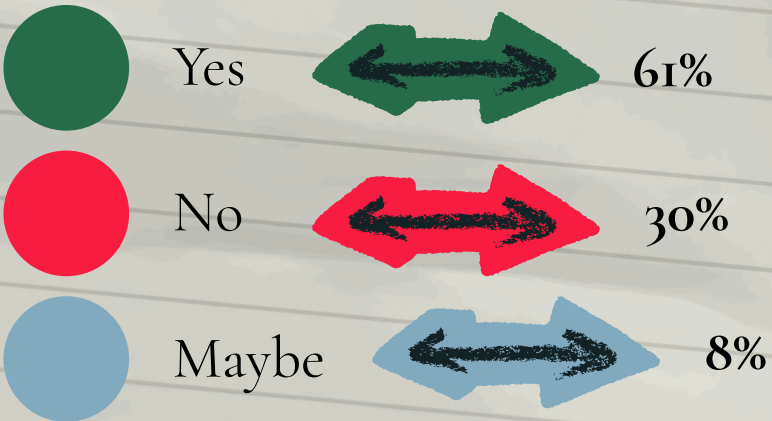
 19103 - 2%	 19144 - 5%
 19104 - 7%	 19146 - 9%
 19114 - 1%	 19145 - 5%
 19119 - 12%	 19146 - 5%
 19120 - 4%	 19143 - 3%
 19128 - 8%	 Other - 31%
 19145 - 8%	



SLA'S GUN VIOLENCE STATISTICS - THE REAL

We are the story

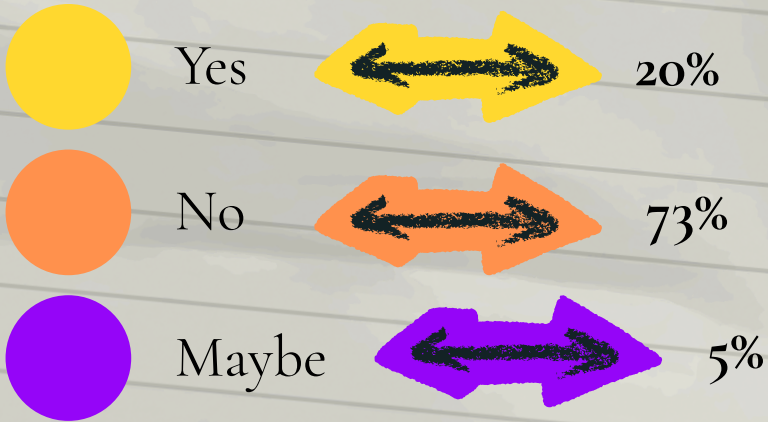
Have you ever known someone who lost someone in their life to gun violence?



SLA'S GUN VIOLENCE STATISTICS - THE REAL

We are the story

Have you ever lost someone to gun
violence?



FINDINGS:

This analysis examines survey responses from approximately ¼ of Science Leadership Academy's student body regarding their experience in, and perception of gun violence in their home city, Philadelphia.

Exposure Vs Second Hand

- **Direct Impact:** Approximately 20-25% of students explicitly answered to being effected or impacted by gun violence in their lives.
- **Second Hand Experience:** Despite the majority of respondents answering no to direct contact or personal experience with gun violence, more than 60-65% responded "Yes" or "Maybe" that they knew someone who had lost someone to gun violence, or that they had been affected in some other second hand way.

The "Normalazation" Trend

A notable segment of the student body (mostly in the 9th-grade bracket) reported "No" to being personally affected and "No" to worrying about it. This suggests either a **localized sense of security** in specific neighborhoods or a level of **desensitization to the surrounding** urban environment.

FINDINGS :

Key Findings

The data reveals **a stark intersection between geography, identity, and psychological safety**, highlighting that gun violence is an unevenly distributed burden within the Science Leadership Academy community. Students residing in ZIP codes like 19120 and 19140 report the highest frequency of direct personal impact, whereas the South Philadelphia clusters (19145/19146) exhibit a unique "vigilance gap" where students report low direct impact but near-universal anxiety. Demographic trends further sharpen this picture: **Black and Hispanic students are significantly more likely to cite personal experience with violence, while female-identifying students across all backgrounds report higher levels of chronic worry.** This atmosphere of instability is most evident in the high volume of "Maybe" responses, suggesting that for a majority of the student body—particularly freshmen still acclimating to a city-wide campus—**safety is perceived as conditional and fragile rather than a constant.** Ultimately, the transition from freshman to senior year appears to replace ambiguity with a hardened, definitive outlook on the city's risks, marking gun violence as a foundational element of the student's developmental environment.

Below is a memorial for a few
of the many lost to gun
violence in our city. To see and
honor more individuals gone
too soon, go to:

[https://gunmemorial.org/PA/phil
adelphia](https://gunmemorial.org/PA/philadelphia)

