"Resurrection first requires being low down, else there’s nothing to rise above". In a contemporary, urban setting six African-American men at six different stages in life deal with issues that could cause despair. Life after prison, failing businesses, poor health, difficulties with education, family secrets: these men understand struggle. But "resurrection" means rising from decay and even the dead. The characters in Resurrection work to rise above these challenges through their belief in themselves and their faith in each other as a community. Blending music, poetry and dance, Resurrection is like a building-sized mural of the struggles and triumphs of African-American men in urban America.

“Beyond pain, Beyond tears, Beyond rage, Beyond fear— There is a Resurrection.”

–The Ensemble
As an artist I am interested in

In 2007 and received

And heart, because Beaty believes

And giving inspirational speeches

Actually, I am interested in

As the youngest character in the play, Eric has the most to learn, but he also has the most time to grow. Eric is both intelligent and determined—attributes that will serve him well as he navigates the complicated road of life. If Eric represents the future, what future lies in store for urban, African-American men? What obstacles might he face?

First-Generation College Students—20

If it wasn’t for Isaac and my moms, I would’ve

According to Education Statistics Quarterly, students

Activity! When have you been a mentor or been helped by someone? What did the experience help you do? What are the challenges associated with being a mentor? Write a story that is fictionalized or from your own life about being a mentor, or about a situation in which a mentor could have a meaningful impact on your life.

Diabetes and Overeating—60

The idea of a person being “addicted to

Activity! What is something that you struggle with, perhaps on an ongoing basis? How has it affected your self-image, your relationships, your life? How did you overcome it? How did it affect your life in some ways?

Small Business Struggles—50

“Dreaded this, business a little over 10 years ago— and that’s been a constant fight to keep it open; a health food store in the hood. If you work hard and don’t sell it, you can’t sell it.”

People in Mr. Rogers’ neighborhood are not interested in buying health food products, which puts his business—and therefore his family—under great financial strain. He faces a common dilemma of small business owners during hard times: the debate between living the dream of owning his own business and knowing when to close up shop. How might being a father and a man affect his feelings and decisions?

Homophobia and The Closet—40

According to Human Rights Watch, although African Americans account for only 12 percent of the U.S. population, 44 percent of all prisoners in the United States are black. The Urban League’s 2007 Report, Portrait of the Black Male, states that one in three black boys born in 2010 will spend time in prison. Communities, special interest groups and government officials are addressing these troubling statistics. Dre is intent on turning his life around after serving his prison sentence. However, many people struggle to get jobs or stay out of prison when they are back on “the outside.”

Activity! Do you know someone who identifies as gay? How did you know that he or she was gay?

Eric — The 10-year-old son of Mr. Rogers, Eric works to perfect the recipe for his Special Herbal Iced Tea, which his father allows him to sell in his struggling health food store.

People in the neighborhood buy it because ‘I’m a kid—but I’m on a secret mission. Every time they drink it, I’m watching to see if it works…’

Eric

Homophobia and The Closet

Activity! Do you know someone who identifies as gay? How did you know that he or she was gay?

Isaac

Homophobia and The Closet

Activity! What is something that you struggle with, perhaps on an ongoing basis? How have you overcome it? How did it affect your life in some ways?

On the Future—10

T’won — A 20-year-old man who struggled in high school, T’won dreams of being the first person in his family to go to college.

If it wasn’t for Isaac and my moms, I would’ve gotten lost in the system.”

According to Education Statistics Quarterly, students like T’won, whose parents did not attend college, are more likely to be academically unprepared for college, to have less knowledge about how to apply for college and financial aid assistance, and to have more trouble adjusting to college, compared to students whose parents are college-educated.

T’won has a mentor, Isaac, and this relationship can make all the difference. Having a mentor or a support group can help first generation students prepare for college, providing important information and support.

Activity! When have you been a mentor or been helped by someone? What did the experience help you do? What are the challenges associated with being a mentor? Write a story that is fictionalized or from your own life about being a mentor, or about a situation in which a mentor could have a meaningful impact on your life.
**Powerful Stories, Particular Styles**

Daniel Beaty’s *Resurrection* can be seen as a contemporary, male response to Ntozake Shange’s 1975 OBIE Award-winning play *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf*. In *For Colored Girls*, different women share their experiences with difficult issues such as rape, abortion, love and abandonment through poetic monologues. Shange describes her play as a “choreopoem”—choreography and poetry, in which stories are told in a non-linear fashion through movement and poetic language. *Resurrection* blends music, poetry and dance to tell its characters’ stories. The director of *Resurrection*, Oz Scott, originally directed *For Colored Girls*… on Broadway.

**Activity:** Some plays are more like collages than stories with a beginning, middle and end. Choose an important issue or part of your life and create a collage that shows its story. Use images, words, poetry and even sound to convey the event.

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**Understanding HIV/AIDS**

In *Resurrection*, Dre contracts HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, while in prison. HIV attacks and destroys cells that are part of the body’s immune system, the defense system that fights diseases. As HIV destroys the cells, people with the virus begin to get serious infections as their immune system becomes deficient. Although the medical community has made significant progress over the years in understanding and treating HIV and AIDS, there is still no cure—AIDS is eventually fatal.

Dre transmits HIV to his girlfriend Kim when he gets out of prison. Unaware of her HIV status, Kim becomes pregnant. If a woman is HIV positive and the doctors know about her HIV status, they can usually prevent the spread of the virus from mother to baby.

**HIV Transmission & Prevention**

HIV is transmitted through body fluids such as blood, semen, and vaginal fluids and is spread through high-risk behaviors such as having sex without a condom. It can also be spread through sharing needles used to inject drugs, which is how Dre got the virus in prison. HIV can be prevented by abstaining from sex, always using a condom during sex, never sharing needles, and avoiding the bodily fluids through which HIV is transmitted.

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**Additional Resources**

**Books/Plays:**
- *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf* by Ntozake Shange
- *Emergence-SEE!* by Daniel Beaty
- *Monster* by Walter Dean Myers

**On the Web:**
- First-Generation College Students: [A Literature Review](http://www.tgsic.org/pdf/first_generation.pdf)
- American Diabetes Association: [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

**Videos:**
- *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*

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**Helpful Hints for Theater Audiences**

As an audience member at the theater, YOU are part of the show! Just as you see and hear the actors onstage, they can see and hear you in the audience. To help the performers do their best, please remember the following:

- **Arrive at least 30 minutes early.**
- **Visit the restroom before the show starts.**
- **Before the show begins, turn off your cell phone, watch alarms, pagers, and other electronic devices. If anything rings by accident, shut it off immediately.**
- **Save food and drinks for the lobby. There is no eating or drinking inside the theater.**
- **Walk to and from your seat - no running in the theater!**
- **Do not talk, whisper, sing, or hum.**
- **Keep your feet on the floor, not on the seat in front of you.**
- **Avoid getting up during a show because it distracts your neighbors and the performers. If you must leave, wait for a scene change, then exit quietly and quickly.**
- **Performers appreciate enthusiastic applause rather than whistling or shouting.**
- **Cameras and videotape are prohibited because they are distracting to the performers.**
- **Enjoy the show!**