

She Persisted

The Musical



Illustration
© Alexandra Boiger

*Script and Lyrics by
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*Music by
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*Adapted from the Book Written by Chelsea Clinton and Illustrated by Alexandra Boiger
Published by Philomel Books*



DISCOVERY GUIDE

APRIL 28–MAY 26, 2024

NEWMARK THEATRE

She Persisted the Musical is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. www.mtishows.com. This play was commissioned and first produced by Bay Area Children's Theatre during the 2018/2019 season.

ABOUT THE SHOW

She Persisted The Musical is based on the best-selling children's book written by Chelsea Clinton and illustrated by Alexandra Boiger. In this stage adaptation, Fourth-grader Naomi's field trip to a Women's History Museum turns into a time travel adventure where she encounters inspirational women who have overcome barriers and made waves throughout U.S. history. From activists to athletes, artists, and more, the musical features the stories of female trailblazers such as Harriet Tubman, Virginia Apgar, Ruby Bridges, Sally Ride, Florence Griffith Joyner, and Sonia Sotomayor.

BIG IDEAS

Empowering women
Overcoming obstacles
Role models
Feminism
Courage
Following your dreams

VOCABULARY

Persistence Not giving up when faced with a challenge

Empowerment People having power and control over their own lives

Activist A person who works hard for a cause or social change

Strike When workers stop working in protest, usually to help get better pay and working conditions.

13 AMERICAN WOMEN WHO CHANGED HISTORY



HARRIET TUBMAN

Known as the “Moses of her people,” Harriet Tubman was enslaved, escaped, and helped others gain their freedom as a “conductor” of the Underground Railroad. She is also considered the first African American woman to serve in the military.



RUBY BRIDGES

At the tender age of six, Ruby Bridges advanced the cause of civil rights in November 1960, when she became the first African American student to integrate into an all-white elementary school in the South.



HELEN KELLER

Undeterred by deafness and blindness, Helen Keller rose to become a major 20th century humanitarian, educator and writer. She advocated for the blind and for women’s suffrage and co-founded the American Civil Liberties Union.



MARGARET CHASE SMITH

She was the first woman to serve in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. During her tenure, Smith wrote the Declaration of Conscience, a rejection of the “smear tactics” of Senator Joseph McCarthy and the anticommunist witch-hunts of the 1950s.



CLARA LEMLICH SHAVELSON

She organized women into the International Ladies Garment Workers Union in 1905, forcing male union leaders to include women workers in strikes. In 1909, her fiery speech set off the Uprising of the 20,000, the largest strike by women workers to date.



SALLY RIDE

She was the first American woman in space. She made her journey into history on June 18, 1983. Throughout her life, Dr. Ride broke barriers and worked to ensure that girls and women were encouraged to do the same.



NELLIE BLY

She went undercover as a patient at a New York City mental health asylum in 1887 and exposed the terrible conditions. Her reporting raised awareness about mental health treatment and also ushered in an age of investigative journalism.



FLORENCE GRIFFITH JOYNER

US track athlete and winner of four Olympic gold medals, she was often called “the fastest woman alive”. Nicknamed FloJo, she was a trendsetter, a businesswoman, and the first woman chosen to head the President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.



VIRGINIA APGAR

She was an American doctor who developed a way to check the health of newborn babies. This is called the Apgar Score System. It helps many infants receive immediate medical care before their conditions worsen. The Apgar Score System is still used today.



OPRAH WINFREY

She’s best known for being the host of The Oprah Winfrey Show, which aired for 25 seasons, from 1986 to 2011. Its success helped her become the world’s first Black woman billionaire in 2003.



MARIA TALLCHIEF

At the age of 17, she joined the famed Ballet Russe Monte Carlo as an apprentice and moved quickly through the ranks. She achieved her goal of becoming America’s prima ballerina, the first Native American artist to achieve the rank.



SONIA SOTOMAYOR

She is an American lawyer and judge who became a justice on the United States Supreme Court. She was appointed to the court by President Barack Obama in 2009. Sotomayor was the first Hispanic person and the third woman to serve on the Supreme Court.



CLAUDETTE COLVIN

She was arrested as a teenager for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white person. Her brave action came nine months before Rosa Parks also refused to give up her seat. In 1956, the Supreme Court made segregation on buses illegal.

13 AMERICAN WOMEN WHO CHANGED HISTORY

Draw a line from each fact on the left and quote on the right to the woman in the middle.

Known as “Moses of her people” she was a conductor of the Underground Railroad



“I should fight for my liberty as long as my strength lasted.” HT

She advocated for the blind and for women’s suffrage(the right to vote)



“One can never consent to creep when one feels the impulse to soar.” HK

she helped found what later became the Progressive Women’s Councils



“I am one of those from the abuses described here and I move that we go on a general strike.” CL

She became a star journalist by going undercover as a patient at a New York City mental health asylum.



“I have never written a word that didn’t come from my heart. I never will.” NB

She was an American doctor who developed a way to check the health of newborn babies.



“Nobody, but nobody is going to stop breathing on me.” VA

She was the first Native American artist to become America’s prima ballerina



“You cant sugar coat it. You have to take a stand and say this is not right.” CC

African American teenager who, in 1955, was arrested for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white person.



“That fateful walk to school began a journey and we all must work together to continue moving forward.” RB

At the age of six she was the first African American student to integrate an elementary school in the South.



“It never occurred to me to say it hurts to do that.” MT

the first woman to serve in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate



“You cant be what you can’t see.” SR

She was the first American woman in space.



“When anyone tells me I can’t do anything I just don’t’ listen anymore.” FJ

She was often called “the fastest woman alive”



“The biggest adventure you can take is to live the life of your dreams.” OW

Emmy Award–winning talk show host, media executive, Academy Award–nominated actress, and philanthropist.



“Standing up for right when it is unpopular is a true test of moral character.” MCS

The first Hispanic person and the third woman to serve on the Supreme Court.



“I have never had to face anything that overwhelm the native optimism and stubborn persistence I was blessed with.” SS

K-3 DISCUSSION & WRITING ACTIVITY: MEETING OUR ROLE MODELS

CORE Standards : K-3 RL1-4, SL 1-61

Before reading *She Persisted*:

Why do you think the book is called “She Persisted?”

What do you think persisted or persistence means?

Were there times when you had to do something really hard, but you kept trying?

What does it feel like to have other people tell you that you can’t do something, or can’t achieve your goals?

What are your dreams?

What do you want to be when you grow up?

How might persistence help you achieve your goals?

After reading *She Persisted*:

Talk about the 13 American women who changed the world in the book.

What is it about them that made them so iconic or special?

How did being persistent help these women achieve what they wanted to do?

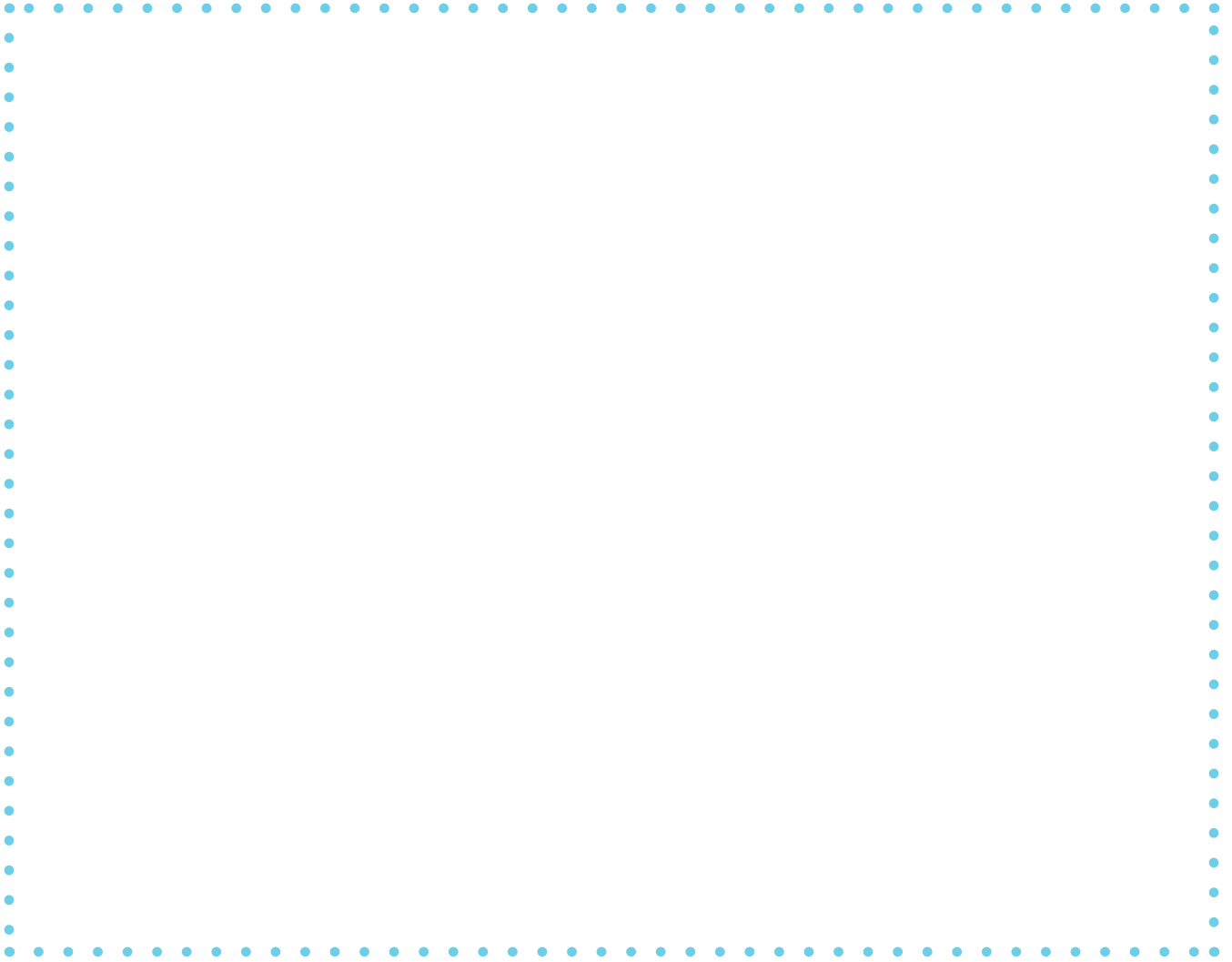
How did what they did pave the way for other women who came after them?

Who are some other iconic women or female role models do you look up to? Why?



MEETING OUR ROLE MODELS

Draw a picture of yourself meeting one of the iconic women from *She Persisted* (or another female role model) the way Naomi does in the play. Use the space below the picture to write what you might talk about. What would you say to them? What questions might you ask?



GRADE 4-7 DISCUSSION & WRITING ACTIVITY: MEETING OUR ROLE MODELS

CORE STANDARDS 4-7 RL 1-4 , SL 1-6

Discussion:

Talk about the 13 American women who changed the world in *She Persisted*.

What is it about them that made them so iconic or special?

How did being persistent help these women achieve what they wanted to do?

How did what they did pave the way for other women who came after them?

Who are some other iconic women or female role models do you look up to? Why?

Writing Exercise:

Have students write a letter to the role model of their choice.

Step 1: Allow 15-20 minutes for a free write. Writing prompts: What do they want to say to them? Why did they choose that person to write to? Why do they look up to them? What is it about them that makes them so inspirational? What questions do they have for them?

Step 2: Ask students to share, either out loud with the class, or in small groups. Share positive feedback after each student shares or if sharing in small groups invite students to share positive feedback with each other. Remind them that they are to only share things they liked about each other's letters.

Step 3: Using the feedback they received, have students write another draft of their letter reminding them to use as much descriptive and active writing as possible.

Step 4: Share with OCT! Compile your students' letters into an anthology and share them with your school or with us. Email them to info@octc.org, or mail them to 1631 NE Broadway St., PMB 620, Portland, OR 97232.

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PAGE TO STAGE ACTIVITY

CORE STANDARDS K-7 RL1-4

Post-Show Discussion Questions:

What was the story about?

What lessons did you learn from watching the play?

Who was your favorite historical figure in the play and why?

How did the music in the play help tell the story?

What was your favorite part of the story and why?

How did Naomi overcome the obstacles she felt?

What can you do in the future to overcome obstacles and persevere to accomplish your dreams?

Bring the Story to Life!

If you'd like to take "She Persisted" from the page to the stage with your class, you can use a script adapted by OCT teaching artist Molly Gilbert in the following pages. Note that there may not be character roles for every student, but those who don't get cast in a role can help support by joining the chorus in the "All" role as well as helping by creating background support.



Page to Stage: She Persisted
Adapted for stage by Molly Gilbert
Created for Oregon Children's Theatre
Winter 2024

She Persisted - Version 1 (14 roles, pages 1-3)

- **Opening**
- **Harriet Tubman**
- **Claudette Colvin**
- **Sally Ride**
- **Sonia Sotomayor**
- **The Big Finish**

She Persisted - Version 2 (15 roles, pages 4-7)

- **Opening**
- **Florence Griffith Joyner**
- **Virginia Apgar**
- **Maria Tallchief**
- **Ruby Bridges**
- **The Big Finish**

She Persisted - Version 1 (14 roles)

- **Opening**
- **Harriet Tubman**
- **Claudette Colvin**
- **Sally Ride**
- **Sonia Sotomayor**
- **The Big Finish**

Opening

Student 1: Sometimes being a girl isn't easy. At some point, someone probably will tell you no.

Student 2: Don't listen to them!

Student 2: These American women did not take no for an answer.

BOTH: They persisted.

Harriet Tubman

Student 3: Harriet Tubman was born an enslaved person,

Harriet Tubman: My story could have ended there. Instead,

ALL: She persisted,

Harriet Tubman: I escaped from enslavement and became the most famous "conductor" on the Underground Railroad.

Student 4: She risked her life many times.

Student 3: She led countless enslaved people to freedom, including her family, friends, and strangers.

Harriet Tubman: Every person I led to freedom arrived safely.

Claudette Colvin

Claudette Colvin: I was fifteen-years-old and riding a bus home from school in Montgomery, Alabama when I, Claudette Colvin, was expected to give up my seat to a white woman.

Rosa Parks: In her refusal to get up

BOTH: She persisted

Rosa Parks: She helped to inspire me, Rosa Parks, to make the same choice nine months later.

Claudette Colvin: Many say this action was the start of the modern Civil Rights movement.

Sally Ride

Student 5: Sally Ride, always believed women could succeed in any math or science career.

Student 6: Although not everyone agreed

All: She persisted

Sally Ride: And I became the first American woman in space, but that wasn't enough for me. I traveled into space once more.

Student 5: And created science and engineering programs specifically for girls.

Student 6: She helped generations of women achieve their dreams, too.

Sally Ride: Both on Earth and in outer space!

Sonia Sotomayor

Student 7: Watching fictional judges on TV inspired Sonia Sotomayor to want to be a real-life judge when she grew up.

Student 8: She knew she'd have to speak English as well as Spanish

Student 9: Study hard in school, and manage her diabetes before she could one day wear a judge's robe with a gavel in hand.

ALL: She persisted!

Student 7: Becoming a Supreme Court Justice, and the first ever Latina, to sit on America's highest court.

The Big Finish:

Student 10: So, if anyone ever tells you no,

Student 11: If anyone ever says your voice isn't important or your dreams are too big,

Student 10: Remember these women.

BOTH: They persisted,

AUDIENCE: ...and so should you!

She Persisted - Version 2 (15 roles)

- **Opening**
- **Florence Griffith Joyner**
- **Virginia Apgar**
- **Maria Tallchief**
- **Ruby Bridges**
- **The Big Finish**

Opening

Student 1: Sometimes being a girl isn't easy.

Student 2: At some point, someone probably will tell you no.

Student 1: Don't listen to them!

Student 2: These American women did not take no for an answer.

BOTH: They persisted.

Florence Griffith Joyner

Student 3: When she was a kid, Florence, would visit her father in the Mojave Desert, and he would tell her to run faster and faster - to run as fast as a jackrabbit.

Florence Griffith Joyner: Even when I had to leave college to help support my family

ALL: She persisted

Student 4: She kept up her training, then went back to school.

Student 3: She got faster and faster, like a jackrabbit.

Florence Griffith Joyner: My unbroken world records

Student 4: Set at the 1998 Summer Olympics means -

Florence Griffith Joyner: I am still the fastest woman ever!

Virginia Apgar

Virginia Apgar: Hi! I'm Doctor Virginia Apgar!

Student 5: My big sister was inspired by my childhood illnesses.

Virginia Apgar: I was determined to be a doctor, long before many girls had such dreams.

Student 6: Even though she trained to be a surgeon, she was discouraged because she was a woman. Nevertheless,

ALL: She persisted,

Virginia Apgar: I became an anesthesiologist and created the apgar score to test a newborn baby's health.

Student 6 Which hospitals all over the world still use today.

Maria Tallchief

Student 7: We moved to California to support our daughter's dream of becoming a dancer.

Maria Tallchief: I am Maria Tallchief and I am going to be a ballerina.

Student 8: But, students teased her because of her last name.

Student 7: They said you should change your name to be something Russian?

Maria Tallchief: Yes, because they said all professional ballerinas are from Russia.

ALL: But, she persisted!

Student 8: ...and became the first great American prima ballerina.

Ruby Bridges

Student 9: Ruby Bridges went to kindergarten in New Orleans.

Student 10: At the time, many schools across America still refused African American students their equal right to an education.

Ruby Bridges: I wouldn't be treated like a second-class student, and so

ALL: She persisted!

Student 9: For weeks, she walked past angry protesters.

Ruby Bridges: That fateful walk to school began a journey!

Student 10: To integrate a formerly all-white elementary school.

The Big Finish

Student 11: So, if anyone ever tells you no,

Student 12: If anyone ever says your voice isn't important or your dreams are too big,

Student 11: Remember these women.

BOTH: They persisted,

AUDIENCE: ...and so should you!

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Each of the women in this guide brought a unique passion to what they did. That is part of why they changed history. The folks at *She Persisted* have created these engaging activities to help further learning and inspire passion in young people. Use [the link here](#) to share these activities with your students.



WRITE TO OCT!

We love hearing student feedback and responses to our shows! Please feel free to share any comments from students with us.

Oregon Children's Theatre
1631 NE Broadway St., PMB 620
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This guide was curated by Oregon Children's Theatre Education Coordinator Nick Condon, nick.condon@octc.org.



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