



Creative Power: Artists as Civic Leaders

Facilitated by Tom Tresser
with material by Tom & Quanice Floyd
Hosted by Still Point Theatre Collective
October 1, 2026





Workshop Goals

- Better understand your role as a creative leader
- Explore how creative practice connects to civic life
- Build relationships with fellow artists
- Produce a mini creative campaign rally/performance(s)

Community Agreements

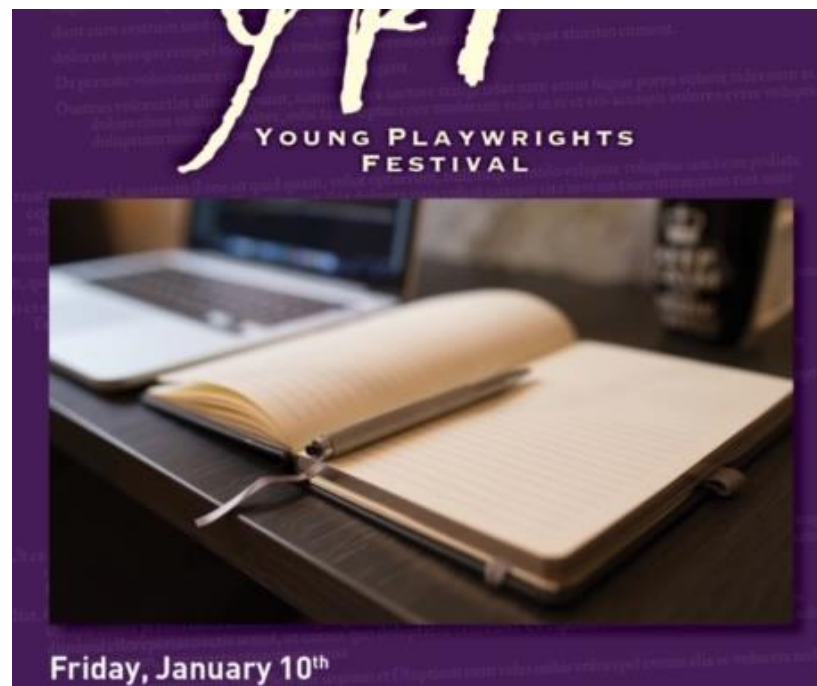
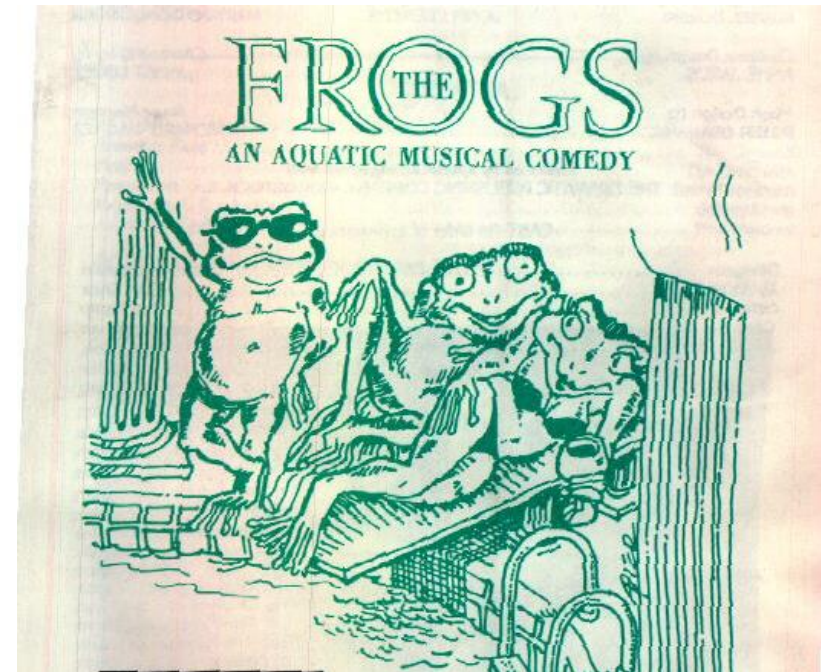
- Listen generously
- Step up, step back
- Assume good intent, embrace accountability
- Make space for curiosity
- Honor lived experience
- Take care of yourself



Introductions

- Your name
- Your neighborhood
- Your artistic discipline
- What brings you to this workshop?
- What's you keeps you up at night?







Pete-Flo Enterprises

[Home](#) [Floyd Group](#)

Disrupting the Status Quo and Reimagining the Future, One Creative Project at a Time.

Five projects. One ecosystem. Liberation in practice.



"Theory's cool, but theory with no practice ain't
sh*t. You got to have both of them." – **Fred
Hampton**

Our Time Together (11am-2pm)

- Why we create /Workbook
- Power & Leadership
- Movement Building/Workbook
- Culture Wars & The Christian Coalition
- Creative Response/Workbook
- Break
- How Chicago works
- How creativity can strengthen civic life
- Teams for rally performances – **Sat @ 8:00pm**
- Online evaluations/comments



A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a paintbrush, applying orange-brown paint to a wooden palette. The palette has various other colors of paint on it, including blue and white. The background is blurred, showing warm, golden light. The text "What is your artistic process?" is overlaid in the center of the image.

What is your artistic process?

This is Civics!

YOU MIGHT BE ASKING...

WHAT IS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT?



Leadership Is...
Leadership Does...



Power



“

If you are a human being you hold power. You and your power can change the world... It is vital that you choose the part you are going to play, that you make sure other fairytales continue to be written.

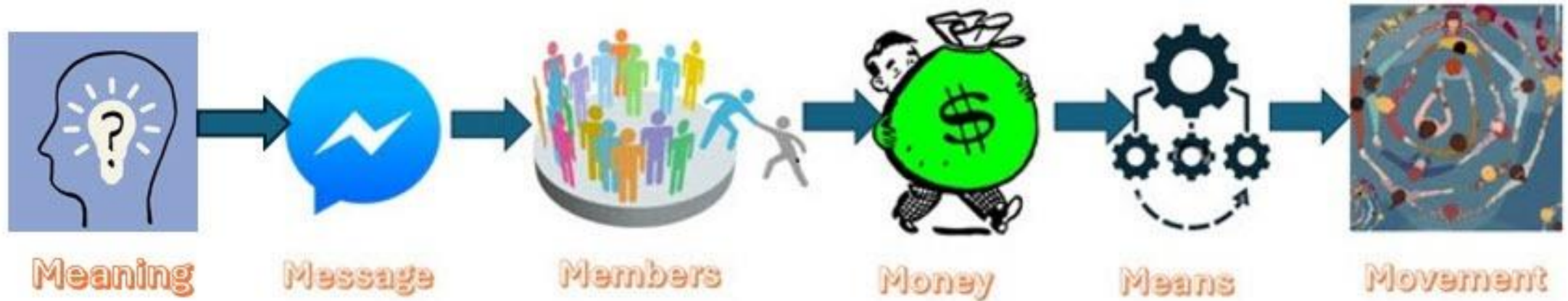
— **CHLOÉ HAYDEN**
Actor and advocate



Power (Eric Liu)



The 6Ms of Movement Building



Case Study: The Culture Wars (1986/1996)

AUGUST 17, 1992

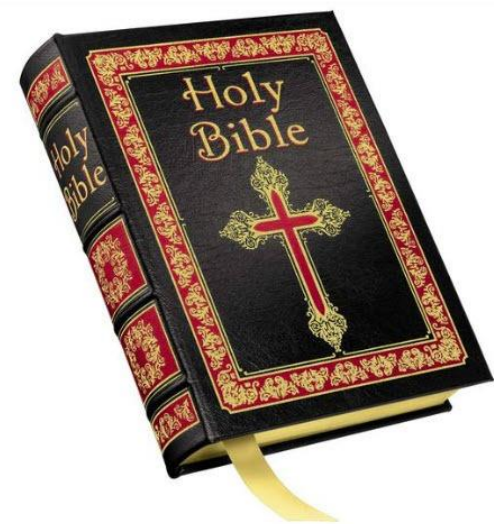
Pat Buchanan Cultural War

Pat Buchanan tells the 1992 Republican Convention that there is a cultural war in America.





Meaning



Message



- “The New Christian Right is out to Christianize America. Randell Terry, founder of Operation Rescue, challenged, ‘Our goal is a Christian nation. We have a biblical duty, we are called by God to conquer this country.’”
- From “The Christian Coalition and the End Game” from *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 1997.
- **THEIR GOAL IS TO ABOLISH THE CONSTITUTIONAL WALL THAT SEPARATES CHURCH AND STATE.**

Members



CHRISTIAN COALITION:

National Fundamentalist Religious
Political Action Group

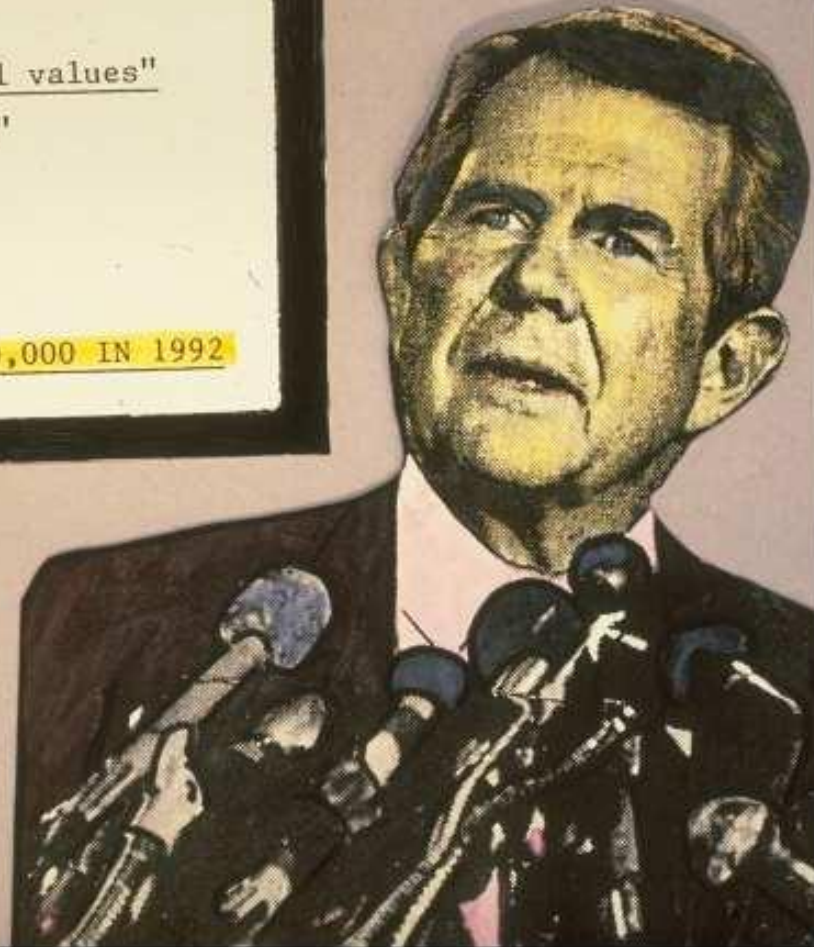
PURPOSE: to "Restore traditional values"
and "Save America for God"

ACTIVE IN 45 STATES

175,000 MEMBERS

SPENT \$5,000,000 IN 1991

expected to spend \$10,000,000 IN 1992





Christian Coalition

Box 1990 • Chesapeake, VA 23327



CHRISTIAN
COALITION
of America

Where have your TAX Dollars Gone?

Money



Christian Coalition

Box 1990 • Chesapeake, VA 23327

*I share Ralph's outrage.
We must act now!*

Yes! Ralph, I agree we must not allow public funds
to be spent for Christian bashing filth.

Enclosed is:

- ☐ My gift of \$ 50.00
☐ My gift of \$100.00
☐ Other \$ _____

014-500

The Christian Coalition is a non-profit organization under IRS Code 501-C4.
Contributions, including membership fees are not income but deductible
under IRS law. Corporate and business contributions welcome.

1995

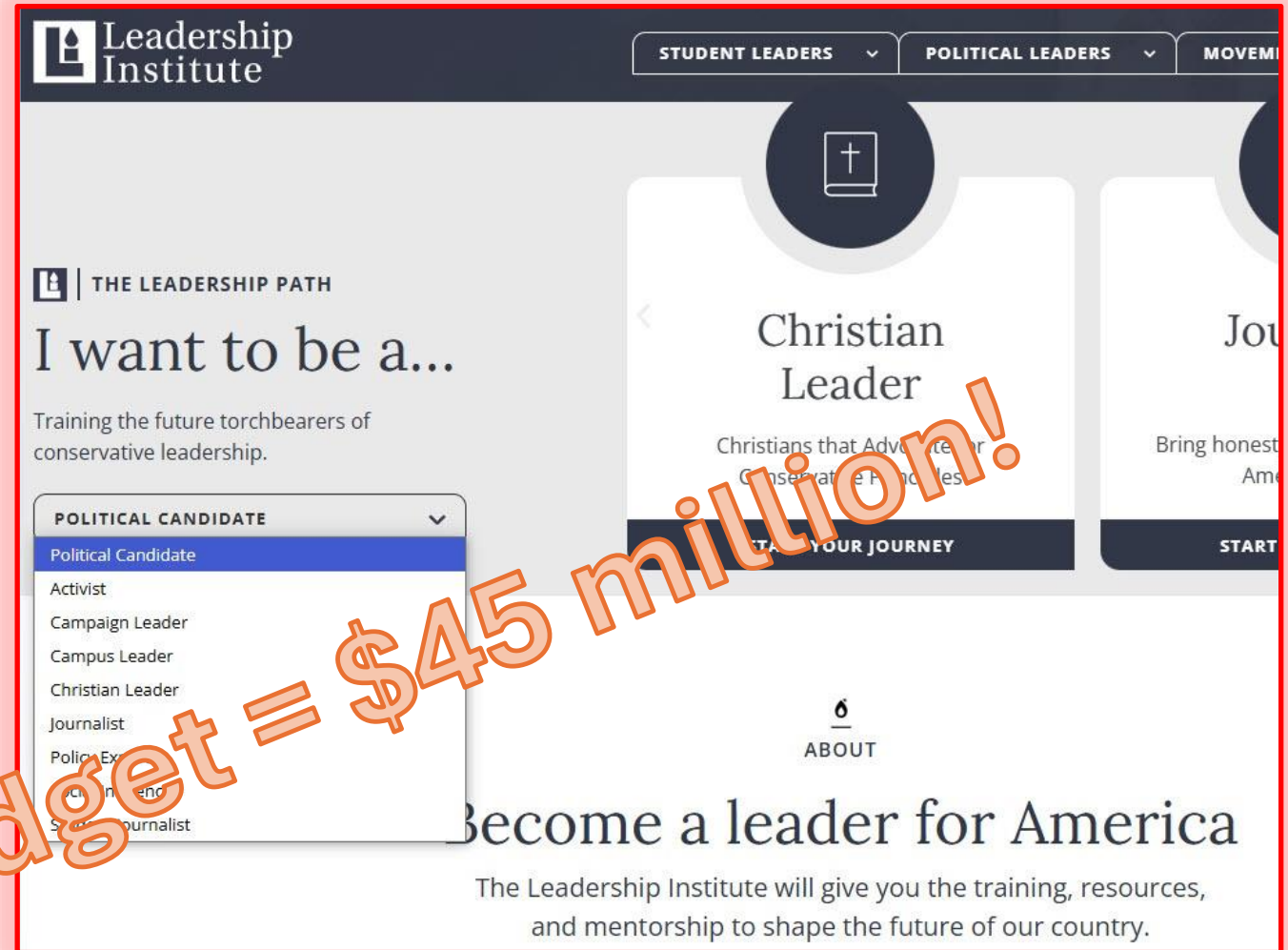
- 1.6 million members
- 1,600 local chapters
- 60,000 churches
- \$25 million budget
- 35 million voter guides
- 3 million calls to voters



Money

Means

- Since its 1979 founding, the Leadership Institute has trained more than 161,271 students. Alumni include Grover Norquist, Ralph Reed, Jeff Gannon, Senator Mitch McConnell, Vice President Mike Pence, James O'Keefe, members of the 113th Congress, and elected officials in all 50 states.



Movement

30 years apart!



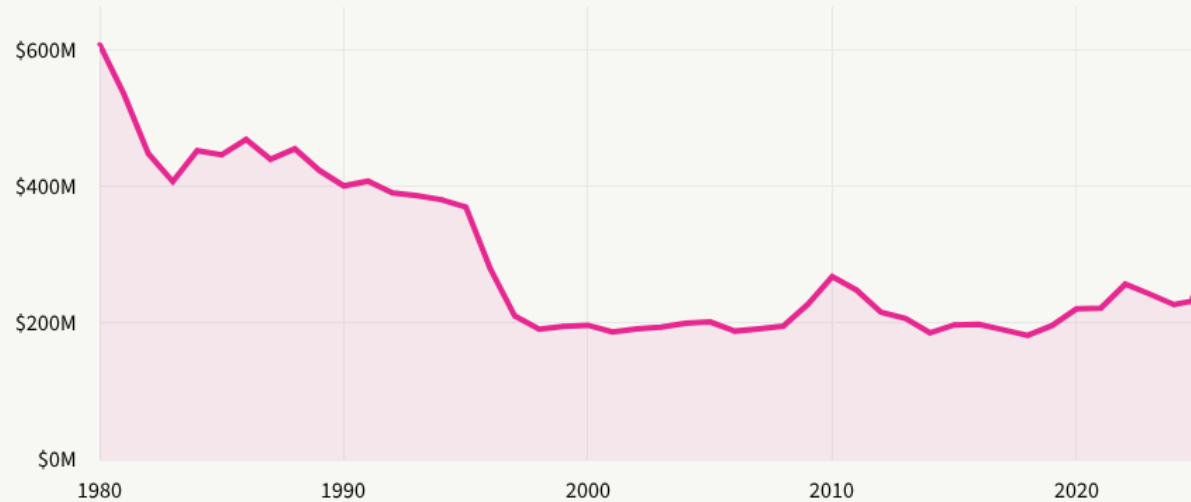
“Christian Conservatives Counting Hundreds of Gains in Local Votes”



“On Far Right, Devout Efforts To Get Elected – Christian Fringe Pushes Into the Mainstream”

The National Endowment for the Arts's federal spending in FY 2025 was lower than in FY 1980.

Yearly federal net spending by NEA, adjusted for inflation (2025 dollars), FYs 1980–2025



Source: Office of Management and Budget and US Department of the Treasury

USAFacts



Creative Response







Creative Practices -> Civic Practices



Civic Leadership Challenge

You're running for Chicago city council for your real ward. Draft your stump speech. You'll share it with the group.

- Who are you?
- Why are you running?
- Why am I the right person?
- What is your vision for the ward?



Your Creative Stump Speech





Gail Schechter
Skokie, IL



@TomTresser

Gail Schechter - Skokie Trustee



Zon Eastes
Vermont
State Rep



THE 100K PROJECT

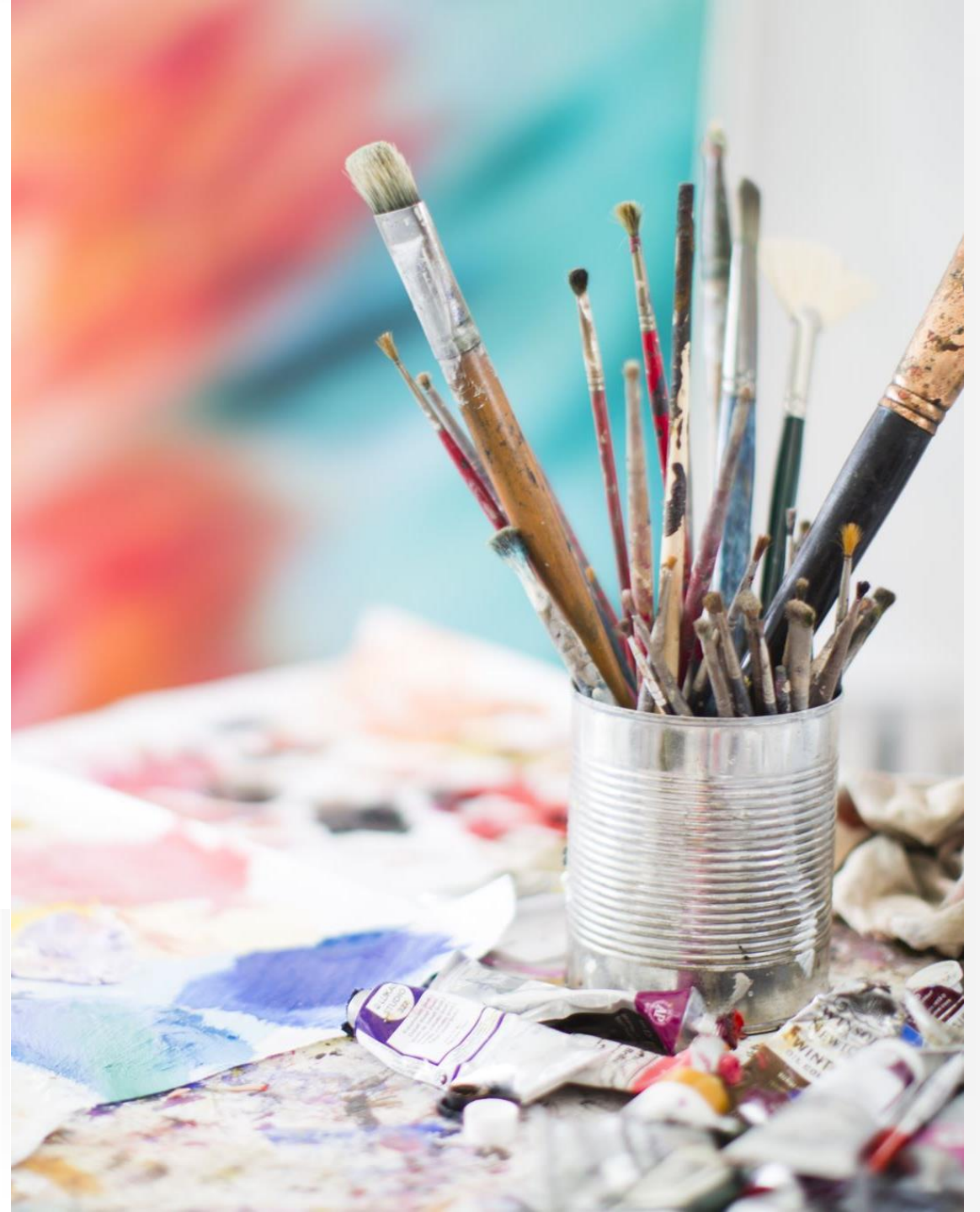
CREATE. RUN. WIN. SERVE.



Planning our Performance/Rallies!

Workbook Activity:

Where do you see yourself in the 6Ms model? Where do you think you need to start?





www.tinyurl.com/CP-Wkshop-Eval



Evaluation, please!