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MARCH 2023

University of Southern California

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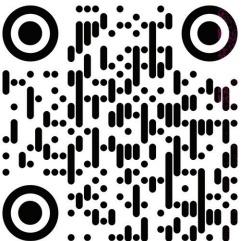
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you will be paired with a
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OF STORYTELLING!





Team Next Gen Zine: Assemble!

BY DOUG MITCHELL

“You know what we really should do? Non-narrated storytelling.

Do you know what we need? A visual journalist or two on each project.

Oh, wait! Let’s add Illustrations, and let’s have three artists per project. I know where to find them.

Now that I think about it, we should be apprenticing people too. Those who want to be digital editors, photojournalists, and audio engineers. I’ll make that work.

And so it goes.

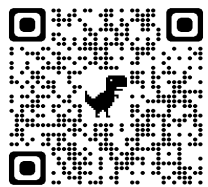
In 2023, we have become the Next Generation of Radio and this is our very first “zine” - a digital magazine created and produced during our regular stop at the USC Annenberg School of Journalism and Communications.”



NextGenRadio

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School for Communication and Journalism



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The Next Generation Radio Project is a week-long digital journalism training project designed to give competitively selected participants, who are interested in radio and journalism, the skills and opportunity to report and produce their own multimedia story. Those chosen for the project are paired with a professional journalist who serves as their mentor. This #NPRNextGenRadio project was funded by the Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

Zine cover artwork by Yunyi Dai

Zine design by Amara Aguilar & Laura Gonzalez

‘Dragging’ herself out: Long Beach drag queen finds her true sense of home

BY KAIT LAVO

Jewels Long Beach, 42, has been grand marshal of the Long Beach pride parade, volunteers weekly in a local AIDS relief center and is the first drag queen to receive a key to the city.

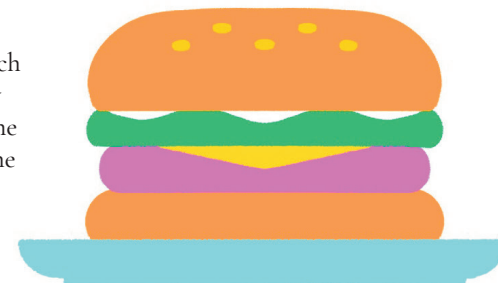
But she wasn’t always a celebrated figure in her community. At age 18, she had to escape her deeply religious hometown in Death Valley, where her father was a minister.

A person’s sense of home is correlated with their mental health, especially for LGBTQ individuals.

Over half of those who have experienced housing insecurities left home in the U.S. due to fear of mistreatment because of their LGBTQ identity, according to a 2021 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health.

Jewels journey from small town to the big city

“In my late teenage years, trying to figure out what was going on with myself and my sexuality and gender identity, the only source of information about gayness or deviant things [came from] a congregation of 30 people, [and] being told that I was unworthy of love, life or liberty, because I felt,



"I had to choose if I wanted to live, or if I could not handle it – something deep inside said, 'We're going to live and be fabulous.'" —Jewels Long Beach

deep inside, that I was going to love a man," she said.

She felt persecuted and ashamed of her identity.

"I had to choose if I wanted to live, or if I could not handle it – something deep inside said, 'We're going to live and be fabulous,'" Jewels said.

She knew she needed to leave her hometown.

"I think the first time I felt safe, loved and celebrated was when I was turning 18 years old and moved to Long Beach, California, and finally found a fabulous group of folks at our LGBTQ center support group of fellow queers my age, and created friends that are still friends today," she said.

She found resources through the

LGBTQ center, a non-profit that provides health and legal resources for the community. The circle of friends she met in Long Beach would socialize at LGBTQ coffee shops and screenings of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* – her first experience at a movie theater.

"I was completely blown away ... and I definitely realized this is the 'evil' that the



ILLUSTRATION BY SHIDEH GHANDEHARIZADEH



ILLUSTRATION BY SHIDEH GHANDEHARIZADEH

preaching was all about," she said.

"If this was a movie theater, no wonder, and I loved every minute of it." She joined the theater's shadow cast soon after. "The first time I got to play dress up and put on that dress – and some very poorly applied makeup – was a feeling of pure joy ... Drag was a fabulous way to present myself as a competent, confident and wondrous creature," Jewels said.

While working at local Hamburger Mary's more than 20 years ago, Jewels asked her former boss if she could perform in drag for the diner – and that's what led to Jewels' promotion to executive director of entertainment and

the establishment's popular drag shows around the country, according to Jewels and her fellow performer, Psychadella.

"It's a destination for people with an open mind that can bring their family members that can enjoy a show," she said. "And you feel that sense of love when you have someone on stage. It infuses the audience with a sense of love and wonder and spectacle at the art form."

Drag bans

In February, at least nine GOP-controlled legislatures sought to restrict or criminalize public drag shows.

"It's very disheartening to see ... Just simply dressing up in something that is

From skinny trees to social hours: An Army vet's journey home

BY RACHEL LIVINAL

Over a 24-hour period in October 1989, Melissa Degnan boarded a military helicopter and survived an emergency landing, hid behind what she remembered as the “world’s skinniest tree,” and buried the uniform she was wearing.

She was in Honduras serving in the U.S. Army when the helicopter she was in experienced a hard, not-quite-crash landing. As she and the other passengers got out, people on the ground pointed weapons at the crew and demanded they hand over Degnan’s general. Degnan and the others ran.

After racing through a wooded area, Degnan came upon what looked like a populated area. From a nearby clothesline she grabbed a pair of pants and a brown shirt.

Leaving some local currency for whoever’s clothes she took, Degnan then walked into a nearby store and bought a straw hat and a flowery white blouse to try to disguise herself as a local.

Degnan, 67, served in the U.S. Army for 15 years, much of it working in an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) detachment, the military equivalent of a bomb squad.

“It was a lot of fun,” Degnan said. “We went into impact areas or somebody would find a round somewhere, and they’d bring it home, not realizing how dangerous it was. And then we [would] take it and destroy it.”

About a decade after leaving the military, Degnan’s mother died and she found herself taking care

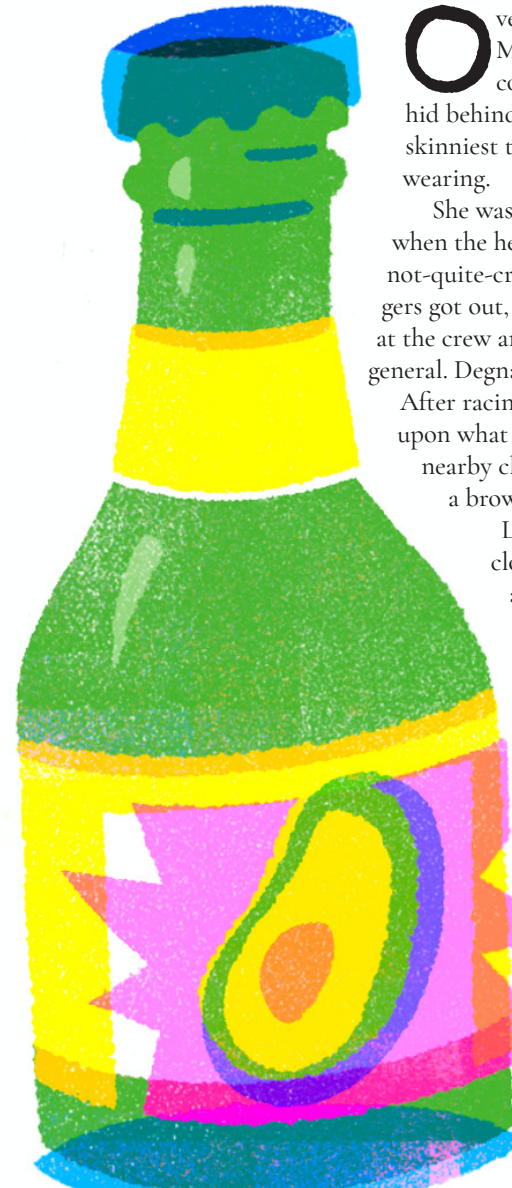


ILLUSTRATION BY YUNYI DAI



PHOTO BY KAIT LAVO

Jewels Long Beach addresses the crowd during the Sunday Brunch on March 5, 2023, in Long Beach, Calif.

not representative of your gender is being made illegal,” Jewels said.

Jewels advises LGBTQ people to separate themselves from spaces where they feel unsafe. Practicing self care, turning to loved ones for support, utilizing the internet to find community groups and resources, or

moving to a new place are ways she recommends to create a feeling of home.

Home: More than a place

Jewels built a home for herself in every sense of the word.

“My version of home is not always a place,” she said. “Sometimes my version of home was a studio apartment. That



was \$400 a month that I had to split with a loved one, just to be in the big city. Now, it’s a beautiful home I saved 20 years for.” Jewels is a co-parent to her 12-year-old niece, who she raises with her sister and brother-in-law, which has been a “gift.”

Jewels said she wants to give her what she didn’t have growing up: “Because of our shared history, when we are teaming up to help raise this kid, it definitely came from a similar background and what we did and didn’t want, and so we are attempting to raise a human who shows respect for everyone – everyone’s personal identity and sense of self.”



of her aging father. Some years later she felt something was “wrong” and couldn’t hold down a job. She ended up living on the streets of Southern California for five and a half years.

Several years ago Degnan connected with CityHeART, a nonprofit organization that serves the houseless, formerly houseless and veterans. Since then she’s become one of its most prominent volunteers.

One afternoon this March, Degnan showed a reporter around the office, pointing out the supply rooms and computer lab. She stopped in a small living room with a filled bookcase, a TV, a piano and a couple of couches.

“This is our social [lounge],” Degnan said. “Our people get here and we just chit-chat.”

In what she calls the social hour, Degnan hangs out with friends she’s made through volunteering and tells “war stories.” Her story about the attempted coup in Panama is a long one, and she has several other funny ones. One story Degnan tells often is about a rattlesnake biting her boot at Fort Irwin in San Bernardino County.

Degnan volunteers at CityHeART three times a week. On Mondays she goes through two small, stuffy rooms full of baby onesies, shirts and shoes, a tiny enclosed space filled with boxes of diapers, toothpaste and other necessities, and a kitchen with a tower of boxes of canned food.

She pulls together items from



ILLUSTRATION BY YUNYI DAI



PHOTO BY RACHEL LIVINAL

Melissa Degnan sits near a mural honoring veterans in the Century Villages of Cabrillo where she volunteers at CityHeart.

each of these areas and assembles bags to distribute to CityHeART families.

Among the items for donation are about a half-dozen wedding dresses. Degnan felt they were too special to store alongside pantry goods, personal-care products and children’s clothes, so she decided to set them aside in the bathroom.

“If I put them in the normal clothing room, the gowns wouldn’t be shown off to their finest,” she said. “And those are beautiful gowns.”

There was a time when Degnan fit the mold of the people she helps. She



ILLUSTRATION BY YUNYI DAI

was houseless and living with “mental illness,” and she would’ve spent more years on the streets if she didn’t stumble into the help she needed.

She was misdiagnosed, then diagnosed again, with PTSD, prescribed different medications, and finally put onto a list for permanent housing.

After years without a

place to live, she eventually transitioned into housing with the U.S. Vets Advance Women’s Program for Transitional Housing.

More than two years later, Degnan got an apartment at the Central



ILLUSTRATIONS BY YUNYI DAI

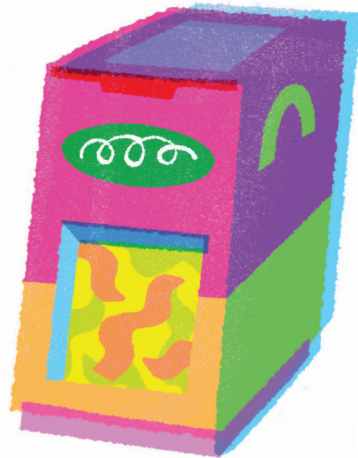
Villages in Cabrillo, a special housing unit for those transitioning out of homelessness and what Degnan describes as the “internal community” of CityHeART. The organization is located within the complex.

In 2019, Degnan moved in, but three years later, she moved out. Twice she experienced harassment by people on bicycles, and on one occasion her assailant threw her to the ground and kicked her repeatedly. She filed a police report against both men, but the first person was never found, and the second was never charged.

After that, her kitten was poisoned and died, so by 2022 she decided to move. Her best friend Reginald “Reggie” McClain helped her transition to her current home: Gold Star Manor. According to the complex’s website, the site “provides independent living” for veterans and seniors.

McClain provides Degnan a sense of family, and they both hang out frequently. “Right now, we’re putting up [shelving] for each other,” Degnan said.

Degnan feels safe in her new home, in a way she hasn’t felt for years. She is still settling in but is grateful for everything she owns — almost all donations, much like the donations she gives to those who visit CityHeART.



ANATOMY OF A NEXT GEN REPORTER



Finding home between two countries, a red canopy and a plate of pupusas

BY TONY MORALES

Less than three miles from the USC campus, Blanca Villatoro molds pupusas under a red canopy on the street in front of her apartment complex. She named her food stand Pupuseria Lupita, after her 2-year-old daughter, who plays beside Villatoro as the pupusas cook on the griddle.

From pulling on her mother's apron to riding her scooter on the apartment driveway, Lupita reminds customers how close to Villatoro's home they are stepping. Lupita also reminds her mother of the family and home that remain in El Salvador, which Villatoro left before emigrating to Los Angeles in 2012.

For Villatoro, home is more than a place to live: It's communication and the support her family gives her. Her pupusa stand on 49th Street helps connect her families to her two homes, in L.A. and El Salvador.

"I was not the mother they needed..."

Villatoro began street vending on roads in El Salvador, selling fruit with her mother and sister. The money Villatoro earned from that business helped her pay to have her first home, a brick house with a metal roof, built in San Marcos Lempa, El Salvador. Villatoro lived in the home with her parents and her two daughters, Osiris and Dianora.



ILLUSTRATION BY YUNYI DAI

Villatoro has another son, Brandon, who was living with his paternal family, also in El Salvador.

She described how street vending prevented her from building a closer relationship to her three children at the time. Villatoro's mother was the support at home that allowed for her to work more and provide financially.

"I was not the mother they needed," Villatoro explained through an interpreter. "Because of the economics and the poverty there, one has to travel and leave their children."

She wanted to change this with

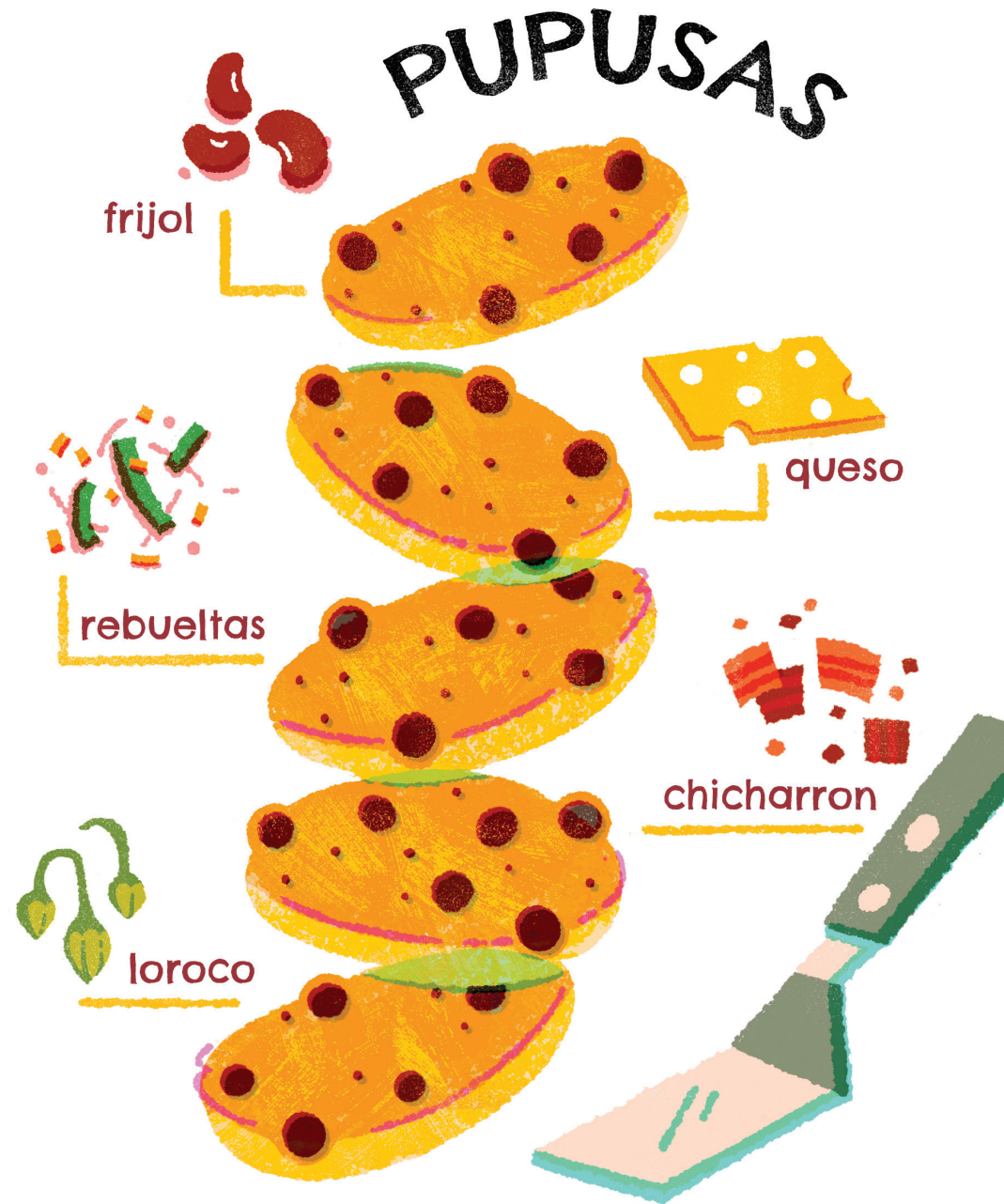


ILLUSTRATION BY YUNYI DAI

Lupita, who's her youngest child. After arriving in L.A., Villatoro worked in factories until Lupita was born.

"I have my daughter who is less than 3 years old, and I did not want to give her to a babysitter" in place of having a parent around, said Villatoro.

Under the red canopy on 49th Street Villatoro began Pupuseria Lupita in front of her apartment building so that she could stay closer to her young daughter while working. When Villatoro decided to return to street vending, it was important for her to continue building a relationship with Lupita. She is Villatoro's only child born in the U.S., and last month Villatoro and Dianora, the second youngest child, reunited in L.A. after years apart.

Villatoro is one of the estimated 10,000 street vendors in Los Angeles County. She's been building Pupuseria Lupita since September 2022, transitioning from a space in the apartment building's front yard to a larger stand on 49th Street. Villatoro uses the business as a vehicle to continue connecting her families in both countries.

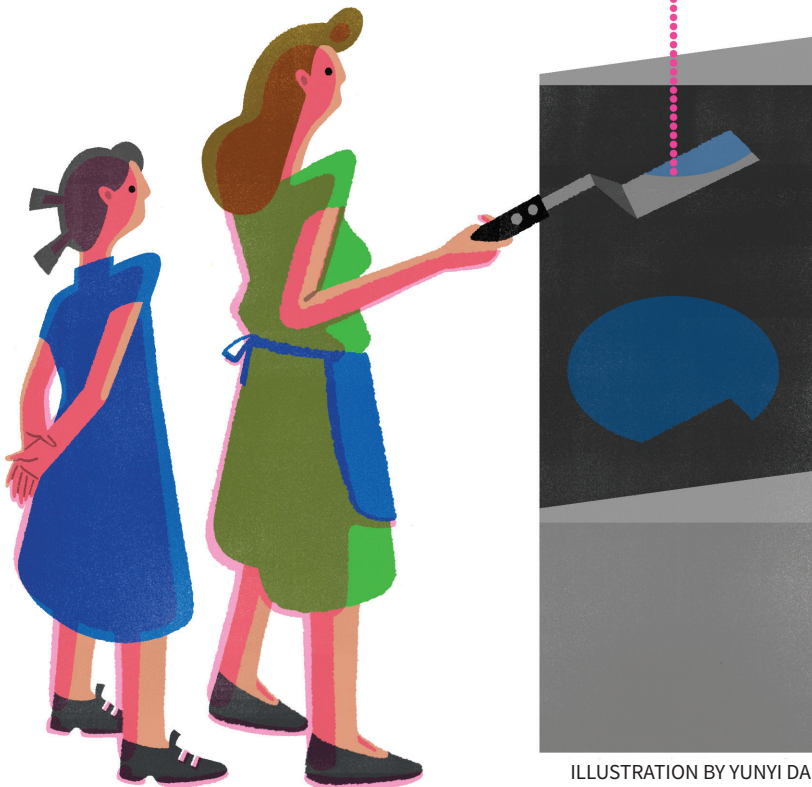


ILLUSTRATION BY YUNYI DAI



PHOTO BY TONY MORALES

Blanca Nuvia Villatoro, a Salvadoran pupusa street vender and immigrant, sits on her couch in her South Central home with her 2-year-old daughter, Lupita.

The business allows Villatoro to continue helping her children and her aging mother and to continue adding improvements to her home in El Salvador. In L.A., the business helps bridge the relationship between mothers and daughters.

Dreams for a brick and mortar Villatoro has aspirations to grow her business outside of her current red canopy. She hopes to one day own a more permanent location in L.A. for the pupuseria, still close to where her family lives.

"In the future, I want to have a small storefront for me to sell pupusas," said Villatoro. "I want to spend more time with my family because it is important to keep us together."

Villatoro emphasizes the importance of her neighborhood and families'



support — and how that support brings her pride and joy. She credits them for the motivation to envision building a bridge between El Salvador and Los Angeles.

Coming out and coming home

BY PALOMA MORENO JIMÉNEZ

Ryan Wimsatt has two homes — one with the loving family that raised him and another with the friends who supported him as he came to terms with his queer identity.

“Home to me is a place or people where you feel safe and you have room to grow,” the 23-year-old man said. “It’s a group of people who nurture you and make you feel seen and heard, but push you to do the best that you can.”

Wimsatt’s understanding of home began with his family in Windsor Hills, California, one of several neighborhoods known as the “Black Beverly Hills.”

Wimsatt said this choice of neighborhood was deliberate.

“My dad and my mom really wanted to live in a Black neighborhood that was nurturing,” he said. “Just letting a family kind of see themselves being successful, see themselves as valuable.”

This sentiment is also reflected inside the family’s one-story stucco home. Wimsatt’s mother, Carman, decorated their living room with Black art — including a collage of



paintings and drawings of Black mothers and children, and a glass case that displays ceramics of Black figurines.

“My mother was raised in her grandmother’s house and she says she didn’t have a lot of Black art in her home,” Wimsatt said. “It reminds me of how my parents have been very intentional in making the home a place to kind of see yourself ... and know that, oh, I’m worth painting and drawing and being created into art.”

Wimsatt’s parents encouraged him to explore his interests. His mother took him on road trips where Wimsatt could practice his photography. They wanted him to pursue his creative passions even if they weren’t his full-time career.

But for Wimsatt there was one aspect of his life that he didn’t feel comfortable sharing within his home — his sexuality. Wimsatt said his parents were never openly homophobic, but they were uncomfortable with queerness.

“I call it ‘northern homophobia’ and that there’s a little bit of fear there, but it’s not overt,” he said. “The conversations then were just more behind closed doors, not really discussed.”

It wasn’t until Wimsatt went to Stanford University that he began to explore his queer identity.

“When I went to college, I met my friends and they were all queer,” he said. “I always say, ‘God subconsciously gave [me] a group of people that were going to receive me when I was ready,’

ILLUSTRATIONS BY EEJOON CHOI

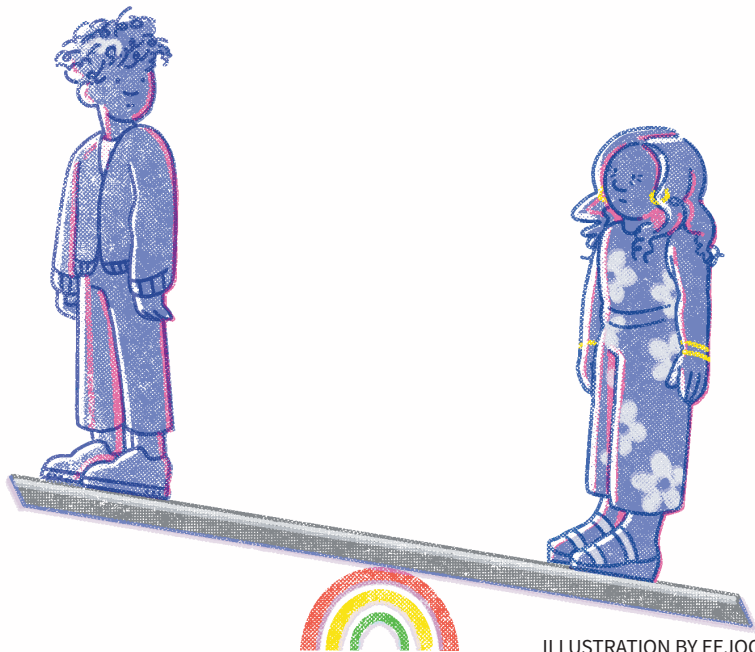


ILLUSTRATION BY EEJOON CHOI

and that definitely happened.”

While Wimsatt felt at home with his friends at Stanford, it took him time to feel ready to come out to his family. Part of his hesitation stemmed from his parents’ discomfort with queerness. But he also wasn’t ready to relinquish a role he had taken on after the death of his younger sister Jenna, who died when she was 6. Wimsatt was only 9 years old at the time.

“When my sister passed away, when I was younger, my parents didn’t stay as just parents. To me, they had transformed into grieving parents,” he said. “So if they’re unhappy, it might be because of me, because the hyper fixation on me is a product of the absence of another child to focus on. And that’s where my child’s brain kind of landed.”

But his college friends encouraged him to be honest with himself.

“I had to relinquish the protector role back to my parents and let them



nurture me and let them show me that they loved me, including my queerness,” he said.

Wimsatt came out to his mother at home during his senior year of college.

“There was some silence that entered the room,” he said.

“We kind of looked at each other a

couple times, then looked at the floor and ... ultimately, we both ended up crying silent tears. Like the tears you have when you know you’ve caused someone some sort of pain that was unintentional.”

But Wimsatt and his family have made a lot of progress in the two years since that moment. Over breakfast, his mother told him that she wanted to be given a chance.

“Ryan, I’m not perfect, and in no way would I hope that you looked at a

couple moments of me and think that that meant everything about you. I hope that in no way has a reaction of mine made you feel like you were living in conditional love,” Wimsatt recalls his mother saying.

Wimsatt sees home as a place to grow — and he wants to give his family the same opportunity.

“My mom needed to definitely feel that she could grow in the house as well,” he said. “It’s her home and this is her family, and I’m her son.”

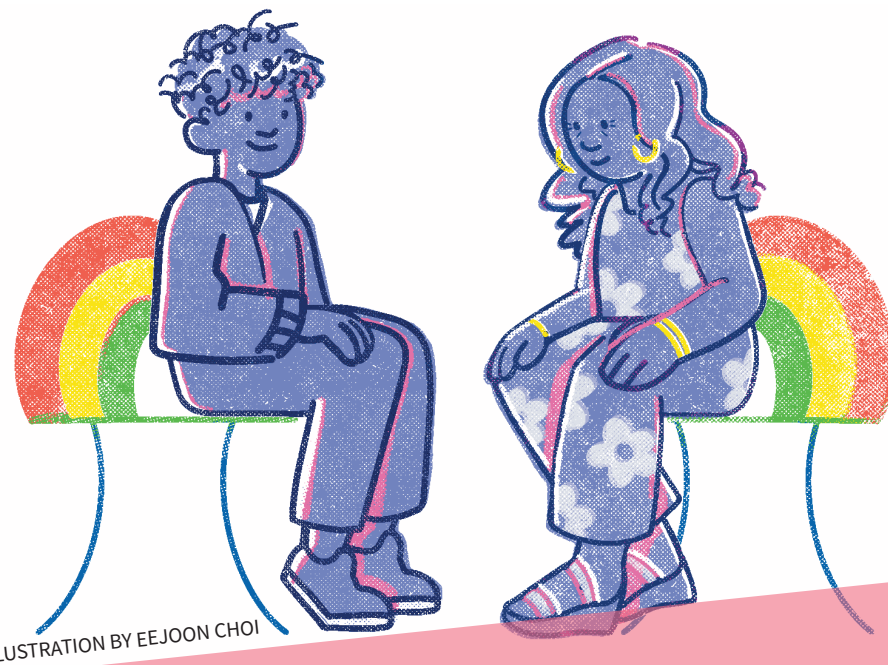


ILLUSTRATION BY EEJOON CHOI

“My mom needed to definitely feel that she could grow in the house as well. It’s her home and this is her family, and I’m her son.”

—Ryan Wimsatt

Formerly incarcerated student finds home in his faith

BY ZAYNAH WASEEM

Philip Thang now relishes the ordinary and mundane.

“Just going to the supermarket, taking my mom to the supermarket and watching her shop was a dream come true for me. I dreamt that moment. Just take my mom to the store, you know, just help my dad around the house,” he said. “I realized that the joy in life is just the small things, not the big things.”

Thang, a sociology student currently enrolled at California State University, Los Angeles, was sent to prison when he was 17 for shooting at a rival gang member. He was sentenced to 70 years to life in prison, but two decades later, in 2020 during the pandemic, Thang was released after demonstrating self-improvement and a commitment to higher education.

“I did it because I was tired of being tired,” he said. “I wanted to make my family proud.”

Now, along with being a student, Thang is giving back to the community and helping others through his involvement at Project Rebound, a program designed to assist formerly incarcerated students transition into the California State University system.

A struggling childhood

Thang identifies as a “refugee baby.” His parents escaped the killing fields in Cambodia and moved to the United States in pursuit of a better life. They eventually settled in Pomona, California. That’s where he became involved in gangs.



ILLUSTRATION BY SHIDEH GHANDEHARIZADEH

“Growing up in this type of environment, the poor neighborhoods, you aspire to be what you see,” he said. “We had nothing. So I saw in front of us all these guys have nice cars. They have nice clothes. You know, I’d have the pretty girls. And I wanted to be that,” he recalled.

While no one was injured when he shot at a rival gang member from a moving car, he was sentenced as an adult.

“From there, my life, you know, just ended. Well, not ended – but paused,” he recalled.

Finding home in his faith

For the first seven years of being incarcerated, Thang said he was battling with himself.

“I was my worst enemy, trying to prove to people and be somebody,” he said.

But eventually, he said he came to an “aha” moment and began to self-reflect on the purpose of life, allowing him to ultimately get deeper with his faith and started attending church.

“That’s when I truly changed. And I realized, ‘you know what, even if I die in prison, at least I’m going to die doing



Philip with his family members at the Pier the day of his release.

PHOTO BY PHILIP THANG

“I realized that the joy in life is just the small things, not the big things.”
—Philip Thang

good in prison,' because I didn't know when I was going to go home," he said. "I realized home is not here on earth, for me it's now more spiritual. I see walls, but God doesn't see walls."

From pursuing gangs to pursuing an education

With that in mind, Thang was determined to improve his situation and started attending a self-help group. He also realized the importance of educa-

tion and the power it had to open new doors. While in prison, he got his GED and was able to apply for community college. His efforts in not only improving himself but also pursuing higher education became fruitful when he was told he would have a chance to go home. Thang left prison with not one, but multiple associate degrees.

The transition back into society hasn't been easy, though he said being released during the pandemic was his "silver lining" because he needed a

slower pace to readjust to society. He recalls being in a grocery store with his dad and being overwhelmed by the choices. He said he couldn't hear an alarm without quickly sitting on the floor because that's what he was trained to do in prison.

And often, he'll walk with his keys in his pocket just to hear the jingle – a familiar sound that comforts him. When guards walked around at night, the sound of their jingling keys meant everyone was locked in their cells, and he would be safe.

The first thing Thang did when he was released was visit a church.

Faith has played a critical role in his journey. For Thang, helping others has allowed him to make a difference and make his family and himself proud.

"That's what I strive to be, is to help," he said. "To help the poor, right? Because I was poor. And Project Rebound is one of the ones that, you know, help the poor, which is formerly incarcerated students."

Thang believes that if you bless others, a blessing will come right back, and that love is wishing the other person the best.

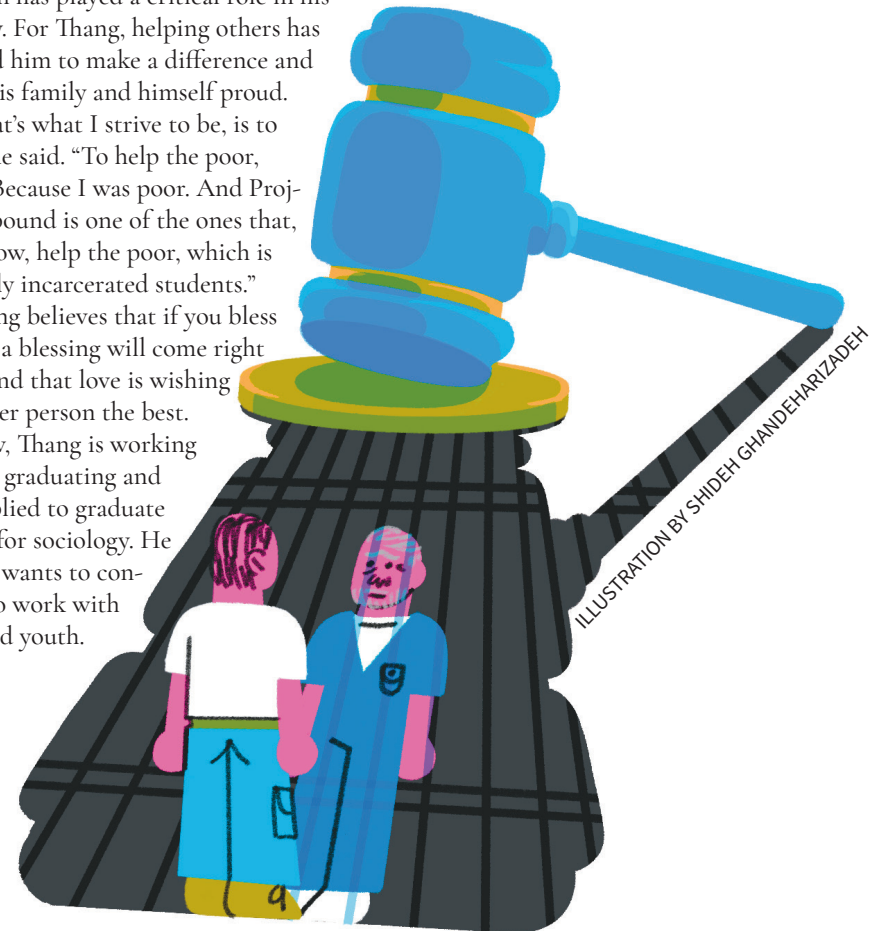
Now, Thang is working toward graduating and has applied to graduate school for sociology. He said he wants to continue to work with troubled youth.



ILLUSTRATION BY SHIDEH GHANDEHARIZADEH

"That's when I truly changed. And I realized, 'you know what, even if I die in prison, at least I'm going to die doing good in prison,' because I didn't know when I was going to go home."

—Philip Tang



KAIT LAVO

REIGNITING MY PASSION FOR JOURNALISM

What a week. I didn't feel like I had a chance as a journalist. Constant rejection letters and silence have greeted me from the many places I've applied. When Next Gen Radio opened up to post graduates, I promptly applied. I'm a visual person but I also have ears, I wanted to learn how to use them for my work.

As someone who hated reading, audio has gotten me through many projects and information dumps. I didn't know what to expect, but after talking to Julie and meeting Tracy, I knew I would be in good hands. And I was!

I love being edited and the feedback I got from everyone on the team helped bring a strong piece together. Going into this, I didn't even begin to fathom just how cool my source was until our formal interview. I mean come on, she was basically THE original Hamburger Mary! Her story inspired me and I can't wait to meet more people like her in my career. It was an honor to be able to share a story of LGBTQ success, these are the stories that I love hearing about and getting to share these stories with an audience that wouldn't generally go seeking them is huge!

If this is how I get to spend my life in the field, I will know I've made it. Thank you for helping prepare me for newsroom life and re-sparking my drive to keep going down the road of multi-media journalism.



ILLUSTRATION BY SHIDEH GHANDEHARIZADEH

Kait Lavo is a recent graduate of California State University, Northridge. While completing her bachelor's degree in journalism, Lavo worked as a freelance photographer. Her portrait photography was featured in global and national news outlets such as the Los Angeles Times and Fox 11 Los Angeles. Lavo's photography and written work have appeared in The Chicago Reader and The Daily Sundial, her alma mater's student run publication. Along with reporting in the field, Lavo worked as the photo editor, eventually becoming editor-in-chief of the Daily Sundial. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community, she loves to learn about the queer experience.

ANOTHER ROAD

I have driven donuts in this cul-de-sac so many times before

When I was 15,
I wrote my first article,
It was something about women in wrestling,
And I loved it more than anything

A month ago,
I got a typed email
The woman said
Do you have time for an interview?

I was blown away,
By the idea of a
Job title,
For my name,
Not exaggerated by my young resume

But after first impression,
I noticed
She had copy and pasted

She had
addressed the email to two applicants,
Thinking my foolishness would be mistaken

Hastily put,
Easily ignored

I replied anyway

What followed were three days with
Delirious eyes and a mind full,
Of draining thoughts

I sighed and looked at a woman,
I presumed would be my boss

She said

I'd like to see what you've got
The instructions for this job
Include early mornings
That normal people call nights,
I want you to drive in traffic that smells like
Claustrophobia,
And looks like the bottom of the totem pole,
I want you to stay young and exuberant,
And willing to do whatever it is,
You are told

I was disenchanted,
I said no

And then I applied to Next Gen
And suddenly,
My cul-de-sac started forming a road

You see clutter's look can change
I spent two hours with a woman on Monday
And I watched her life unfold,
I saw how age and wisdom fits like mixed Play-Doh

My team left with
Audible anecdotes of worldly destinations,
Photos of small rooms stuffed with donations,
A million little learned lessons

In summary,
I have spent the last week
Wondering where this journalism,
Will take me

Because I've been driving this backroad—
No traffic,
All wind

And I swear if I listen,
I feel like it's saying,
That dream that you had at 15?
You need to go with it

But I see these cul-de-sacs—
The donuts and the brakes,
And the endless roads that I must,

Or I could,
Or I wanted to take

And still
There is something to sound,
And something to print,
And it all leads me to this colorful mess of
A story,
That the web team on Friday will publish
So what has this week taught me?

The future is always unknown
I mean two weeks ago,
I didn't even know what story idea I was going to show

But now,
I think
That no matter the cul-de-sac,
I have to search for another road



ILLUSTRATION BY SHIDEH GHANDEHARIZADEH

RACHEL LIVINAL

Rachel Livinal is a senior journalism major finishing her last semester at Cal State Long Beach. She is on staff at two of the university's student-run media organizations, as the radio production and imaging director for 22 West and the podcast editor at DIG Magazine.

Rachel decided to pursue journalism because she has always loved sharing the many sides of individual stories, and she hopes to become an investigative podcaster. In her spare time, she likes to write poetry and climb imaginary but steep hills during spin class.



ILLUSTRATION BY SHIDEH GHANDEHARIZADEH

TONY MORALES

Tony Morales is a multi-media artist and educator from Los Angeles. Before returning to the area, he was a college advisor to high school students in Richmond, Calif., and launched UC Berkeley's Multicultural Community Center's podcast platform. His passion for audio storytelling stems from his family's sonidero, or DJ, background and oral history, and he uses different media to tackle themes in home-building, labor issues and music culture. Tony's work has been featured by UC Berkeley's Labor Center, Dryland literary journal and Home Grown Radio. The Los Angeles Clippers' "Write the Story" campaign has honored his writing.

"COULD I TAKE A MOMENT?"

This was the reply the interviewee asked me after my second question. At that moment, I felt the intensity and emotions the questions raised. On my first day, I learned how important adjusting and pivoting was going to be for the rest of the week.

From there, I went on to reassure her that she does not have to answer any questions she does not feel comfortable answering. I took my own advice and set boundaries in not working on the project outside of our hub, and assure deadlines are met.

I have learned so much from David this past week, especially on how to hold a microphone and always wearing my headphones. I have experience recording, but David made mindful points in always assuring to keep levels and gain the same throughout locations to keep audio consistent. Also Nina reminded me to always assure you are recording!

The audio mix session was very important to me as an audio production student. I learned so much from Selena, like deleting a fire alarm beep in the background! I am still amazed! But I feel that this is what really stuck with me: Keeping those human moments in the edit. The person I interviewed had many pauses and breathes between responses, and I was able to coexist many moments through those details.

Overall, Next Gen Radio has given me journalistic confidence in reporting a story. I feel empowered to continue developing stories in Los Angeles. I feel the support of the new gained community, and much less alone in this career transition. I enjoyed learning about David's career trajectory during lunches, and getting advice on my current path. I was telling David about a job I was rejected from a year ago, but the head of audio mentioned to keep in touch. Once Monday comes, and the project is on the site, the first thing I am doing is sharing this project with that person.

PALOMA MORENO JIMÉNEZ

Paloma Moreno Jiménez is an audio storyteller from the borderlands of Tijuana-Chula Vista. Paloma has worked with WNYC's Radiolab, WBEZ's Art of Power, and YR Media's Inherited. After graduating from Stanford University, Paloma began interning for the Women's Audio Mission where she focused on improving her sound engineering skills.

Paloma is passionate about using audio to provide a missing mic and platform for intergenerational stories, specifically from LGBTQ+ and POC communities. Beyond the stories, Paloma identifies as a 2000s pop girlie, is well versed in curly hair products, and calls Broad City and New Girl her comfort shows.



ILLUSTRATION BY SHIDEH GHANDEHARIZADEH

TRUST YOUR CURIOSITY. EMBRACE YOUR EMPATHY.

SUNDAY

I was doubting myself and the interview questions I had.

MONDAY

I felt a lot more confident, and I trusted myself and my curiosity.

TUESDAY

Audio!! I drafted my story and script. And I remembered how much I loved the audio storytelling process and had so much fun!

WEDNESDAY

Looong day! I finished my audio piece — but was on low battery. I had to freshen up and bring out the energy! Filmed my stand up

THURSDAY

Mixed until midday and only had an hour and a half to write my web story, but three cups of coffee helped me power through! I'd never written a piece in journalistic writing before, but I did it!! I was doooone.

FRIDAY

It set in that I'm telling someone else's life story. I got nervous, but I also remembered that I tried to be very intentional and caring with every part of the process. I'm processing all I did in one week and feeling a deep pride.

APPRENTICE AUDIO WIZARD

Once upon a time there lived a little girl from a small village. One day as she was resting in her home, she heard a knock on the door. Outside stood a grand wizard who was looking for a place to rest during her travels.

The girl offered the grand wizard a place to stay and in return the wizard showed the girl their audio magic.

"Little girl, did you know you can become an audio wizard too? I see potential in you."

The grand wizard gave the girl a magical wand called Adobe Audition, and showed her how to wield the magic of sound. But just as quick as the wizard came, so did she leave.

All the grand wizard left behind was a note:

"If you wish to become an audio wizard seek out the sage Doug and join NPR Next Gen. We shall meet again there. Signed, Selena the Grand Audio Wizard."

And so, the little girl set off on an adventure to join NPR Next Gen.

After traveling across many mountains, lakes, and valleys, the little girl finally arrived at a small hut near the edge of the world. When she opened the door though, the hut transformed and expanded into a magnificent town called USC. At the gate stood the sage, Doug.

"Little girl, what brings you to this faraway town?" Doug said.

"I am looking for the grand audio wizard Selena! I wish to become her apprentice. Please let me join NPR Next Gen," responded the girl.

The sage peered into the past and saw the girl's journey as she made it to USC and saw that she continued to practice and hone her audio magic while she was away.

"Very well, you may join. There are already five other apprentices here, but they are not trying to be audio wizards. They are going to become knight reporters, who defend the truth and protect the weak."

As the girl walked around the town she watched three magical fairies create beautiful artworks out of thin air. Soon she found herself at the center of the town, where she encountered General Traci along with the other apprentices standing with their mentors.

"For the next week be prepared to face many challenges. You will need to be ready to work yourself to the bone! You will need to hone all your weapons from your words, to your video, and your audio."

After Traci's announcement, the little girl saw someone flying through the air while riding a bass guitar. She watched as the person descended down next to her and realized it was Selena the grand wizard!

"We meet again! Now you are officially my apprentice, I'll be sure to teach you all you need to know to become a great audio wizard like me!" said Selena.

Selena showed the girl many new tools to enhance her audio magic. From Plugins and shortcuts to EQ and compression magic and more. The little girl could feel her magic muscles and knowledge growing everyday.

When Selena was called away by the duty of a wizard, the little girl met another grand audio wizard, Tina, as well. The wizard projected their image through a will-o-wisp and used audio magic at speeds too fast you could not see it with the naked eye. The little girl would find the chance to learn audio magic from Tina when she had the chance.

Halfway through the week, the little girl was told that she would need to battle audio monsters soon. The other apprentices had created the beasts by capturing the stories of five magical beings. It was now the job of the audio wizard to complete the job.

Over two nights and days, the little girl watched Tina battle three audio monsters, and under the guidance of Selena, she helped to defeat two.

At the end of the battle, the dust settled to reveal the audio monsters had transformed into beautiful sound. The knight reporters took the tamed sound and used it to bring the stories of the five magical beings to life.

The little girl, having made new friends with all the people that were a part of NPR Next Gen along with improving her audio magic, came out satisfied and tired.



ILLUSTRATION BY SHIDEH GHANDEHARIZADEH

ANNE TO

Anne To is a third year journalism major and creative writing minor at Cal State LA. She is the managing editor at the University Times and news director for the Golden Eagle Radio. She wants to highlight the lives of the AAPI community, and enjoys working in audio engineering, podcasting, and radio. She enjoys collecting blind box figurines, cosplaying, reading, and playing video games. She was born in the year of the horse.

LISTEN TO YOUR GUT (AND YOUR MOM!)

As we reach the end of this incredible training, I think back to the week leading up to the application deadline. I spent a week contemplating whether I should even apply. Although my heart was optimistic, my mind kept telling me otherwise.

At the beginning of the week, I remember having a conversation with my mom where I told her I would apply next year when I feel I have a little more experience. However, my mom encouraged me to apply, trusting in my ability. That night, I went to sleep with a mix of emotions not knowing what to do. However, the next morning, I woke up with a strange sense of optimism and my gut instinct telling me I should just go for it and the worst that could happen, is that I would get rejected. It wouldn't hurt to try. That night, I submitted my application and waited impatiently to hear back. When I did, I couldn't believe my eyes. It almost felt like the world around me stopped for a second.

Now, as I write this on the last day of the program, I am in awe of the tremendous support and kindness I experienced within the newsroom. Every morning, I would come in with excitement and a sense of child-like wonder of the things I would get to learn and experience. Next Gen Radio taught me to treasure that sense of wonder.

Lastly, I want to give a huge shoutout to my mentor, Elly. Despite all the technical difficulties I experienced this week, she remained patient with me and none of it would have been possible without her support. As I take the next step in my journey, I'm happy to know there is a tiny (or maybe not so tiny!) corner in the world known as Next Gen Radio!



ILLUSTRATION BY SHIDEH GHANDEHARIZADEH

ZAYNAH WASEEM

Zaynah Waseem is a graduate student at the University of Southern California pursuing a Master of Arts in Visual Anthropology. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Global Studies and Media & Cultural Studies from the University of California, Riverside. She is passionate about documenting the diverse stories of Pakistani, Muslim and immigrant communities through film, video and media. In her free time, she enjoys building Lego models, traveling and going through family photo albums.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Freelance Journalist and Consultant

NINA EARNEST

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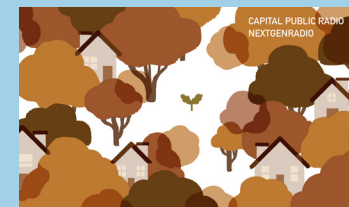
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THANK YOU
FROM NEXT GEN RADIO!



