



# Victory Gardens to host ‘Town Hall: #NeverAgainChicago’ to end gun violence, April 15

April 4, 2018



Chicago – **Victory Gardens Theater**, in association with **Natural Shocks National Project** and **HowlRound Theatre Commons**, presents **Town Hall: #NeverAgainChicago** to discuss the call to action taking place across the nation by students and allies to end gun violence.

*#NeverAgainChicago*, which also features a reading of an excerpt from Lauren Gunderson’s new play *Natural Shocks*, will be held in the Začek McVay Theater at **Victory Gardens Theater**, 2433 N. Lincoln Avenue on Sunday, April 15 at 6pm. This event is FREE and open to the public. HowlRound Theatre Commons will livestream the event and can be viewed at [www.howlround.tv](http://www.howlround.tv).

This event is held in response to conversations happening around the world about gun violence, the upcoming National School Walkout on April 20, and the anniversary of the Columbine High School shooting. Donations will be accepted for Everytown for Gun Safety, Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence, and Cure Violence. *#NeverAgainChicago* is made possible by the support of The David Rockefeller Fund.

“This is a historical moment for our nation as the students and teachers of this country, and the city of Chicago, lead the call to end gun violence,” said Artistic Director Chay Yew. “With *#NeverAgainChicago*, Victory Gardens is proud to provide a public space for students, teachers, and allies to come together, in a civic dialogue, to work towards ending gun violence.”

Based on Hamlet’s “To be or not to be,” playwright Lauren Gunderson’s *Natural Shocks* is a new one-woman tour-de-force play that bursts to life when we meet a woman waiting out an imminent tornado in her basement. She overflows with quirks, stories, and a final secret that puts the reality

of guns in America in your very lap. The play is part confessional, part stand-up, and part reckoning.

The Town Hall Series is a part of Victory Gardens' Public Programs Series, connecting the theater to the world beyond the stage and rehearsal room. Victory Gardens' Public Programs bridge ideas, provoke dialogue, and deepen the relationship between audiences and productions. Past Town Hall events include: *Casting Notice* (2016), *The Color Game* (2016), *Directors Town Hall* (2016) and *We Must Breathe* (2014).

### **About Lauren Gunderson**

Lauren M. Gunderson is the most produced playwright in America of 2017, the winner of the Lanford Wilson Award, the Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award and the Otis Guernsey New Voices Award, she is also a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize and John Gassner Award for Playwriting, and a recipient of the Mellon Foundation's 3-Year Residency with Marin Theatre Company. She studied Southern Literature and Drama at Emory University, and Dramatic Writing at NYU's Tisch School where she was a Reynolds Fellow in Social Entrepreneurship. Her work has been commissioned, produced, and developed at companies across the US including South Coast Rep (*Emilie*, *Silent Sky*), The Kennedy Center (*The Amazing Adventures of Dr. Wonderful And Her Dog!*), Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The O'Neill, The Denver Center, San Francisco Playhouse, Marin Theatre, Synchronicity, Berkeley Rep, Shotgun Players, TheatreWorks, Crowded Fire and more. She co-authored *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* with Margot Melcon, which was one of the most produced plays in America in 2017. Her work is published at Playscripts (*I and You*, *Exit Pursued By A Bear*, *The Taming*, and *Toil And Trouble*), Dramatists (*The Revolutionists*, *The Book of Will*, *Silent Sky*, *Bauer*, *Miss Bennet*) and Samuel French (*Emilie*). Her picture book *Dr Wonderful: Blast Off to the Moon* was released from Two Lions / Amazon in May 2017. [LaurenGunderson.com](http://LaurenGunderson.com) and [@LalaTellsAStory](https://www.instagram.com/LalaTellsAStory)

### **About Victory Gardens Theater**

Under the leadership of Artistic Director Chay Yew and Managing Director Erica Daniels, Victory Gardens is dedicated to artistic excellence while creating a vital, contemporary American Theater that is accessible and relevant to all people through productions of challenging new plays and musicals. Victory Gardens Theater is committed to the development, production and support of new plays that has been the mission of the theater since its founding, set forth by Dennis Začek, Marcelle McVay, and the original founders of Victory Gardens Theater.

Victory Gardens Theater is a leader in developing and producing new theater work and cultivating an inclusive Chicago theater community. Victory Gardens' core strengths are nurturing and producing dynamic and inspiring new plays, reflecting the diversity of our city's and nation's culture through engaging diverse communities, and in partnership with Chicago Public Schools, bringing art and culture to our city's active student population.

Since its founding in 1974, the company has produced more world premieres than any other Chicago theater, a commitment recognized nationally when Victory Gardens received the 2001 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. Located in the Lincoln Park neighborhood, Victory Gardens Biograph Theater includes the Začek-McVay Theater, a state-of-the-art 259-seat mainstage and the 109-seat studio theater on the second floor, named the Richard Christiansen Theater.

Victory Gardens Ensemble Playwrights include Luis Alfaro, Philip Dawkins, Marcus Gardley, Ike Holter, Samuel D. Hunter, Naomi Iizuka, Tanya Saracho and Laura Schellhardt. Each playwright has a seven-year residency at Victory Gardens Theater.

For more information about Victory Gardens, visit [www.victorygardens.org](http://www.victorygardens.org). Follow us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/victorygardens](https://www.facebook.com/victorygardens), Twitter [@VictoryGardens](https://twitter.com/VictoryGardens) and Instagram at [instagram.com/victorygardenstheater/](https://www.instagram.com/victorygardenstheater/).

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