In this WE Day vignette, Christian Burgos takes us on an emotional journey as he recounts the worst night of his life. In 2014, his older sister, Alexandria, was killed in a shooting while picking him up from a friend’s home in Chicago. Christian has since become a speaker against gun violence.

Since his sister’s death, Christian has also attended several marches in Alexandria’s honor and advocates for tougher gun control laws. In December 2015, he and his family attended the National Vigil for All Victims of Gun Violence on Capitol Hill and spoke directly with congresspeople, hoping to pressure the government about policy change on the issue.

Christian’s school is a WE School that designed a campaign to take a stand against youth violence by rallying members of the community. To recognize their incredible work, Allstate awarded them with a grant to support their efforts.

As a WE Schools supporter, Allstate believes that every person has the power to change the world. Standing in solidarity with Christian and others affected by violence, Allstate is committed to helping youth become empowered to make their neighborhoods safer.
ACTIVITY
Take a Stand

COURSES: English Language Arts, Social Studies

The following activity explores how one teenager stood up to the violence in his community and how we can follow in his footsteps.

STEP 1: EXPLORE

1. Choose three to five facts or statistics to highlight from the following websites that illustrate the issue of youth violence on both a national and global scale. Alter a couple of the statistics to create false statements. Then record the statistics for reference. (For example, if the statistic is that three in five people wear blue on Mondays, change it to one in five people.)

   WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION’S YOUTH VIOLENCE FACT SHEET:
   who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs356/en

   USA: CDC’S YOUTH VIOLENCE DATA SHEET:

2. Introduce the activity and read each statistic to the group. Ask students to stand if they believe it is true and to stay seated if they believe it is false.

3. Have students discuss their reasoning with a partner, then ask volunteers to share their reasoning with the class.

4. After a brief discussion, reveal the true statistic.

5. Repeat for every statistic.

6. Complete the activity by asking students to consider what they have just learned:
   a. Which statistics surprised them?
   b. Were any statistics upsetting? How so?

STEP 2: WATCH

Watch the WE DAY vignette about Christian and how his school took action to help prevent violence in their community.

STEP 3: DISCUSS

1. What are some of the ways that Christian is addressing the issues of youth violence and youth safety in his community?

2. Christian took action with his WE School through a peace pledge. How can peace pledges be effective and help prevent violence in communities?

3. What can we do to increase the safety of young people in our community?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

Come together as a WE School to take a stand against youth violence. Take your own peace pledge, create signs to raise awareness or put together a community event. Design your own volunteer campaign and rally your school by using WE Volunteer Now campaign tools. Apply for a WE Volunteer Now grant to get started. Go to WE.org/wevolunteernow to learn more.