

The stories we tell.
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West Ridge Story Festival: New American Voices



Since 2019, Silk Road Rising has been working in the West Ridge neighborhood on Chicago's far north side to foster a greater sense of social cohesion. West Ridge is one of the most ethnically, racially, religiously,

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the microcosm of the 21st-century American mosaic. Silk Road Rising's work in this neighborhood brings to light the experiences of immigrant and refugee communities and provides a platform for their voices to be heard.

In December of 2019, we produced the inaugural *West Ridge Story Festival*; staged readings of plays written by community members who participated in our Empathic Playwriting Intensive Course (EPIC) classes. Once the pandemic hit, our work with our community partners had to move online. Working with Asian Human Services, we created last year's [Stories from English Language Learners](#). Shortly thereafter, Silk Road Rising released [The COVID Monologues](#), culled from the West Ridge neighborhood and beyond. Now we are thrilled to be working again with Asian Human Services to bring you *West Ridge Story Festival: New American Voices*.

New American Voices (36 min, 4 sec) features six plays written by students who participated in Silk Road Rising's EPIC for English Language Learners Class at Asian Human Services and EPIC at Passages Charter School. These tales explore the lives of new Americans as they navigate cultural differences and community expectations.

These virtual staged readings are directed by Lexi Saunders, written by Bibi Zainab Binti Nurul Hakim, Madina Mustafina, Fowsia Nur, Sofi Escutia Ramirez, Meram Thahr, and Renee Twum, and feature Zhanna Albertini, Adia Alli, Allison Grischow, Juan Gonzalez Machain, and Victor Mallari with special appearances by Bri Buckley and Alexis Tornez. The video is available for free to watch at anytime on YouTube.

Watch West Ridge Story Festival: New American Voices

WINDY
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Silk Road Rising Co-Founders Talk about Journey from Medical Setback

by Andrew Pirrotta, Windy City Times

Malik and Jamil share their ongoing stroke recovery, two years and eight months in.



[Read the Interview Here](#)

Community Spotlight



The Chinese Lady

by Lloyd Suh

Directed by Helen Young

Playing now through June 18

at Theater Wit, 1229 W Belmont Ave, Chicago

TimeLine Theatre caps off its thrilling 25th Anniversary season with the

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Lady. Brought to the United States at age 14 from China in 1854 by enterprising American merchants, Afong Moy is put on display so the American public can get its first view of an authentic “Chinese Lady.” Over the course of 55 years, she performs an ethnicity that both defines and challenges her own views of herself, all while witnessing stunning transformations in the American identity. As these dual truths become irreconcilable, Afong must reckon with herself and the history of her new home with startling discovery and personal revelations.

The Chicago Tribune wrote that as Afong Moy, “[Mi Kang gives] an exceptionally sophisticated performance at the heart of a small, assertive, resonant and moving play” and the Chicago Sun-Times raved “it’s a stunner.”

Get \$5 OFF tickets with code COMMUNITY5 [online](#) or by phone at 773.281.8463 x6.

Learn more at <http://www.timelinetheatre.com/chinese-lady>

[Click here to purchase tickets online](#)

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