



RAISE YOUR VOICE

a film by MARIBETH ROMSLO

RaiseYourVoiceDocumentary.com

SYNOPSIS

Raise Your Voice follows the student journalists at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School navigating their school mass shooting as both survivors and journalists. The documentary explores youth free speech history in America, connecting the Parkland students to a broader story about **young voices** and their **power through social movements**.

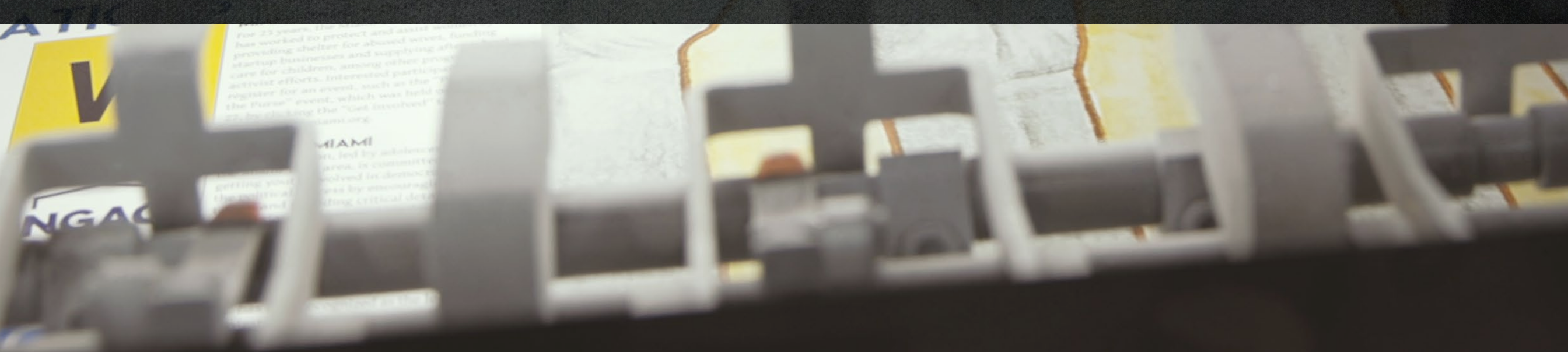


WATCH THE TRAILER



“These aren’t just kids practicing their First Amendment Rights.
They’re living them.”

—LATA NOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FIRST AMEDNMENT CENTER



Characters



MARY BETH TINKER

Youth free speech advocate and plaintiff in the 1969 Supreme Court case *Tinker v. Des Moines*.



LENI STENIHARDT

Eagle Eye News editor-in-chief
MSD Class of 2020



MELISSA FALKOWSKI

Journalism teacher at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and newspaper advisor to Eagle Eye News.



DARA ROSEN

Eagle Eye News editor-in-chief
MSD Class of 2020



REBECCA SCHNEID

Eagle Eye News editor-in-chief
MSD Class of 2019



NEHA MADHIRA

Eagle Nation online editor-in-chief
Prosper High School Class of 2019

MARIBETH ROMSLO

Director's Statement

On February 14, 2018, I watched news coverage of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. I was angry. I was sad.

On CNN, Anderson Cooper interviewed MSD journalism teacher Melissa Falkowski. What she said left a mark. She had kept 19 students hidden and calm for nearly 2 hours in the newspaper classroom closet until the SWAT team arrived to escort them to safety. In her interview, she said that our country is failing our kids by not keeping them safe in schools.

I watched in tears and complete agreement. We shouldn't have to worry that when we hug our kids in the morning, that they could be shot to death at school. Or at the mall. Or at a movie theater. Or at church. Or at a dance party.

Our hearts cannot continue to break like this.

In the days that followed, I was glued to the television and in awe of the MSD students who were speaking up, calling out, and demanding change.

We live in a world that systematically tells kids to sit down and be quiet. The students of Parkland weren't having it. Emma Gonzalez declared BS. #NeverAgain trended on Twitter. Four days after the shooting, March for Our Lives was announced. These were kids, and they were just getting started.

And I couldn't stop thinking about Melissa Falkowski huddled in a utility closet with 19 teenagers.

I found the MSD high school newspaper website, Eagle Eye News. I spent a solid hour on the site, reading well-reported stories about topics that are important to teens today, such as vaping and rape culture. Well before the tragedy, these kids knew how to write, and they knew how to speak up.



MARIBETH ROMSLO

Director's Statement, *Continued*

Seventeen years ago, I lost my cousin to gun violence. My kids have lockdown drills at their public schools, and I have to talk to them about things like shootings and terrorism. I am also a filmmaker with a journalism degree, and I believe deeply in empowering young people to use their voices.

So while I live in Minnesota, halfway across the country from Parkland, this story hit close to home. I emailed Mrs. Falkowski and asked her if I could make a film featuring her students, and focusing on the power of young voices. After just a few phone calls, I met up with her and her Eagle Eye student staffers in Washington, DC to film their coverage of March for Our Lives.

On that trip, I met Mary Beth Tinker, a student free speech advocate who won a landmark Supreme Court case in 1969 which states that students and teachers do not “shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate.”

That chance meeting with Ms. Tinker gave more depth and history to this project. In February 2019, Ms. Tinker organized events to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision in Des Moines, Iowa. (Serendipity side note: my name is also

Maribeth and I also grew up in Des Moines!). The anniversary events were the perfect opportunity to connect the history dots of student free speech in America.

Raise Your Voice is a story about youth leading social change with the power of their voices.





ALYSSA ALHADEFF

Alyssa Alhadeff was a beautiful all-American teenager. The 17-year-old was the most popular girl in school, and everyone loved her. With a long black hair and a bright smile, she was a natural leader. She was the one who everyone turned to when they had a problem, and she was always the one who knew what to do. She was the one who everyone looked up to, and she was always the one who was there for everyone. She was the one who everyone loved, and she was always the one who was there for everyone. She was the one who everyone loved, and she was always the one who was there for everyone.

“She never met a person she couldn't make laugh. Her laugh was contagious to everyone that heard her within a mile radius.”



By Marianna • Alyssa Alhadeff '05

“These budding journalists remind us of the media’s unwavering commitment to bearing witness — even in the most wrenching of circumstances — in service to a nation whose very existence depends on a free and dedicated press.”

—DANA CANEDY,
PULITZER PRIZE ADMINISTRATOR

“I was angry about feeling helpless and angry about what had happened.
So the result was using my voice and all of us using our voices.”

—REBECCA SCHNEID, *EAGLE EYE NEWS* EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HIGH SCHOOL, CLASS OF 2019

Tinker v. Des Moines



Tinker v. Des Moines is an historic Supreme Court ruling from 1969 that cemented students' rights to free speech in public schools.

Mary Beth Tinker was a 13-year-old junior high school student in December 1965 when she and a group of students decided to wear black armbands to school to protest the war in Vietnam.

The students and their families embarked on a four-year court battle that culminated in the landmark Supreme Court decision.

On Feb. 24, 1969, the court ruled 7-2 that students do not “shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate.”



“It’s the power of young people speaking for themselves about their own interests. Sure adults can be advocates for teenagers and children. But when young people speak for themselves, that is so powerful.”

—MARY BETH TINKER, YOUTH FREE SPEECH ADVOCATE
PLAINTIFF IN THE 1969 SUPREME COURT CASE *TINKER V. DES MOINES*





MARIBETH ROMSLO

Maribeth Romslo is a director, cinematographer and producer who believes that stories have the power to change the world. Her award-winning films have played at festivals around the world.

She recently created an original documentary series (*Handmade*Mostly*) for Reese Witherspoon's new media platform, Hello Sunshine, and a conceptual dance film (*Kitchen Dance*) supported by a Minnesota Arts Board grant about the work of women.

Her feature film (*Dragonfly*) was selected for "Best of the Fest" at the 2016 Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival. *Amelia*, the first film in her historical fiction series to inspire girls in STEM premiered at the 2018 Toronto International Film Festival Kids.

Maribeth lives in Minneapolis and is a member of the Twin Cities chapter of Film Fatales.



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Interested in watching the film or hosting a screening? Contact: MARIBETH ROMSLO • Director + Producer maribeth.romslo@gmail.com • 952.237.9496