Hello listeners, this is ISC ensemble member and Artistic Associate for Social Justice Carene Rose Mekertichyan. Thank you all for joining me for ISC's August Community Action Update. These monthly episodes feature social justice initiatives and ways you can serve your local Los Angeles Community and beyond.

This months’ update is a special one as we are currently in the middle of our run of *The Tempest* in Griffith Park! It has been gift to perform live and share physical, socially distant, space with our fellow Angelenos once again. What truly made me fall in love with this company during my first summer back in 2019, was the way we connected with our community and remained civically engaged throughout the summer as we offered our free youth workshops, voter registration drives, and advocated for various causes, such as the oceans and our environment which was our focus that summer.

During this time of increased gentrification, displacement, and legislation that often criminalizes homelessness, we at Indyshakes wanted to focus on serving our unhoused community members this summer.

At each performance of *The Tempest* we are collecting hygiene kits and supplies that will be distributed to our unhoused neighbors by SELAH, which is a local organization serving the unhoused in Silver Lake, Echo Park, Los Feliz, Atwater Village, and Hollywood.

The items we are collecting include travel sizes of shampoo, conditioner, lotion, soap, and toothpaste. We are also collecting combs, socks, toilet paper, body wipes, toothbrushes, and first aid kits (particularly those containing bandages and antibiotic ointment).

Cat Kim, co-founder and board member of SELAH, was kind enough to join us at the park for our Civic Engagement Night and spoke with me a bit about SELAH’s history and ways you can serve your community and support their work.

“Hi my name is Cat Kim, I am a board member and co-founder of SELAH neighborhood homeless coalition. I am a native angeleno, born and raised in Los Feliz and I am currently at the Old Zoo with Carene at tonight’s performance of *The Tempest*. We co-founded SELAH in 2017; just neighborhood, people in the neighborhood and community that wanted to make a difference to help our unhoused neighbors. Five of us started, and we are now a non-profit that has over 500 volunteers. We have three separate chapters, and we currently offer three weekly programs in Silver Lake and Echo Park. We are 100% volunteer funded, volunteer run—sorry community funded; we’re not volunteer funded.
When we first started, the most important thing for us was that services are the number one key to get people into housing, so we heavily focus on supporting services. Food, showers, and, you know, restoring people’s humanity is really important for us but getting people connected to services was our number one thing. When we first started we worked with the local homeless service providers along with the city community officials, just so that we can make our efforts a lot stronger and more impactful for our unhoused neighbors. It was really important that we are a community level movement because that is where you’ll feel the most impact and that’s the most important thing about addressing homelessness is that it starts at the community level.

We have three weekly programs in Silver Lake and Echo Park, and the best way to support us is, first, vote. Vote and pay attention to like everything that is happening in your community. If there are any policies that are coming into place, calling your council member, calling the mayor’s office to let them know that you support bringing in all different kinds of housing into your community, that’s the first step. Second step is just getting involved with a local non-profit that are dealing with issues, you know, it doesn’t even have to be homelessness, it could be just something that you care about like, in our neighborhood, we have Friends of the Los Angeles River, so if the environment is something important you, be a part of that and learn how you can help in your community.

Please, if homelessness is something that you are really passionate about, you can sign up at selahnhc.org to volunteer with us and you know, there is a role for everyone to play in the community, so if volunteering on site or going on engagement to speak to your unhoused neighbors is not your thing, there are so many different things like hosting a hygiene kit drive or hosting a fundraiser for us, there are so many different kinds of things you can do to help your community and to help us so please visit us, our instagram is @selahnhc and thank you so much.