

Media Release  
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### **First of Its Kind Musical Debuts this Spring**

FREDERICKSBURG, VA—A groundbreaking new musical will hit the stage this spring, as cast and crew tell the story of “A Special Covid-19,” a musical based on the pandemic of 2020, reflecting the challenges of our current times as lived by someone with a disability.

Supported largely in part by STEP VA, Inc., a local 501c nonprofit that “empowers people with special needs through artistic expression and sensory exploration,” the musical is the first of its kind—not only for the topic, but also being created, produced and directed by an autistic individual, and starring a cast composed solely of people with disabilities.

Noah Finch has been involved with STEP VA for six years. With the encouragement of STEP VA leadership, he channeled his feelings about the pandemic first into a song. Then, guided by professionals across several fields, the 22-year-old turned that song into a complete, two-act musical with songs spanning multiple style genres. Finch created the story, arranged the music and wrote all the songs and lyrics, handpicked his cast from his STEP VA friends, and is directing weekly Zoom rehearsals.

“I thought of people I knew and their personalities. That’s how I cast their roles. Having friends makes our rehearsals easier. Everybody knows each other and is comfortable,” said Finch, who explained that he wrote the plot, then the script, before deciding on who would play which role. “I’m having fun with rehearsals every week. I lead the warm-ups and accompany the participants with my keyboard playing while teaching the songs. It makes me feel proud hearing them sing my songs. As we begin our Zoom rehearsals the participants are working hard learning the music, lyrics and choreography. Since it’s via Zoom, it’s more difficult than rehearsals in person, but they’re doing their best.”

Plans are going forward to stage the musical the weekend of April 17 - 18, with a live audience as safety permits. STEP VA is also exploring options to both live stream and record the show for later online viewing.

“Our goal with these performances is to showcase the unique perspectives of people with disAbilities. and bring their talent, voices and stories to the stage,” said STEP VA executive director, Jan Monroe.

For more information or to donate, visit [www.stepva.org](http://www.stepva.org).

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**STEP VA, Inc.** is a 501c3 non-profit organization that provides sensory-based theater and arts programs for individuals with disabilities. Its vision is to transform the world by offering each individual the opportunity to flourish in the community.