



## 2007 Coming Up Taller Awards

### **Barrington Stage Company Playwright Mentoring Project**

**Pittsfield, MA**

The Playwright Mentoring Project is an intensive, seven-month after-school program, in which teens take troubling material from their personal lives and—with help from theater artists and mental health professionals—transform it into a poignant performance that expresses the truth of their lives. The program serves youth in one of the poorest areas of Massachusetts, many of whom are struggling with such issues as substance abuse, family violence, teen pregnancy and school failure.

### **Accessible Arts Discovery Trails**

**Kansas City, MO**

Discovery Trails is a two-week educational adventure for blind and visually impaired youth along portions of the Oregon or Santa Fe trails. Participants explore what happened to pioneers who ventured west in the mid-1800s by reading from pioneer journals and meeting with local historians. These contemporary pioneers are also challenged to hike canyons, ford rivers, repair “broken wagon wheels” and camp along portions of the trail. Participants might also touch the names of pioneers carved into rock, plant flowers on a pioneer’s grave, or sculpt miniature replicas of geological formations. After the journey, organizers encourage the adventurers to give presentations about their trip to local school and civic groups.

### **Chicago Humanities Festival and Chicago Park District**

**Chicago, IL**

A joint project of the Chicago Humanities Festival and the Chicago Park District, Words@PLAY is a 10-week after-school program offered at cultural centers in underserved Chicago neighborhoods. Teachers and professional poets lead weekly 90-minute sessions that introduce elementary school children to renowned poets and different styles of poetry. Through engaging games and exercises, instructors encourage students to express their own thoughts and feelings through poetry. As a vivid and succinct art form that doesn’t require a large vocabulary or long attention span, poetry is well-suited to the program’s 8-to-12-year-old participants.

### **Dreams of Wilmington, Inc.**

**Wilmington, NC**

Created by Dreams of Wilmington, Inc. DREAMS is a youth development program dedicated to providing free daytime, after-school and summer classes in music, visual arts, literature, dance and theater to more than 500 youth each week at the organization’s inner-city center, schools, recreation centers, public housing sites and a county treatment facility for adjudicated youth. The program features three major initiatives: Artists-in-Residence, Youth Entrepreneurship and Public Art.

### **La Pilita Youth Docent Program**

**Tucson, AZ**

Offered by the La Pilita Museum, which celebrates and preserves the history of Barrio Viejo, one of Tucson’s oldest neighborhoods, the La Pilita Docent Program evolved out of a partnership with the nearby Carrillo Elementary School to provide after-school enrichment and community service opportunities for its students, some of whom come from lower-income families.



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A great nation  
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**Lynn Meadows Discovery Center/Wings Performing Arts****Gulfport, MI**

Created by the Lynn Meadows Discovery Center, WINGS offers Gulf Coast students in elementary through high school the opportunity to participate in theater productions that are presented at community sites and area schools. Students work closely with adult staff and volunteers who encourage them to develop teamwork skills and confidence while guiding them through increasingly challenging roles and assignments. WINGS seeks out at-risk students, many of whom experienced the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Its productions have earned statewide recognition, and 100 percent of the participants who graduated from high school have gone on to college.

**Richmond Boys Choir****Richmond, VA**

The Richmond Boys Choir, which has been designated by Richmond's Chamber of Commerce as Richmond's Ambassadors of Song, offers boys aged seven to 17 the opportunity for choral training and performance. The choir also stresses academics, offering weekly study/homework sessions to help students keep up their grades. Members must maintain at least a C+ average to perform with the choir. Older choir members "adopt" younger members, giving them tips on music and performance, while the choir experience teaches teamwork, endurance and patience.

**Imagination Celebration****Ft. Worth, TX**

Imagination Celebration is being honored for two initiatives: the Young Artists Apprenticeship Program and The Debbie Allen Dance Institute. Launched in 1989, the Young Artists Apprenticeship Program is a highly competitive program that enables students to experience more rigorous and in-depth arts experiences than those offered in their schools, and bases admission on a portfolio review and recommendations from art teachers. Each year, 30 to 40 students attend weekly sessions at the Fort Worth Community Arts Center, where they work with the master artists who introduce them to diverse forms of art and help them develop technical skills and confidence.

The Debbie Allen Dance Institute is taught each summer by acclaimed dancer and choreographer Debbie Allen, along with a group of dancers from such prestigious companies as the Bolshoi Ballet and the Alvin Ailey Dance Company. The workshop spans two weeks, and enrollment is open to students aged 7 to 21. Students come from throughout Texas and the other states and have also attended from as far away as Africa and Venezuela.

**The Unusual Suspects Theatre Company****Los Angeles, CA**

The Los Angeles Theatre Company, which offers intensive theater workshops to youth in the juvenile corrections and foster care systems, brings together theater and film professionals to develop participants' acting techniques and help them collaboratively write and produce an original play. Often based on the participants' experiences, the plays provide a vehicle for learning how to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence. Because of this experience, some participants have gone on to previously unimagined goals, such as finishing high school and going on to college.

**Hampden Family Center/Youthlight Photography Project****Baltimore, MD**

Offered through the Hampden Family Center, the Youthlight Photography Project enables southwest Baltimore middle school and high school students to learn to compose and shoot

pictures with a 35 mm camera and to develop and print the black-and-white images. The program is offered through after-school sessions two days a week during the school year at centers in central and southwest Baltimore. Community centers, local galleries and universities have displayed the students' photographs.

### **PHILADELPHIA READS**

**Philadelphia, PA**

Through its summer reading program known as SWARM (Science, Writing, Art, Reading, Music), PHILADELPHIA READS incorporates activities in art, music and science to help teach literacy skills to children in first through third grades. The program operates at 20 recreational camps in areas of Philadelphia that tend to provide fewer summer enrichment opportunities. It specifically targets children during the summer months, when educational gains can falter and when many children lack supervision.

### **Sitka Fine Arts Camp**

**Sitka, AK**

Through its intensive summer classes, Sitka Fine Arts Camp offers students from across Alaska—and even across the country—arts education and interaction with working artists. The camp offers a one-week session for local elementary school students and two-week sessions for middle and high school students. Students can choose from more than 60 different classes in music, visual arts, dance, writing, theater, Alaskan Native art, and art technology. Students take five 90-minute classes each day and attend live performances by faculty in the evenings. The sessions culminate in exhibitions of students' projects, as well as performances, all of which are open to the public.

### **Hudson River Museum/Junior Docent Program**

**Yonkers, NY**

A collaboration between the Hudson River Museum and the Yonkers Public School District, the Junior Docent Program serves nearly 80 teens who become docents for the museum. To prepare for their docent roles, students undergo an ongoing intensive training process where they learn about the Museum's exhibitions, which focus on the art, history, and ecological environment of the region. Once trained, junior docents lead weekend tours, help run family-oriented hands-on workshops and work with the Museum's camp programs.

### **Reel Works Teen Filmmaking/The Lab**

Created by Reel Works Teen Filmmaking, *The Lab*, is a free, semester-long program, through which participants turn the difficult raw material of their lives into riveting documentaries. Each teen is paired with a professional documentary filmmaker who helps the student choose a topic, shoot it, and shape the footage into a compelling personal story. Over two million people have seen Reel Works films, which have been broadcast on PBS, MSNBC, HBO Family and Oprah. A growing number of the films are also being used in classrooms across the country to stimulate discussion on such important issues as race, identity, self esteem and personal choices.

### **The Hyde Square Task Force/ Ritmo en Acción**

**Boston, MA**

The Hyde Square Task Force established the Ritmo en Acción (Spanish for "Rhythm in Action") youth dance troupe in 2001 to provide high quality dance instruction previously unavailable to teens in their predominantly low income, Latino and African American neighborhood of Boston. Under the program, two of Boston's top professional Latin dancers,

Burju Hurturk and Victor Perez, provide rigorous weekly instruction in Afro-Latin and contemporary dance on an ongoing basis at no charge to students. The teens perform at public events in the Boston area, and have performed by invitation at the West Coast International Salsa Congress and in Paris, France.

### **The Cultural Center San Francisco Tzcalha**

**Yucatan, Mexico**

Occupying the historic Hacienda San Francisco, the Cultural Center San Francisco Tzcalha has established four choirs, which serve more than 100 children and teenagers in the towns of Dzindzantun, Yobain, Dzilam Gonzalez and Dzilam de Bravo. Participants study vocalization, scales, body movement and musical interpretation. Mayan and Spanish songs connect choir members with their cultural heritage, while Latin, Italian and French pieces expose them to other cultures and musical traditions. The choirs have performed in the state capital of Merida, and in local schools, churches, public plazas and theaters. One high point for participants was the invitation to sing Carmina Burana, a cantata based on medieval poems, with Yucatan's symphonic orchestra.

### **The Instituto Queretano de la Cultura y Las Artes Santiago de Queretano, Mexico**

In an effort to build a bridge between the longstanding cultural traditions of Mexico's Huasteca region and its many new emigrants, the Instituto Queretano de la Cultura y las Artes launched in 2002 a program through which master musicians teach young people the huapango music and dance that is indigenous to the region. The huapango music is created by instrumentalists playing the violin, a large guitar known as a quinta huapanguera, and a smaller guitar known as a jarana huasteca. The musicians are typically accompanied by singers and dancers and the music often accompanies major events such as weddings, baptisms, feasts honoring patron saints and other religious celebrations. Nearly 100 children and young adults, ranging in age from 4 to 23, attend the workshops every year. Some of the more inspired participants have gone on to form huapanguero trios of their own, make recordings and perform in other communities in Mexico.

### **The Children's Palace**

**Shanghai, China**

Based on Mme. Soong Ching Ling's educational philosophy that the arts and humanities nourish and inspire children for lifelong learning, the Children's Palace offers programs in dance, choir, orchestra, traditional musical instruments and Chinese calligraphy, painting, drama and other areas for children aged 4 to 16. As a vital part of the Chinese Government's nine-year compulsory education strategy, the programs provide children with easy access to affordable, high quality arts instruction and experiences. To date, nearly 6,000 children have benefited from these opportunities, including migrant students from less urbanized regions of the country.