



2009 Coming Up Taller Awards

The Coming Up Taller Awards recognize and support outstanding community arts and humanities programs that celebrate the creativity of young people, and provide them with new learning opportunities and a chance to contribute to their communities. The awards also highlight the contributions that historians, scholars, librarians and visual and performing artists make to families and communities by mentoring children. Additionally, 35 semi-finalists were also recognized for their programs and more than 400 nominations were received by CUT in 2009. Coming Up Taller is an initiative of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities in partnership with the [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#), the [National Endowment for the Arts \(NEA\)](#) and the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#).



TAG TEEN PROGRAM

**City of Willcox, Elsie S. Hogan Community Library
Willcox, AZ**

The TAG (Teen Advisory Group) Teen program provides a breadth of experiences in the arts and humanities through a three-hour per week, year-round program of workshops, speakers, and discussions, and most particularly through the publishing of *TAG Magazine*, produced entirely through teen effort. A monthly theme woven with education workshops, field trips, and fun get-togethers brings a forum for teen creativity in the arts and writing to a small, rural community, and creates in turn a high quality magazine that all area teens can enjoy. Teens plan content for each three issues of *TAG Magazine* per year, then write, edit, design, layout, distribute, and fund them through advertising sales. In the process, they not only explore their creativity in art and writing, but learn self-confidence, gain interpersonal skills, and are empowered to strike out on future paths that they would have considered only dreams before.

HARMONY PROJECT

Los Angeles, CA

The Harmony Project was created in 2001 to promote the healthy growth and development of children through the study, practice, and performance of music. We currently serve more than 600 children each year with instruction in eight instruments, choir, and orchestra programs, on an after-school and weekend basis at seven primary locations in Central and South Los Angeles. Students are provided instruments, weekly lessons, performance opportunities, juries, field trips, and a variety of supporting resources. The Harmony Project exclusively serves low-income families for whom the program is provided at no cost. Built upon the latest social sciences research on arts education, we support children and their families with an intensive, year-round program that follows them throughout their childhood –including college scholarships. We are growing rapidly through novel partnerships with public and private institutions and, having established a strong financial position, plan to launch new program hubs in 2009-2010.

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HIGHER ACHIEVEMENT

Washington, D.C.

Founded in 1975 at Gonzaga High School by a young teacher named Greg Gannon, Higher Achievement evolved over the years and became its own incorporated 501(c) 3 in the early 1980's. In 1999, the organization reorganized as a national demonstration model for enrichment of disadvantaged middle school children. For more than 30 years, Higher Achievement has impacted the lives of more than 10,000 motivated young people. Its rigorous programs have prepared and inspired Washington's youth to achieve their dreams. Higher Achievement's mission is to develop skills, behaviors, and attitudes in motivated and underserved middle school children, 'scholars', to improve their grades, standardized tests, attendance, and opportunities: acceptance to top high schools. The program is guided by three principles: Talent is everywhere; Intellect is built through effort; and Opportunities matter. Higher Achievement delivers year-round rigorous programs via its Achievement Centers during the most critical time in a child's development: middle school. Scholars receive supplemental educational experiences through intense, multi-year after-school and summer programs in addition to college-preparatory high school placement services.

SITAR ARTS CENTER

Washington, D.C.

Sitar Arts Center provides young people from low-income families with the opportunities to discover their gifts through the arts in a safe, nurturing environment. A unique community-based organization, Sitar Arts Center provides more than 700 students annually with a rich selection of multidisciplinary arts classes offered in collaboration with local volunteer artists and DC's premier artistic institutions. The Center maintains the policy that 80% of students come from low-income households ensuring that a high-quality arts education is accessible to every family regardless of their ability to pay. A semifinalist for the 2006 Coming Up Taller Awards, the Center has undergone tremendous organizational and programmatic growth during the past three years that includes 43% increase in annual enrollment, new artistic partnerships, the expansion of the *Arts for Teens Initiative*, and a successful executive transition.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MEXICAN ART

Yollocalli Arts Reach

Chicago, IL

Yollocalli Arts Reach, a youth initiative of the National Museum of Mexican Art (NMMA), is an arts education and career-training program for youth between the ages of 13-19. Yollocalli is designed to develop students' appreciation and understanding of production, interpretation, and exhibition of art and to providing an open forum for experimentation, collaboration, and dialogue about issues in the arts and in the students' communities. Yollocalli holds fifteen free 8-10 week classes that meet after school two-three days as well as several rotating satellite locations throughout the metropolitan area. In recent years, satellite projects have taken place in Back of the Yards, Little Village, Cicero, Berwyn,

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South Chicago, Bridgeport, Park Ridge, and other areas that have significant Latino populations. In 2009, Yollocalli will begin a pilot program in Kansas city, another Midwest city with a large Latino population. Many Yollocalli students are first or second generation Mexican immigrants, but the classes are open to all.

YOUNG CHICAGO AUTHORS

Chicago, IL

Young Chicago Authors (YCA) encourages self-expression and literacy through creative writing, performance, and publication. YCA provides student centered, artist-led workshops free to youth ages 13-19 in schools and communities. Our process emphasizes artistic development, mentorship, and creating safe spaces where a young person's life matters. We believe that through their words, young people can promote respect and remove barriers to transform their lives and society.

Now in its 16th year, YCA serves more than 5,000 low-income and underserved teens annually and reaches an additional 45,000 people through readership and audiences. By providing high-quality literary arts programs, mentorship opportunities, and leadership development in an encouraging environment, YCA strives to positively impact young people's lives. Our core community comes from predominantly low-income African-American and Latino neighborhoods throughout Chicago where high school dropout rates reach as high as fifty percent.

EXPRESS YOURSELF, INC.

Beverly, MA

You cannot see or touch mental illness, but for the youth of Express Yourself (EY), it is a daily struggle. Since 1988, this non-profit arts organization has celebrated the power of creative arts to transform the lives of youth residing in Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) treatment settings and in underserved communities. Through our program, youth coping with emotional and mental disturbance develop a sense of self-identity, belonging, and personal worth by focusing on their strengths in a high quality artistic experience rich with collaborative opportunities. Youth come from isolation to a sense of collaboration and bring their personal creative energy to work as a team toward a common goal. EY is well known for the ten-month program, *Express Yourself!* which culminates annually in a powerful performance at Boston's Citi Performing Arts Center. Youth are immersed in this dynamic, coherent program of music, movement, theater, and visual arts with life changing results. For the first time, their friends and family will celebrate success through this spectacular exhibition and performance.

ART A LA CARTE

College Bound Dorchester

Dorchester, MA

Now in its 15th year, Art a la Carte (AaC) is an interactive arts education program offering 50 middle and high school students the opportunity to obtain in-depth sequential and cumulative arts instruction, develop portfolios for college or gain practical skills in

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museum work. Art a la Carte links teens with some of Boston's finest artists and the local cultural community through classes, internships, work experiences, and field trips. Art a la Carte offers in-depth classes generally not available to urban students and provides a needed service to inner city youth who would not have the opportunity to receive high-quality instruction in the arts. AalC develops teens' art and life skills, self-awareness, sense of personal efficacy, and self expression as it prepares students for higher education in the arts. Over 95% of Art a la Carte portfolio students have gained admission to college or art school in the program's 15 year history.

CITYWIDE POETS

InsideOut Literary Arts Project

Detroit, MI

Citywide Poets is InsideOut Literary Arts Project's after school workshop for high school poets. Students meet once a week, under the direction of a lead poet and an assistant, to improve writing skills and performing abilities. They publish their work in a year-end anthology, with accompanying spoken word CD, and perform throughout the year at numerous venues in and around Detroit. The goal of the program is to help Detroit teens develop and strengthen their voices as writers by providing a safe, stimulating environment in which participants engage with models of poetic excellence and help one another improve both poetic craft and performance. Charismatic, committed poet-teachers, who excel both on page and stage, maintain a high level of loyalty and engagement among participants.

OUTREACH PROGRAM WITH INCARCERATED YOUTH

Keshet Dance Company

Albuquerque, NM

Keshet Dance Company's Outreach Program with Incarcerated Youth provides ongoing programming at the New Mexico state juvenile detention center to 250 youths (ages 12-18) which uses dance to teach literacy, math, and conflict resolution skills. Working closely with professional dancers who serve as instructors as well as mentors, this program also increases self-confidence by encouraging youth to find their own voice and express it through choreography and performance. Once released from jail, youth have the option to continue with Keshet in a Post-Release Program which provides free dance activities, a support system removed from the community which inspired past behavior, and one-on-one mentors to help the youth negotiate the difficult transition from incarceration back into the community and their lives.

SHAKESPEARE REMIX PROGRAM

Epic Theatre Ensemble

New York, NY

Epic Theatre Ensemble's Shakespeare Remix program produces professional quality Shakespeare productions with underserved students from two New York City Public High

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Schools. Shakespeare Remix students conquer Shakespearean text while developing the tools necessary to re-interpret and perform Shakespeare's plays for their schools, parents, and communities. Each year, this rigorous after-school program engages students in text analysis, professional mentorship, and civic engagement, as they develop literacy, communication, and leadership skills. At the Chelsea Career & Shakespeare Remix program has transformed the loves of the participating students, by providing an opportunity to work within a professional theatre context—one that is both rigorous and nurturing, one that provides an opportunity to bond with peers and connect to adult mentors, and one that looks to the past while building a bridge to the future.

GIRLS WRITE NOW MENTORING PROGRAM

Girls Write Now, Inc.

New York, NY

Since 1998, Girls Write Now (GRN) has helped nearly 2,500 at-risk girls from NYC's public high schools develop into the next generation of writers and readers. Fiction, poetry, playwrighting, memoir, and journalism are used to explore issues and themes such as social justice, gender, race, and religion. Forty high school girls with emerging writing talent are custom-matched with professional women writers who serve as personal mentors and writing coaches, meeting weekly for an entire school year, and for up to four years.

NEW URBAN ARTS

Project New Urban Arts

Providence, RI

Founded in 1997, New Urban Arts is an interdisciplinary community art studio and gallery in Providence, RI for high school students and emerging artists. Its mission is to build a vital community that empowers young people as artists and leaders to develop a creative practice they can sustain throughout their lives. We cultivate mentoring relationships between artists and urban youth in free, year-round out-of-school programs. Most of our students are from Providence's highest-poverty neighborhoods and attend public schools with little to no access to the arts. Despite these challenges, well over 90% of their students find New Urban Arts as a safe environment where they develop confidence, build strong relationships with adult mentors and improve as artists. Last year, 100% of seniors were accepted to over 30 college and universities including the Rhode Island School of Design, University of Rhode Island, Tufts University, and Holy Cross.

YOUNG ARTISTS APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Blaffer Gallery, University of Houston

Houston, TX

Established in 1998, Blaffer Gallery's Young Artist Apprenticeship Program brings an intensive art-making experience to at-risk high sophomores, juniors, and seniors. This free

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comprehensive after-school program meets four days a week for six weeks each fall and spring and targets teenagers from neighboring schools with limited economic resources. The YAAP matches 8-12 teenagers with two Artist Mentors, who are accomplished professional artists and teachers. Guided by the Artist Mentors, YAAP students work together to create art informed by a current Blaffer Gallery exhibitions. Students also interact with University of Houston students, meet museum staff, and take field trips to area museums. The students learn the value of leadership and teamwork as they solve increasingly complex problems through brainstorming, sketching, and small initial assignments. YAAP students develop skills to create ambitious final projects, often collaborative in nature, which expand on their ideas and techniques. YAAP culminates in an exhibition and awards ceremony, during which one student receives a \$1,000 scholarship and another is awarded \$500.

PLAYHOUSE APPRENTICESHIP

The Old Brick Playhouse Company Elkins, WV

Established in 1992, the OBP Apprentice Program aims to provide a safe, positive environment where youth can explore the arts through after-school programming. This six month long program culminates in a main-stage performance featuring each Apprentice student. The mentor based curriculum provides bi-weekly workshops on various aspects of theatre focusing on collaboration, leadership, problem solving, character development, and expanding one's self-esteem. Originally designed for twenty students, the program has grown in enrollment to eight-three students and fifteen hundred alumni. OBP Apprentices can participate in *Acting Up Literally*, weekly sessions in which they serve as tutors for elementary students who are having difficulty learning to read. Finally, the OBP Apprentice Program offers each participating student support by providing assistance with college selection and admittance, seeking out and applying for college scholarships, and finding employment opportunities in the arts.

International Programs

Mexico

ESTRELLAS CON ANGEL

Campeche

The dance group Estrellas con Ángel (Stars with Angel) focuses on children with Down's syndrome. Participants, who range in age from 7 to 36, attend two workshops a week, learning both traditional and contemporary dances, while polishing their performance skills. This is one of the outstanding programs of the La Chácara Children's Cultural Center in Campeche on the Yucatan Peninsula. The cultural center also offers exhibitions, workshops, and performances for children and youth, including those that are incarcerated, living on the streets or in orphanages.

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RADIOMBLIGO

Chiapas

Chiapas, in southeastern Mexico, is a largely rural area where many people live in poverty. The children's programs of Radiombligo are carried on the 10 stations that make up the state broadcasting system and they offer young people throughout the region an opportunity to hear the classic fairy tales of 18th century French author Charles Perrault, the music of the Austrian composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, or the songs of the Mexican composer Gabilondo Soler, known affectionately as "The Little Singing Cricket". One of the organization's longest-running programs is "Sirenas y Unicornios" (Mermaids and Unicorns). This hour-long show, broadcast five days a week, features literature and songs from around the globe.

China

GREEN PATH OF ART—ARTS TRAINING FOR YOUTH IN SICHUAN

Chengdu, Sichuan Province

Established in 1999 by the Sichuan Vocational Art College, the Green Path of Art, Arts Training for Youth in Sichuan Program was created to help students living in poverty pursue higher education and discover their creative potential through the arts. Immersed in the rich cultural heritage of Sichuan Province, the program offers vocational arts training in a number of disciplines, including opera, dance, and visual arts. With its experience of providing students with both academic and financial assistance, Green Path of Art offered psychological services and free performances to young people after the devastating 2008 earthquake. Their assistance enabled many students to continue their education and prepare for their college entrance exams. Over the past 10 years, the Green Path of Art Program has served 2,020 students in the region.

Egypt

ALWAN WA AWTAR

Cairo, Egypt

Alwan wa Awtar serves as a multidisciplinary laboratory for creativity in Muqqatum, a community outside Cairo. Diverse after-school and summer arts activities engage participants in a wide range of art forms. Disciplines encompass performing arts, such as theater and music lessons; visual arts, for example, painting, photography, and calligraphy; crafts, including needlepoint, basket weaving, candle making, and tie-dyeing; plus literary arts, such as storytelling. By recognizing the poverty in which the participants live, the program strives to impart life skills that will enable the youth to become productive adults and engaged members of the community who contribute to improving the quality of life for themselves, their families, and their neighbors.