



FY24 Annual Report

# Young Playwrights' Theater

# My Body is Mine!

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Our programs and productions are made possible by community support. Join us in inspiring young people to realize the power of their own voices.



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# About YPT

Founded in 1995 by celebrated playwright Karen Zacarías, Young Playwrights' Theater (YPT) inspires young people to realize the power of their own voices. Because everyone deserves high-quality theater education that centers their voices, YPT provides inspiration, tools, and opportunities for young and emerging artists to develop and share their stories. We prioritize young people who are targeted by systems of oppression, and we also collaborate with people of all ages who are invested in the ways that theater can transform lives and communities. YPT believes that young people are inherently brilliant, and we exist to share that brilliance with the world.

**Our Mission**  
Young Playwrights' Theater inspires young people to realize the power of their own voices.



*"It gave me pride to watch something that we started from scratch turn into a full-on performance."*  
— 2023-24 YPT Playwright



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# From the Executive Director



Dear Friends of YPT,

Do you remember the first time you experienced the magic of theater? If you are like me, you learned the power of theater at a young age. Perhaps you've even had the opportunity to be a playwright – experiencing the joy of watching actors breathe life into your story. No matter your personal connection to the performing arts, you know firsthand that participating in theater is powerful.

At YPT, we believe everyone deserves high-quality theater education that centers their voice. Our playwriting and theater education programs boost confidence and personal resilience, inspire creativity, and create lifelong memories, often providing our students with their very first theater experience.

Thanks to your support throughout the 2023-24 year, YPT provided more than 200 creative writing and theater education classes for 800 elementary, middle, high school, and college-aged youth across the Washington, DC region. We also produced a season of student showcases and theatrical productions for more than 500 audience members. These performances largely centered on the theme of bodily autonomy. On stages around the DC region, our young playwrights explored what it means to be free in their bodies, telling stories of wellness, justice, and celebrating the skin you're in.

Over the last year, YPT continued to provide mentorship, career development, and paid work opportunities for young people pursuing careers in theater through the **Young Playwrights in Progress (YPIP)** mentorship program and our partnership with the Arts Institute for Creative Advancement, a technical theater job training program for young people who are out of school and out of work. Notably, our spring production of **Silence is Violence: Wish Me Well** featured the work of seven young playwrights, primarily YPT alumni, and was stage managed by Howard University student, Ty'Ree Davis.

We hope you enjoy reviewing highlights and photos from the past year in this annual report. None of these achievements would be possible without you. Thank you, as always, for believing in the power of theater and the brilliance of young people.

In gratitude,

Brigitte Winter  
Executive Director



Thank  
you for  
all your  
support!



## FY24 Highlights

### YPT's Biggest Program Year Yet

In 2023-24, YPT's Program Team provided an unprecedented 200 in-school, after-school, and summer classes for more than 800 young people across the DC region. These classes were primarily taught by YPT's two full-time Program Associates, and many of these programs spanned the full year. Notably, YPT collaborated with Washington School for Girls to build their first in-school drama program, providing students with their only arts engagement during the school day.

*"The biggest benefit of having Young Playwrights' Theater work with our girls this year has been watching them go from really unsure of this area of the arts... to completely diving in, and I hope they take that approach of taking good, safe, risks with them to high school."*

– Abigail Greer, former WSG principal

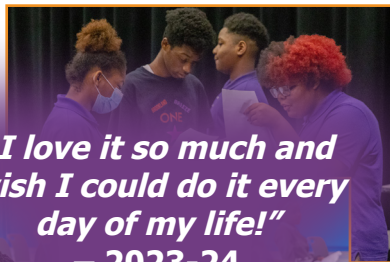
### Watch Here!

Check out a brief overview of our work with Washington School for Girls on our Virtual Stage!



### The First-ever Playspiration Festival

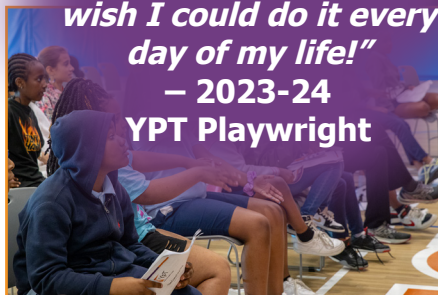
In May and June 2024, YPT's partner schools participated in the first-ever **Playspiration Festival**. Through the Playspiration Festival, YPT paired each participating school with a partner school to develop original plays starting from a shared point of inspiration. Then, through a series of field trips, the students performed their plays for one another! This ambitious and inspiring collaboration featured ten different performances of original work by elementary, middle, and high school students over two very busy months.



*"I love it so much and wish I could do it every day of my life!"*

– 2023-24

YPT Playwright





## Silence is Violence: Wish Me Well

In June 2024, YPT Artistic Director Farah Lawal Harris presented the ninth annual installment of **Silence is Violence**, YPT's social justice performance series, at the Prince George's Community College Center for the Performing Arts. **Silence is Violence: Wish Me Well** continued YPT's exploration of what it means to be free in your own body. YPT contracted seven young playwrights for this production, many of whom were YPT alumni. Through a partnership with Voices Unbarred, these playwrights interviewed formerly incarcerated Community Advocates about their experiences of wellness, writing short plays inspired by their conversations. Thembi Duncan and Jeremy Keith Hunter directed a company of career actors to bring these stories to life, and Howard University student Ty'Ree Davis stage managed the production. The Community Advocates from Voices Unbarred shared the stage with YPT actors, performing their own original poetry and music to kick off the show each night.



**Watch Here!**  
 Watch the full performance on YPT's Virtual Stage!



# The Young Playwrights' Ovation Showcase



In February 2024, YPT presented the **Young Playwrights' Ovation Showcase: my.self** at the Prince George's Community College Center for the Performing Arts to an excited audience of YPT community members, including students, families, alumni, friends, and playwrights. Student playwrights across YPT's in-school, after-school, and summer programs contributed work to this production, exploring the theme of bodily autonomy and the question, "What if we were free in our own bodies?" The production was directed by YPT Education Director Jared Shamberger and performed by a company of career actors over a weekend of performances presented in-person and via livestream on YPT's new virtual stage.

## Watch Here!

Enjoy the full performance on YPT's website.



# Young Playwrights in Progress

Through the **Young Playwrights in Progress** mentorship program, YPT produced a sold-out professional reading of **Dresses That Twirl** at Busboys and Poets in Takoma to a full house of community members, students, artists, and activists. Playwright Amira Al Amin spent the last year working with YPT Artistic Director Farah Lawal Harris to develop and strengthen an original play through research, dramaturgy, and private readings by professional actors. **Dresses That Twirl** chronicles the friendship and eventual romantic relationship between two teenage girls living in the 1960s, and the joys and hardships they experience as the scrutiny of their world threatens to break them apart.



**"I don't think I could ever stop writing."  
– Amira Al Amin**



**Watch Here!**

Enjoy the full reading on YPT's Virtual Stage.







## YPT's Purple Prom Fundraiser

In May 2024, the YPT community came together at Mess Hall DC for an unforgettable night of fun, glamor, and celebration at the Purple Promenade. This spectacular fundraiser invited YPT supporters to don their best duds and redo their high school prom memories as the unique people they are today. Guests enjoyed an open bar, hors d'oeuvres, games, and a silent auction. Guests danced the night away and raised funds to create life-changing performing arts memories for young people across the DC region.



Thank you to Capital For Children, GRF CPAs & Advisors, Nexxis Solutions, and KPMG for making this magical night possible!



## Thank You 5!

To celebrate all that we accomplished this year, YPT launched our Thank You 5! campaign the last week of June 2024, which raised more than \$7,500 to support our summer programming! In the theater world, saying "Thank you 5" is a way to show appreciation to the people behind the scenes who make performing arts magic happen. YPT is a small but mighty organization, and every donation counts. That's why everyone who gave as little as \$5 or as much as \$5,000 was invited to a special happy hour at Metrobar that brought together YPT donors, staff, and board members for a night of fun and celebration. Thank you to everyone who donated and made our last campaign of the year a huge success!



## Virtual Stage Launch

To continue in our effort to make theater experiences accessible to everyone, YPT launched our Virtual Stage, along with an updated website! On this stage, we've been able to livestream all of our public performances from the 2023-24 season, making the work of our young playwrights more accessible than ever before.

Watch all our public performances here!





# FY24 By the Numbers

YPT REACHED:

**800 + 500**

STUDENTS

AUDIENCE  
MEMBERS



**82.1%** of our students are youth of color.

**64.4%** are Black.

**13.3%** are Latine.

**17.9%** are white.

**4.4%** of our students are from other ethnic/racial backgrounds.

**12.3%** are English Language Learners.

**16%** receive special education support.

**75%** align with the DC Office of State Superintendent for Education's definition of "At-Risk."



Our playwriting programs served eight schools in Spring 2023 and went up to thirteen in Spring 2024.



11 of the 13 partner schools have specifically requested to continue working with YPT for the FY25 school year.

Livestream attendance accounted for 20% of YPT's total audience reach in FY24.



93% of students reported that YPT's programs were fun!



88% of students said YPT inspired them to think creatively.



93% of students said they felt more confident after working with YPT.

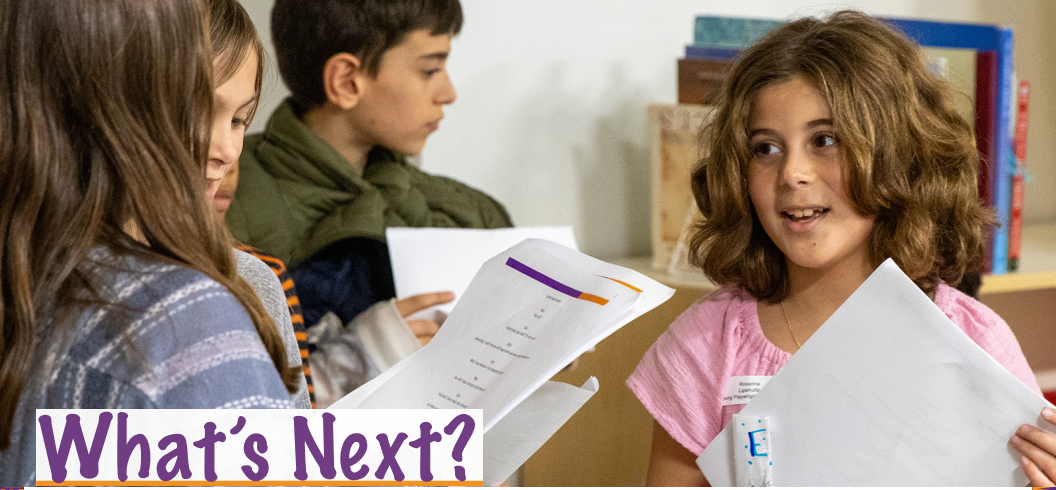
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90% of students would tell their friends and other students about participating in YPT programs.



**STAY IN THE KNOW!**  
Keep up with YPT throughout the year by subscribing to our monthly newsletter.





# What's Next?

## Celebrate World Pride with YPT

We are excited to announce that our 2024-25 season will center World Pride! With 2025 marking the 50th anniversary of Pride in Washington, DC, and our city hosting the annual World Pride, we want our work to amplify the voices of young people in the DMV through the performing arts. Through our work this year, we hope to help young people realize they have so much to celebrate about themselves and deserve to be proud of who they are!

## Dinner and a Show with Busboys and Poets

YPT is premiering a season of dinner theater productions this year at Busboys and Poets in Takoma DC. The season will launch on Saturday, October 12, 2024, with a staging of **Riot: The Beat of Freddie Gray** by 2024 Young Playwrights in Progress featured playwright Ty'Ree Davis. This performance will be followed by a listening party for the new **Silence is Violence Podcast** in February 2025, **Silence is Violence: Liberation** in March 2025, and **Silence is Violence: "Dear Mom..."** in May 2025. We hope to see you for dinner and a show this season!

## The Ovation Showcase is Going Virtual

In November 2024 and April 2025, YPT's young playwrights will take over our Virtual Stage for month-long celebrations of YPT programs through the **Ovation Showcase!** Every day of the week will feature new photos, videos, and other content fresh from YPT classrooms, and audience members will have an opportunity to flex their own creative muscles by responding to weekly creative writing prompts on YPT's social media. Join YPT's email list and follow us on Instagram and Facebook **"@yptdc"** so you don't miss out on the fun.

## Playwrights Who Brunch

This year, YPT will present **Playwrights Who Brunch**, a new program introducing young LGBTQ writers to a variety of leaders, artists, and activists in DC's LGBTQ community. Through a series of intergenerational dialogues – over brunch! – the young writers will explore LGBTQ history and current events, and imagine the future together. They will write dramatic work inspired by these conversations, which will be performed by career actors at a celebratory brunch event during DC Black Pride on Saturday, May 24, 2025.

## YPT's Fall 2024 Events and Productions

### Theatre Week Kickoff Fest

Arena Stage  
1101 6th St SW, Washington, DC

Sept. 28  
1-5pm

### Takoma Park Street Festival

Carroll Avenue, Takoma Park MD to Carroll Street NW, Washington DC

Oct. 6  
10am-5pm

### Riot: The Beat of Freddie Gray by Ty'Ree Davis

*A Young Playwrights  
in Progress Performance*  
Busboys & Poets (Takoma)  
235 Carroll St NW, Washington, DC

Oct. 12  
6:30pm Dinner  
8pm Performance

### From-Home Fest

YPT's Virtual Stage

Oct. 26 - Nov. 3

### The Young Playwrights' Fall Ovation Showcase

YPT's Virtual Stage

The month  
of November

## YPT's Spring 2025 Events and Productions

### Silence is Violence

#### Podcast Listening Party

Busboys & Poets (Takoma)  
235 Carroll St NW, Washington, DC

Feb. 20  
7pm Dinner  
8pm Performance

### Silence Is Violence: Liberation

Busboys & Poets (Takoma)  
235 Carroll St NW, Washington, DC

March 15  
6pm Dinner  
7pm Performance

### The Young Playwrights' Spring Ovation Showcase

YPT's Virtual Stage

The Month  
of April

### Silence is Violence: "Dear Mom..."

Busboys & Poets (Takoma)  
235 Carroll St NW, Washington, DC

May 10  
6pm Performance  
7:30pm Dinner

### Playwrights Who Brunch: A DC Black Pride Celebration

TBD

May 24  
12-3pm

### World Pride Festival & Concert

Pennsylvania Avenue  
& National Mall

June 7-8



# FY24 Donors

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Kaitlin Athmer

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Jill DeNinno & Jamie Cavanaugh

Myra Cephas

Duncan Chaplin

Emily Charles

Chelsey Christensen

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Beth Francesco  
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Courtney Froemming\*  
Amy Gambrill  
Phillip Genera  
Dirk Gifford  
Jeffrey Gilliland  
Sarah Glynn  
Avery Harmier  
James "Tony" Harris  
Jessica Henry

Joel A. Henry  
Brenna Hill  
Darrica Hill  
Bruce Hirsh  
Alison Drucker and Tom Holzman  
Asia Honablue  
Mike Honig  
Emily Huesman  
Shantrell Huffman  
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Michone Johnson Ingraham  
Robert Johnson  
Latisha Jones  
Courtney Knowles  
Glenn & Noreen Kozeluh  
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\* Donors that have scheduled recurring donations to YPT

While we do our best to be accurate, if you notice a mistake please contact Development Director Brenna Hill at [bhill@yptdc.org](mailto:bhill@yptdc.org).



# FY24 Sponsors



AerieReal Foundation

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Learn24 Office of Out of School Time

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# Our Team

## Administration

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## SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

Young Playwrights' Theater is looking for volunteers to fill a variety of roles during fundraisers and other events! If you or anyone you know may be interested in volunteering, scan the QR Code and fill out our volunteer interest form.



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# Our Board

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## Join the YPT Board!

For more information, contact Executive Director Brigitte Winter at [bwinter@yptdc.org](mailto:bwinter@yptdc.org)





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