

YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS' THEATER

FY25 ANNUAL REPORT



Young Playwrights' Theater

Our Mission

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

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.



Stay Connected

Keep up with YPT's latest performances, programs, and events by subscribing to our newsletter and following us on social media!

@yptdc



Scan here to
subscribe to YPT's
newsletter.



From YPT's Executive Director



For the young artists of Young Playwrights' Theater (YPT), creative writing is a tool to build imagination and resilience, important skills for architecting a better future. Now more than ever, youth voices are vital in public discourse about that future, a future that is, after all, theirs to dream.

At YPT, we believe that everyone deserves a high-quality theater education that centers their voice. Our playwriting and theater education programs boost confidence and critical thinking, teach literacy skills, and create lifelong memories, often providing our students with their very first theater experience.

**"YPT made
me confident to
say more things in
class. It made me
less anxious."**

Thanks to your support throughout our 2024 - 2025 season, YPT provided nearly 1,000 hours of creative writing and theater education workshops for 795 elementary, middle, high school, and college-aged youth across the Washington, DC region.

We also produced nearly 40 theatrical performances and showcases, sharing the brilliant work of our youth playwrights.

None of these achievements would be possible without you. Again and again, you have shown up for YPT and our young artists when we've needed you, and we are so incredibly grateful. In this uncertain time, it means the world to have your support, your care, and your joy, and I can't wait to see you at a YPT event soon.

In the next year, YPT is proud to turn 30. We did not have the opportunity to celebrate our first 25 years when we hit that milestone in 2020, right at the start of the global COVID-19 pandemic, so we are looking forward to celebrating three decades of inspiration with you in a big way. Stay tuned for details.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy reviewing highlights and photos from our past season in this annual report. Thank you, as always, for believing in the power of theater and the brilliance of young people.

In gratitude,

Brigitte Winter
Executive Director

**"...It's so
liberating to be able to
tell our story, especially as
young people. Being around
people who not only want the
best for you, but they also
uplift you and
themselves."**

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FY25 Highlights

Dresses That Twirl at CHAW

Playwright Amira Al Amin was back in the YPT offices this year with a whole new take on her play ***Dresses That Twirl***, which chronicles the relationship between two teenage girls and their mothers living in the 1960s. The girls must make difficult decisions about how to maintain their dynamic when the scrutiny of their world threatens to break them apart.

Amira was invited to workshop her play through a Kennedy Center REACH artist's residency, which YPT was unfortunately forced to cancel after many of the Kennedy Center's Social Impact staff members were laid off this spring. Luckily, thanks to our friends at Capitol Hill Arts Workshop (CHAW), we were able to give this brilliant playwright the stage and spotlight she deserves.



"I learned that my talent is palpable. That I have the capacity to create true human characters and portray the emotions that I aim to do – relatable, queer characters that are holistic. I learned that if I impress myself that I'm bound to impress others."

– Playwright Amira Al Amin

With the help of a week-long workshop with actors led by YPT Artistic Director Farah Lawal Harris and Production Manager Keta Newborn, Amira was able to add a brand new perspective to ***Dresses That Twirl*** that stemmed from her personal experiences in debutante society and the pressures legacies can add to already complicated feelings and situations. This brought an even more powerful performance to the CHAW stage during a live reading.



Watch the live recording of ***Dresses That Twirl*** on YPT's Virtual Stage!



Playspiration Hits the Big Screen

For FY25, we expanded our Young Playwrights' Workshop and Playspiration Festival to include video production! Through careful planning and coordination from Program Manager Madison Chapman, leadership from Education Director Jared Shamberger, and filming and editing by Communications Manager Cody Bahn, we recorded and produced three professional videos featuring plays written and performed by our Workshop students. These students worked with YPT teaching artists all year to learn the art of playwriting, and then they collaborated to create, rehearse, and perform original plays, all starting from shared points of inspiration. We then premiered videos of all of these performances at Kimball Elementary School, Brookland Middle School, and Garfield Elementary School so that each of our classes could celebrate one another's work!



YPT at CHEC



This year, YPT returned to Columbia Heights Education Campus (CHEC) with an exciting opportunity to provide playwriting classes for middle- and high-school students four days a week for a full school year. CHEC was one of YPT's very first program partners after our founding in 1995, and it's a joy to return to our roots as YPT turns 30 in the next year. YPT Program Associate Rodney Johnson Jr. taught all four of our weekly programs at CHEC, which allowed him to develop a deep and trusting relationship with the students. Having time to form that relationship had a noticeable effect on the success of the program at CHEC, and we're excited to continue our partnership!

Sigworks in the Schools 2025

YPT was proud to partner with Signature Theatre for SigWorks In the Schools 2025.

SigWorks in the Schools identifies and develops burgeoning high school playwrights attending Arlington, Virginia Public Schools. Five students were selected for the program, several of whom were applying their writing skills to playwriting for the very first time. They then worked with YPT Education Director Jared Shamberger to craft original ten-minute plays, which were performed by professional actors at a live reading at Signature Theatre in April.

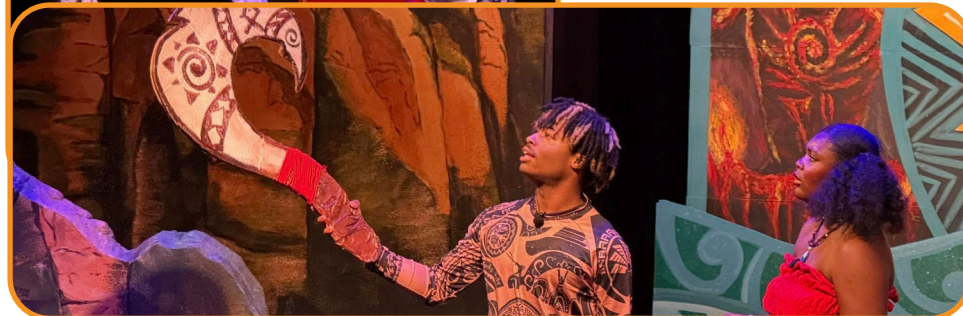


We are thrilled to have worked with Signature Theatre this year, and we look forward to growing this partnership in years to come.

Moana at SEED



One of YPT's key school partners, The SEED Public Charter School of Washington DC, was selected in 2025 as an inaugural Disney on Broadway School of Excellence partner! As a result, SEED and YPT worked together to produce **Moana**. In addition to rehearsing conventional acting and performance skills, the students engaged in writing and dramaturgy activities, deepening their understanding of the context of the play through self-reflection and creative exploration.





YPT's Residency at

This year, we were excited to host a dinner theater performance series at Busboys and Poets Takoma, just down the street from the YPT office! We were proud to produce two performances of new work by young playwrights, as well as a community writing workshop, for audiences who arrived early to enjoy food, drinks, and fellowship and stayed late for conversation about the themes of the plays.

RIOT! The Beat of Freddie Gray by Ty'Ree Hope Davis

The house was packed on October 12, 2024 for *RIOT! The Beat of Freddie Gray* by Ty'Ree Hope Davis. This powerful and engaging solo performance took the audience on a journey through the life and memories of Freddie Gray, told from the perspective of two characters: Freddie Gray and Ty, a middle school student who witnessed Freddie's murder. The audience was on the edge of their seats chanting, "Go Freddie. Go Freddie. Go!" in step with Ty'Ree. Thanks to a Childrens Theatre Foundation of America Founders Grant, we are looking forward to working with Ty'Ree again in February 2026 to present *RIOT! The Beat of Freddie Gray* for a new audience at Everyman Theatre in Baltimore! Ty'Ree will perform opening night for an audience of Baltimore community members and then present several matinee performances for 500 Baltimore high school students. These matinees will also be broadcast to classrooms around the country, and YPT and Everyman Theatre will create and share a study guide to support students in deepening their understanding of the context and themes explored in the play.



Scan here to see Ty'Ree's original performance at Busboys and Poets!



Silence is Violence: Liberation



"I really appreciate places and spaces like YPT, because who else is giving young Black people a microphone, a stage, and lights and saying 'tell your story?'" – Playwright Karma Price

Our second performance at Busboys and Poets Takoma, *Silence is Violence: Liberation*, brought together Community Advocates from Voices Unbarred – an amazing initiative providing theater and justice workshops, script writing, and interactive performances to people affected by incarceration in the DC area – and three amazingly talented Howard University theatre students for a night of poetry, music, and solo performances. Diezel Braxton (*Games of America*), Joshua Leggett (*Nightstand Drawers*), Karma Price (*How To Refine Your Rage: An Etiquette Guide To Eloquent Anger*), and Voices Unbarred Community Advocates Big Gee Da Poet and Dev D'Ryan performed for another full house. They each brought their own vision of liberation and self-mastery to life that night.



Scan here to watch *Silence is Violence: Liberation*

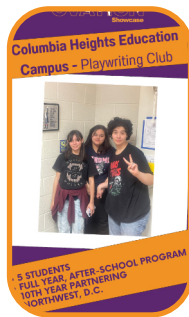


Liberation Writing Workshop

In early 2025, YPT Artistic Director Farah Lawal Harris and Production Manager Keta Newborn hosted a one-night community writing workshop at Busboys and Poets Takoma, which helped take attendees on a journey of self-exploration and defining freedom for themselves. Writers who attended the workshop said they found the experience healing and affirming. Discovering new avenues and thoughts about freedom and creativity during this workshop gave writers stronger confidence in their writing and ability to "be themselves" as artists.

The Young Playwrights' Ovation Showcase

In Fall 2024 and again in Spring 2025, the Young Playwrights' Ovation Showcase took over our Instagram and Facebook accounts for a full month. These months were filled with photos of student artwork, short videos featuring play rehearsals, and a lot more! This exclusive social media showcase gave our followers a chance to see and engage with our students' work and showcased all the amazing things our teaching artists and students work on throughout the year.



From-Home Fest

YPT was proud to participate in From-Home Fest this year! We brought ***Silence is Violence: The Future of the Field*** to a whole new audience for this 10-day, fully virtual festival. YPT is committed to making theater more accessible, and being a part of something as amazing as From-Home Fest helped us connect with new audience members, many of whom are unable to attend in-person performances. We're looking forward to the next festival in 2026.

The Resilience PLAYlist

The beginning of 2025 was very challenging for YPT and our community. In response, YPT Executive Director Brigitte Winter and Operations Specialist Tristan Willis shared care and inspiration by publishing YPT's very first interactive zine, the YPT Resilience PLAYlist. This zine included curated selections of monologues, poems, and other dramatic writing by young playwrights throughout YPT's history, accompanied by activities inviting readers to build their own resilience through creativity. The zine was a big hit with the YPT community and brought many of us some peace and fun when we needed it!

Download the Resilience PLAYlist!



Bites & Bops

Thanks to our community and efforts from board and staff, we had a successful spring "joyraiser" culminating in a party for our community members! The Bites & Bops campaign focused on celebrating the brilliance and resilience of DC youth and their community. Donors to the campaign were also able to contribute songs to a community playlist that we played throughout the night at Chicken & Whiskey 14th Street, where YPT board and staff members spent time with some of our supporters.



CPAs & ADVISORS

GRF CPAs & Advisors is pleased to support the important work of Young Playwrights' Theater



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KPMG is proud to support the important work of Young Playwrights' Theater



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FY25 By the Numbers



YPT REACHED:

795 + **350**
STUDENTS AUDIENCE
MEMBERS



89% of our students are youth of color.

64% are Black.

20% are Latine.

11% are white.

3% of our students are from other ethnic/racial backgrounds.

15% 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."



YPT hosted 531 Workshops in FY25!



Across all the schools we worked with last year,
we totaled 963 program hours!

Livestream attendance accounted for 15%
of YPT's total audience reach in FY25.

LIVE



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



92% of students said YPT inspired them to think creatively.



94% of students said they felt more confident after working with YPT.

[Share](#)

98% of students would tell their friends and other
students about participating in YPT programs.



JOIN THE TEAM BY VOLUNTEERING

YPT is always looking for talented people to
lend their skills through volunteer opportunities.
Scan here to join our volunteer mailing list!

FY25 Donors



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

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CHILDREN



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your
light

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Our FY26 Team

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Our FY26 Board

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Interested in joining the YPT Board of Directors?
Email bwinter@yptdc.org to find out how!

Thank you to all our FY25 Employees who
have moved on to new opportunities!



Aszia Green
Production Assistant



Madison Chapman
Program Manager



Lauren Ihenachor
Program Associate

Thank you to our departing Board Chair Lemar White
for your amazing service. We are so grateful!



