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YOUNG AUDIENCES LAUNCHES
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR TEENS

BUFFALO, NY (March 11, 2015) – Young Audiences is launching its first ever workforce development program, ArtWorks. ArtWorks is a paid summer youth apprenticeship program in the arts for high school students ages 14-18 that reside in the City of Buffalo. ArtWorks gives students the opportunity to learn and practice essential 21st century career skills such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and problem solving skills, as well as the ability to think and work creatively with others.

This summer, Young Audiences will hire student apprentices to work in teams to flex their creative muscles and learn essential career skills while producing works of art. Youth Apprentice teams are divided by artistic discipline and work under the guidance of an ArtWorks Master Teaching Artist. Youth Apprentices can engage in art forms like visual art, creative writing, dance, and theatre.

"Youth are capable of becoming powerful influences within our world," said Aitina Fareed Cooke, Education Coordinator at Young Audiences. "Our desire is to give them hands-on job readiness, communication, and collaboration skills for them to pursue their purpose and propel them towards success. The ArtWorks program will act as a platform, to elevate young minds to think creatively beyond their own expectations, to become positive and proactive leaders, and to inspire others."

ArtWorks is made possible by the John R. Oishei Foundation and New Your State Council for the Arts through the Regional Economic Development Consolidated funding process. Additional support is provided by private and public support including support from Buffalo City Council President Darius Pridgen, Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, City of Buffalo, Cornell University ILR School Fellowships, Current Catering, Erie County, and United Way of Buffalo & Erie County

“Providing practical exercises for creative problem solving and team building – as well as practical knowledge about holding a job – is critical to the overall learning students have to do for the emerging workplace,” said Robert D Gioia, president of the Oishei Foundation. “Using the arts as a platform for this learning has been shown to be effective, and we’re happy to support this effort.”

The apprenticeship teams will meet four days per week, Monday – Thursday, for six weeks (July 6 – August 14, 10 am – 3 pm). Once hired, youth apprentices will attend a formal orientation. Apprentices will then report to work at the Buffalo & Erie County Library, 1 Lafayette Square, Downtown Buffalo. Youth applications are due by May 1st at 4 pm. Application Assistance Workshops for youth will be Friday, March 27th, 4:30-5:30pm at the Downtown Library (Central Meeting Room) and Saturday, April 11th, 10-11am at the Downtown Library (West Room).

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Young Audiences is also seeking innovative curriculum proposals from teaching artists, as well as Youth Coordinators to assist apprentice teams. Curriculum proposals from artists of all disciplines will be considered. Proposals that integrate technology, highlight community revitalization or interdisciplinary practices are encouraged. **Master Teaching Artist Proposals and Youth Coordinator Applications are due Friday, April 17th by 4 pm.**

For more information visit [yawny.org/latest-news/artworks](http://yawny.org/latest-news/artworks)

ArtWorks is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislator.

The John R. Oishei Foundation strives to be a catalyst for change to enhance economic vitality and quality of life for the Buffalo Niagara region through grantmaking, leadership and network building. The Foundation was established in 1940 by John R. Oishei, founder of Trico Products Corporation.

**ABOUT YOUNG AUDIENCES:** Young Audiences of Western New York’s mission is to make the visual, performing, and literary arts a part of young people’s lives in order to enhance their development as creative and productive human beings. They provide services in Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, and Wyoming counties. Every day, they fulfill their mission through performances, workshops, and residencies in educational, cultural, and community centers. Young Audiences of Western New York celebrated 50 years of service in 2013.

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