



Young
Audiences
Arts for
Learning
Western New York

For Immediate Release
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Young Audiences of Western New York (YA-WNY) announces development of the *Underground Railroad in Western New York Residency*, a multi-disciplinary program to benefit area children and people of all ages.

-- Buffalo, NY – November 2, 2009 -- Young Audiences of Western New York is developing its new Underground Railroad in Western New York Residency, with generous support from the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo.

The workshops and performances in the *Underground Railroad Project* will be designed to increase community understanding regarding racial and ethnic disparities, and cultivate literacy skills. Once the development stage is completed, the program may include music, theater, visual and literary workshops, in a multi-week residency setting. Students and their families will learn about the role of the Underground Railroad in American history, and about the impact slavery and its legacy has in society. Additional focus will be placed on the local history and relevance of the events on our culture today.

Annette Daniels-Taylor, playwright, actress and poet, is the lead teaching artist for the project. Daniels-Taylor has already created content that successfully increases community understanding of racial and ethnic disparities, with her award winning play, "A Little Bit of Paradise," premiered by Road Less Traveled Productions in 2008.

"Adults and children today all want to be entertained; they relate so much to all kinds of media," said Daniels-Taylor. "Using music, dance, theater and visual arts to teach history, and particularly the history of the Underground Railroad, is an effective way to immediately connect the information with the audience—students or adults."

The *Underground Railroad Residency* will focus on 5th and 8th grade curriculums for schools; all ages (children and adults) for community centers and libraries; and professional development for teachers. The residency will be modeled on Young Audiences' successful Erie Canal Residency, which includes theatrical and music performances, a traveling museum, and writing workshops.

In addition, Ujima Co., Inc. has committed to the project. Ujima will provide deeper links to the African American artistic community. It has also committed its Loft Theatre, on Elmwood Avenue, as a venue to provide in-process workshops, open to the public, in Feb.-March 2010. YA-WNY is still seeking funding for this aspect of the project. In collaboration with Young Audiences staff, Ujima Artistic Director Lorna C. Hill will mentor project artists who are new to teaching artist field.

Young Audiences is issuing a call to area African American artists who may have an interest in becoming teaching artists. Such individuals or groups are invited to contact the organization at 881-0917 or info@yawny.org. They should provide a one-page proposal, and a brief work sample (DVD, CD, images, or written work), of an arts-based, 45-minute workshop or performance about the Underground Railroad's role in WNY history. The deadline for these submissions is November 30.

Images of Annette Daniels-Taylor may be found on Flickr, user name Young Audiences WNY or at this link: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/42060677@N07/tags/annette/>

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YA-WNY will also consult with other area organizations and leaders in the fields of education, WNY history, and the presentation of programming on the Underground Railroad to further enrich historical material and the experience it is able to provide. These partners are in the process of being confirmed.

YA-WNY is honored to be the recipient of funding from the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, which is celebrating its 90th anniversary this year. During the past 90 years, CFGB donors have directed more than \$100 million to charitable causes. Working with the Foundation these causes have helped improve literacy rates in the City of Buffalo, built Kleinhans Music Hall, and lead efforts to improve our region's natural and historic resources.

Founded in 1962, Young Audiences WNY programming is designed around the fact that an arts-rich education provides a child with the ability to look beyond facts and figures; to creatively meet new challenges as they arise. Plus, the arts make learning fun. Introducing curriculum-supportive, arts-based learning provides a varied and compelling environment--engage even the most reluctant learners and give day-dreamers a classroom as rich as their imagination.

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