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Skylight Music Theatre's KidsWrites Program

You are making a difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of children who benefit from UPAF-funded arts education programming! Here is just one program where your gift has made an impact.

[KidsWrites](#) is a free in-school arts education program that builds confidence, creativity, and a sense of teamwork. Skylight teaching artists lead creative writing workshops for elementary and middle school students in the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) to generate writing that could be performed.

Two-day creative writing workshops in the fall integrate music, movement, and theatre to inspire students to write their own pieces based on a common theme. A team of professional composers and Skylight performers then transform some of the 1,500 works of student writing created during those workshops into a professional musical theatre revue that tours schools throughout Greater Milwaukee in the spring.



Skylight's 2015-16 KidsWrites program invited students to write on the theme "Before and After."
Click the video above to see three of the resulting songs!

Skylight's Education Manager, Margaret Bridges, tells us what MPS students have been writing about on this year's KidsWrites theme, "Power":

"Initially, the students seem to jump to super heroes. And that's great, but we guide them to think beyond that to real powers and the powers that the kids themselves have. Kids are also thinking about power dynamic: Who has power over them and where do they have power? Why is that? Is it fair?"

A lot of kids are writing about the election and about powerful people in the news. One girl spoke about Malala Yousafzai and how she uses her power to help people. On a more personal level, one middle school girl wrote that she feels like her single mother is a super hero because of all of the things she takes care of.

The topic has inspired kids to talk about themselves and how the things that make them unique and different can make them powerful. A lot of students talk about how being bilingual is really powerful.

You always get students who deal with hard emotions through these writing workshops. We are seeing a lot of stories about powers that students wish they had: 'I wish I had the power to make everyone like me or the power to have a



The cast of *KidsWrites: Before and After* with student writers

specific talent.' It has been interesting to see the wide range of scenes and songs that students are writing inspired by the idea of power.

What I really like about the touring show in the spring is the chance for the students to just sit and enjoy what they accomplished in the writing workshops. Having professional composers and performers put that time in to create and perform the show is our way of showing respect to the student writers - honoring the hard work that they did."

Skylight music theatre

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