



## Milwaukee Chamber Theatre Does It Again, Another Successful Young Playwrights Festival!

Milwaukee Chamber Theatre hosted their eighth Young Playwrights Festival (YPF) this May. The festival challenges teens from local high schools to create scripts for live theater and to compete for the opportunity to see their work directed and performed at the final showcase.

Participants are mentored by professionals who encourage the students to make their scripts as creative as possible.

Milwaukee Chamber Theatre's YPF is a unique opportunity to create lifelong friendships and hone skills that are relevant both on the stage, and in the real world as well.



### Read on for personal stories from people involved in the most recent Young Playwrights Festival:

#### **Malaina Moore, Student Finalist**

Malaina Moore was a student participant in this year's YPF. Through hard work and dedication, her script "This Just In," a story about two boys mourning the loss of their friend killed by the police, was directed and performed at the final showcase.

Malaina is 19 years old and was born and raised on Milwaukee's North Side. She is now a student at Marquette University majoring in Theater and minoring in Social Welfare and Justice.

As a kid, there weren't many opportunities for her to explore theater. YPF presented Malaina with the chance to obtain a deeper knowledge and respect for the art and ultimately, the opportunity to pursue a passion she loves.



Malaina is now a confident playwright with a new desire to write creatively. She is a firm believer in using the arts as a platform to speak about important issues. "Being an African American artist, it is important to me to address black issues, which is where I found inspiration for my script," said Malaina.

Being the only social justice-themed play in the showcase, Malaina was nervous when her play premiered. Her fears quickly subsided when was greeted with compliments and congratulations for putting an artistic view on a important issue.

## **Carrie Baker, Young Playwright Mentor**



Carrie Baker is no stranger to Milwaukee Chamber Theatre's YPF. She has been working with the program for the past seven years and has mentored more than 120 students including one of this year's showcase finalists, Kyle Radomski, creator of "Pride & Pancakes." Being part of a program that gives teens an amazing, creative outlet has been a rewarding experience for Carrie.

"I love giving students the opportunity to develop a work of theater about a theme or issue they feel passionate about," said Carrie. "Often students feel they don't have a voice in our society and the Young Playwrights Festival gives them that voice. It's always intriguing to hear what they feel connected to."

Carrie is a teacher and founder of the theater program at Reagan IB High School. There are over 250 students involved in theatre classes and 300 involved in extra-curricular performing arts at the school. This includes an annual Fall One Act Festival, an annual musical and a forensics team that routinely qualifies students to Nationals. Carrie is an advocate for the performing arts and she is certainly doing her part to make a positive impact in the community.

## **Marcella Kearns Associate Artistic Director**

Marcella Kearns is a Milwaukee-based actor, teaching artist, director and arts administrator. Before she began her career in Milwaukee, Marcella worked in the theater community in Buffalo, NY. She was also involved in the Ministry of Culture and Education in Vienna, Austria, where she completed a Fulbright Fellowship.

As the Associate Artistic Director at Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Marcella's responsibilities include successfully producing the YPF every year.

One of Marcella's favorite things about YPF is being able to engage with the students and to hear the inspiration for their scripts. One of Milwaukee Chamber Theatre's primary missions is to nurture upcoming, local artists. In the end, this is what YPF is all about.



"I encourage students to finish a work, to tell their truths; I take great joy in knowing that their stories are being carried to a wider audience," said Marcella.

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Congratulations to Milwaukee Chamber Theatre  
for another successful Young Playwrights Festival!

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