



THE FUND FOR *Transformative* THEATRE EDUCATION

IN HONOR OF DEB GOTTESMAN AND BUZZ MAURO

In 2017 The Theatre Lab celebrates **twenty-five years** of providing the Washington metro area with award-winning dramatic arts education and groundbreaking outreach programs for at-risk communities. The following pages describe The Theatre Lab's impact on our region and our plans for another twenty-five years of making a dramatic difference. We hope you will join us on this journey to make both the artistic and the real-life benefits of theatre training accessible to all.

MAKING A DRAMATIC DIFFERENCE
25
YEARS

The Theatre Lab
SCHOOL OF THE DRAMATIC ARTS



“I was nine years old when I started studying here. If it hadn’t been for The Theatre Lab **I would never have even dreamed of going to Juilliard** — let alone audition. I’m here to tell you that, when you give your support, it’s a really, really big deal.”

— **JAYME LAWSON**, THEATRE LAB SCHOLARSHIP STUDENT AND JULLIARD SOPHOMORE



(opposite) Jayme in front of billboard featuring her image at Juilliard. (above) Jayme in her first Theatre Lab show in 2009.

MEET JAYME

AT EIGHT YEARS OLD, Jayme was a thoughtful, shy young girl. She was also reeling after her parents' divorce. Her mother, Sherry, thought a camp at The Theatre Lab would be a safe, nurturing place for her to spend a few weeks of her summer around other children, and she successfully applied for a scholarship that helped cover the cost of the camp.

Jayme thrived at her first summer camp, immediately falling in love with acting and her instructors. She developed confidence and increased self-esteem that made her a stronger student at school.

Returning summer after summer, her experiences at The Theatre Lab made her confident enough to audition for Duke Ellington School of the Arts, a selective, pre-professional training school in DC for young artists. Her instructors at The Theatre Lab helped her prepare for the audition and wrote a letter of support for her application.

When she got into Duke Ellington, her teachers described her as a "force" in the classroom. They were impressed by her skill set and her familiarity with Shakespeare, something she learned at her very first acting camp at The Theatre Lab.

She returned to The Theatre Lab every summer throughout high school, taking on some of the most challenging classical and contemporary roles in dramatic literature.

Today Jayme is at Juilliard, pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Drama and loving every minute of it. And when she graduates she hopes to not only pursue her career as a professional actress but also to teach theatre to children in underserved communities.

THE POWER OF THE DRAMATIC ARTS

Jayne's story is one of many that play out on The Theatre Lab's stages year after year — for twenty-five years, in fact.

In 2017 The Theatre Lab celebrates a quarter century of bringing the transformative power of high-quality theatre education to people from all walks of life.

Whether providing a disadvantaged child's first theatrical experience, training students for the professional stage, or helping homeless women share their stories at The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, The Theatre Lab understands that arts education is a powerful tool for improving lives and strengthening communities.

Although many organizations strive to make their art more accessible, few have developed programming that consistently and significantly improves the lives of people from vulnerable populations. Only 10% of grant dollars for the arts benefit underserved communities and less than 4% focus on advancing social justice. The Theatre Lab's nationally recognized **Life Stories** drama outreach program serves young men in prison, low-income seniors

in assisted living, wounded veterans, culturally isolated immigrant teens, and many others whose voices are too frequently ignored in our society. Life Stories has offered hundreds of individuals their very first opportunity to explore their lives through a creative lens, an experience that many participants have called "life-changing."

In addition to meaningful personal transformations, high-caliber dramatic arts training enhances the cultural fabric of Washington, DC. The vast majority of theatre performances in the nation's capital are produced by local theatres who need more local talent to bring their artistic visions to life. Thanks to our reputation as a leading force in theatre education, casting directors from Arena Stage, Signature Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre, and many others regularly attend Theatre Lab performances and showcases seeking emerging talent, and have engaged many of our students as performers on their stages. By training current and future generations of actors and technicians, The Theatre Lab contributes to DC's creative spirit and growing economy.

DID YOU KNOW?

YOUTH ENGAGED IN THE ARTS:

Are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement

Have significantly higher GPAs and SAT scores

Demonstrate significantly increased self-confidence

EVEN FURTHER, LOW-INCOME YOUTH IN THE ARTS:

Maintain better attendance records in school

Are more likely to be elected to class office

Volunteer more in their communities



“It was like coming out of a long darkness and into the light.

Being on that stage made me feel like I didn’t have to hide my story anymore. And the burden just lifted.”

— PERTRINA THOMAS, LIFE STORIES PARTICIPANT FROM N STREET VILLAGE, SPEAKING ABOUT HER PERFORMANCE ON THE KENNEDY CENTER STAGE

THE THEATRE LAB’S COMMUNITY PARTNERS

CHILDREN’S INN AT NIH • COLUMBIA HEIGHTS EDUCATION CAMPUS • GALA HISPANIC THEATRE’S PASO NUEVO PROGRAM
N STREET VILLAGE • NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES • NEW BEGINNINGS YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER
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“When we become the storytellers of our lives, we are no longer victims of circumstance. We are *artists* — who make things happen, who write the next chapter, who change the ending.”

— DEB GOTTESMAN, THEATRE LAB CO-FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR, FROM HER TEDx TALK



OUR PHILOSOPHY



“I loved this program because it helped us express our inner self and gave us something to aspire to be.”

— C.T., LIFE STORIES FOR INCARCERATED YOUTH PARTICIPANT

As the District of Columbia’s largest theatre school, The Theatre Lab introduces young children to the magic of creative play and performance, teaches teens to bring characters to life on stage, prepares emerging and professional actors for successful careers in theatre, and brings the joy of creative self-expression to those who need it most. At the heart of our impact is our commitment to four key values:

1. EXCEPTIONAL ARTS TRAINING

The Theatre Lab provides high-quality dramatic arts training to all participants by employing DC’s leading theatre educators and professionals and implementing rigorous curricula across all of its programming, including the Life Stories drama outreach program. Our youngest students learn to perform Shakespeare while our emerging theatre professionals learn the essential skills for success in the local theatre economy through the Honors Conservatory.

2. ACCESSIBILITY

Last year, we distributed nearly \$110,000 in scholarships to students who could otherwise not afford to attend summer camps or year-round classes. Our programs are accessible to participants of all abilities and have attracted children and youth who typically struggle in school.

3. OUTREACH

Recognizing that even the most accessible theatre programming is not attended by some of our community’s most vulnerable populations, The Theatre Lab developed Life Stories, a drama outreach program that teaches children, youth, and adults facing particularly challenging circumstances to create original dramatic work from their personal experiences. By partnering with other community organizations and social service providers, we can bring the benefits of the dramatic arts — including stronger communication skills, enhanced teamwork, and increased self-confidence — to people whom the arts rarely reach.

4. STUDENT SUCCESS

We want our students to be successful, whatever that looks like for them. Our Honors Conservatory graduates have an 85% employment rate in local professional theatre, and our youth program participants have gone on to receive scholarships at the nation’s leading university theatre programs, including Juilliard, Northwestern, NYU Tisch, Columbia, and more. Our youngest campers have built the confidence to speak up in school classrooms. Our Life Stories participants have used their experiences to reconnect with estranged family members, support their path to addiction recovery, adapt to civilian life after military service, and more.

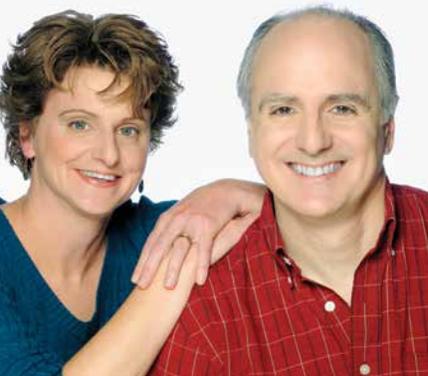


“Theatre teaches us that we are not only all of who we are,
but also all of who we **could** be.”

— BUZZ MAURO, THEATRE LAB CO-FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR



LOOKING BACK



Theatre Lab Directors Deb and Buzz, then...and now

For the last twenty-five years, The Theatre Lab has transformed thousands of lives through exceptional theatre education that reaches children, youth, and adults of all experience levels and from all walks of life. Under the leadership of professional actors and lifelong educators **Deb Gottesman** and **Buzz Mauro**, recipients of the prestigious Linowes Leadership Award recognizing Washington's "unsung heroes," the organization has:

- Offered more than 1,500 award-winning acting and musical theatre classes for youth and adults;
- Launched a national dissemination model to train other arts professionals and service providers to implement the Life Stories drama outreach program in communities across the country;
- Forged extensive educational partnerships with more than 60 community organizations and schools;
- Established a home in downtown DC with a 180-seat performance space and two additional rehearsal spaces; and
- Created a diverse theatre family that includes 24,000 students ages 5 to 103, 88 distinguished faculty members and instructors, and now 30 arts educators and social service providers from around the country who are replicating the Life Stories drama outreach program in their own communities.

"I owe my career to The Theatre Lab. The teachers are passionate and empathetic, and I love that the organization is genuinely committed to making a difference in the community. "

— NORA ACHRATI, HONORS CONSERVATORY GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL ACTOR, APPEARING AT ARENA STAGE IN 2017

LOOKING AHEAD

Now, as The Theatre Lab celebrates its 25th Anniversary,
we share our vision for the future of theatre education in DC
and invite our theatre family to invest in the next
25 years of transformative arts experiences.

THE FUND FOR *Transformative* THEATRE EDUCATION



YOUR SUPPORT WILL HELP US ACHIEVE THE FOLLOWING GOALS:



ENSURING EXCELLENCE

The Theatre Lab is working to remain at the forefront of theatre education in DC by:

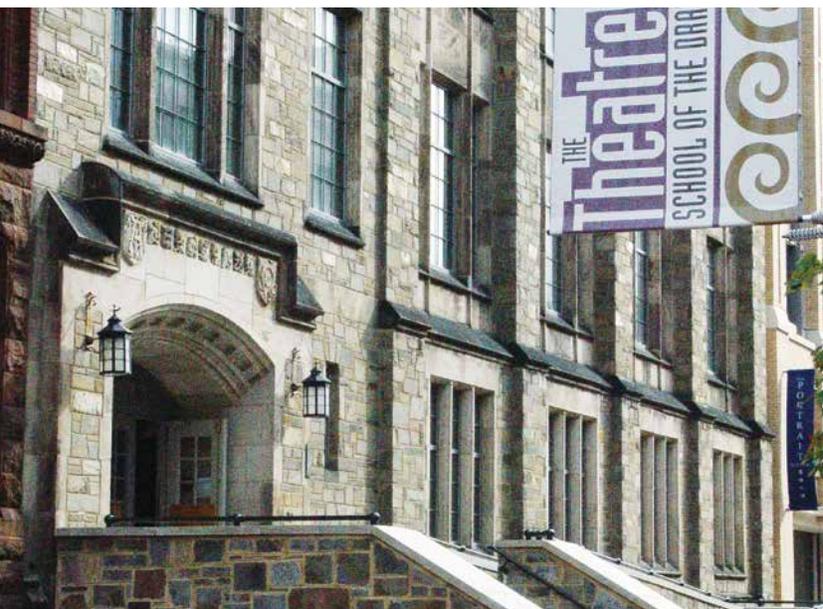
- Building relationships with local public and public charter schools
- Expanding programs to convenient satellite locations
- Growing our scholarship fund to ensure talented individuals like Jayme Lawson have access to exceptional arts training,
- Upgrading our main performance space.

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES

The 2014 documentary “How I Got Over” by Academy Award-nominated producer Nicole Boxer gave The Theatre Lab a national platform to increase the visibility of our Life Stories program and launch the Life Stories Institute, which trains other arts educators and social service providers to replicate the program for vulnerable youth and adults in their communities.

Over the next three years, we plan to increase the impact of our outreach work by:

- Expanding our direct service Life Stories programs in the DC Metro area
- Building the Life Stories Institute into a robust national dissemination model with an accessible e-learning platform
- Exploring opportunities to integrate the dramatic arts into new communities, including refugee camps and college classrooms.



SUSTAINING IMPACT

Finally, The Theatre Lab is planning for long-term impact that ensures the success of the organization through staff transitions, economic changes, and evolving infrastructure needs. For us, sustainable impact means:

- Continuing to build our operating reserves
- Creating a careful plan for leadership succession
- Securing long-term leases for additional teaching and performance spaces that fit the organization’s diverse needs.

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY CAMPAIGN

ESTABLISHING THE FUND

In celebration of its 25th Anniversary, The Theatre Lab has launched the **Fund for Transformative Theatre Education**, with an initial goal of \$250,000 in 2017. For optimum long term planning purposes, contributions will be solicited primarily in the form of three-year pledges. All gifts will be tax-deductible and may include planned giving, multi-year pledges, gifts of securities, and one-time gifts in addition to annual contributions. After the campaign, the Fund will be an ongoing gift opportunity for key stakeholders interested in supporting the long-term success of the organization and honoring its visionary founders.

The Fund, designed to promote the stated objectives of **Ensuring Excellence, Expanding Opportunities, and Sustaining Impact** will be a board-restricted reserve administered by The Theatre Lab's Finance Committee. Funding withdrawn to achieve key objectives may be replenished through additional contributions.

DONOR RECOGNITION

Your donation to the Fund for Transformative Theatre Education will be acknowledged through name and/or logo placement on The Theatre Lab's website and in all 2017 printed catalogues and programs, reaching more than 45,000 individuals throughout the year. The Fund will also feature several distinctive donor levels, including:

LEADERSHIP 25 CIRCLE

The top twenty-five donors to the Fund will be recognized at this elite level in all of Theatre Lab's printed and digital publications through the year 2020, highlighting their transformative impact on our work.

SCHOLARSHIP BENEFACTORS (\$25,000+)

In addition to the recognition listed above, donors who give \$25,000 or more will receive naming rights for a Theatre Lab scholarship fund, ensuring the region's underserved youth have access to summer and school-break programs.

LIFE STORIES CHAMPIONS (\$50,000+)

In addition to the recognition listed above, donors who give \$50,000 or more will receive unique naming rights for an ongoing Life Stories program of their choice, serving marginalized youth and adults in the DC region.

By making a donation of any size to the Fund for Transformative Theatre Education, you can secure The Theatre Lab's long-term future and ensure that the benefits of dramatic arts education continue to reach those who need them the most. **To make your donation today or to learn more, contact Terah Herman, Development Manager, at terah@theatrelab.org.**



"It's all about empathy.

Put yourself in other people's shoes and find that place where your story connects with their story. It's the ultimate saying of 'I see you, I hear you, and let me gift you back with your story.'

— AMAL SAADE, LIFE STORIES INSTRUCTOR

25TH ANNIVERSARY LUMINARY COMMITTEE

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SCHOOL OF THE DRAMATIC ARTS

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The Theatre Lab has
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