

NORTHLIGHT THEATRE

Contact: Cathy Taylor
Cathy Taylor Public Relations, Inc.
cathy@cathytaylorpr.com
773.564.9564

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Northlight Theatre Launches "Arts for Everyone" Program Offering Free Tickets to Performances for Partner Organizations

CHICAGO, IL - **Northlight Theatre**, under the direction of Artistic Director **BJ Jones** and Executive Director **Timothy J. Evans**, is pleased to announce a new initiative, "**Arts for Everyone**," a program that provides **free tickets** to every production in the upcoming 2018-19 season. All performances included in this program are at Northlight Theatre, 9501 Skokie Blvd in Skokie.

Northlight will kick off the program with the first production of the 2018-19 season, ***Curve of Departure***, which begins performances on **September 13, 2018**.

Northlight will pilot this program with existing partners including **Y.O.U.** (Youth & Opportunity United), **YWCA** Evanston/North Shore, and **Family Focus**, and eventually expand to the Evanston and Skokie Public Libraries. The goal of this initiative is to break down any barriers that exist to accessing theatre, starting with ticket costs. Northlight is committed to reaching a broader, more diverse audience and anticipates the "Arts for Everyone" program will help achieve this objective.

Executive Director Timothy J. Evans comments, "This breakthrough program addresses Northlight's commitment toward equitable access for all audiences to experience theater without the barriers of price and privilege. We are inaugurating this unique program with our long-standing community partners thus strengthening their organizations' missions and ours. For those people within these important social service groups, access to free theater and the conversations they inspire will be transformative."

Northlight's existing community partnerships have built bridges through theatre arts, using customized theatre-related programs to serve the missions of each organization. "**Arts for Everyone**" is the exciting next step, offering access to the work on stage as well as the training being provided within each organization.

Katy Okrent, Northlight Trustee and Evanston resident, adds, "This program demonstrates Northlight's commitment to community building, and what better way than to extend this kind of welcome. It's easy to say that you believe in diversity and accessibility, but Northlight is acting on its belief with this new initiative. We hate to think that the cost of a ticket could stand in the way of someone experiencing the wonder and wisdom of a great play. Theater tells the stories of everyone and our hope is that everyone gets to hear them."

Casey Varela, Manager of Strategic Partnerships at Y.O.U. comments on the impact of the partnership with Northlight, "Northlight's Speak Up! program over the past 3 years has been greatly beneficial to the youth from Y.O.U.'s elementary sites. The program has given youth the opportunity to identify and explore difficult issues effecting themselves, their families, and their communities and a creative outlet in which to express themselves. The creative process provided through Speak Up! aligns perfectly with Y.O.U.'s commitment to post-secondary and life success. By continuing our partnership, Y.O.U. youth will continue to develop their problem-solving skills, have the opportunity to discuss and reflect on their emerging values and mindsets, and continue to develop a greater sense of agency."

JoAnn Avery, Senior Staff Primary Prevention Program Coordinator at Family Focus describes the value of working with Northlight, "We are grateful to Northlight for giving our Grandparents Support Group a voice to tell their stories. They have so much confidence and definitely feel better about themselves. Many of the grandparents have expressed their gratitude for believing in them, for believing that what they had to say mattered, and for giving them the courage to be on stage and reflect on their past. This partnership has revived our group 100%. They can now speak louder and bolder with pride and with a sense of accomplishment."

The Davee Foundation is a major supporter of "Arts for Everyone."

Support also comes from The Barn Steakhouse of Evanston, hosting a "**Barnyard Barbecue**" on **Sunday, August 19**, 3:00-7:00pm, at the rear of 1016 Church St, Evanston. Tickets are available at backtoschoolbbqatthebarn.brownpapertickets.com. Net proceeds will benefit Northlight Theatre's "Arts for Everyone."

ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS:

Family Focus promotes the well-being of children from birth by supporting and strengthening families in and with their communities. Northlight works with the Grandparents Support Group on presenting their writings about their experience in life and as grandparents, helping these caregivers gain the skills and confidence to share their work with an audience.

Y.O.U. is a youth development agency that provides services and leadership to meet the emerging needs of young people and their families in our community. Northlight partners with four Y.O.U. after-school enrichment sites (Dawes, Oakton, Walker, and Washington) to run a *Speak Up!* theatre for social change program with 3rd-5th graders.

YWCA Evanston/North Shore is on a mission to eliminate racism, empower women, stand up for social justice, help families, and strengthen communities. Northlight runs a monthly Masterclass for families with children in the Domestic Violence Program with the goal of allowing parents to have a positive, collaborative art-making experience with their children.

If a community organization is interested in developing a partnership with Northlight, contact Director of Education and Community Engagement Mara Stern at 847-324-1607 or mstern@northlight.org.

Northlight Theatre aspires to promote change of perspective and encourage compassion by exploring the depth of our humanity across a bold spectrum of theatrical experiences, reflecting our community to the world and the world to our community.

Now entering its 44th season, the organization has mounted over 200 productions, including nearly 40 world premieres. Northlight has earned 207 Joseph Jefferson Award nominations and 36 Awards, as well as nine Edgerton Foundation for New Play Awards. As one of the area's premier theatre companies, Northlight is a regional magnet for critical and professional acclaim, as well as talent of the highest quality.

Northlight is supported in part by generous contributions from Allstate Insurance; the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation; Robert & Isabelle Bass Foundation; BMO Harris Bank; Henrietta Lange Burk Fund; The Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation; The Chicago Community Trust; ComEd, An Exelon Company; The Davee Foundation; Edgerton Foundation for New American Plays Award; Evanston Community Foundation; Full Circle Foundation; Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; Kirkland & Ellis Foundation; The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; Melvoin Award for Playwriting; Modestus Bauer Foundation; National Endowment for the Arts; Niles Township; The Offield Family Foundation; The Pauls Foundation; Room & Board; Sanborn Family Foundation; Dr. Scholl Foundation; The Shubert Foundation, Inc.; The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust; The Sullivan Family Foundation; and Tom Stringer Design Partners.

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