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4/25/06

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NEWS RELEASE

PORTLAND CENTER STAGE PRESENTS 7TH ANNUAL VISIONS & VOICES READINGS

Annual event stages the short plays of 22 promising young playwrights from Portland Public High Schools

On May 7th and 8th in PCPA's Winningstad Theatre (1111 SW Broadway), 22 young playwrights from area high schools will put their work on stage for the public to enjoy and celebrate. The event is FREE and open to the public and begins promptly at 7 pm both evenings.

Since 1999 Portland Center Stage's **Visions & Voices** program has been bringing professional actor/writers into public high school classrooms for free nine-week residencies, during which the artists spend three to four hours each week teaching students about the basic elements of theater and assisting each of them in writing a short play. All the plays receive in-school readings at the end of each residency. Selected plays from each participating school are also performed for the general public, by professional actors, on the stage of PCPA's Winningstad Theatre. For some of these young writers, this event could be the beginning of a fruitful career in theater arts. For all of them it will be an experience they'll remember the rest of their lives. Here's what one past participant had to say about **Visions & Voices**:

The whole day was so much fun, I can't put it down in words. I'm going to write some short plays this summer just for fun and I hope and pray that you'll be back next year so we can have the opportunity to work with you again.

Each year, four Promising Playwrights from the **Visions & Voices** program are graduated to **Just Add Water/West**, Portland Center Stage's annual summer playwrights festival, where writers, directors and actors from all over the country bring their freshest work to be developed, refined and performed in a hotbed of artistic creativity.

Schools that participated in **Visions & Voices** for the 2005-2006 Season include Cleveland High School, Madison High School's FOCUS Program, Lincoln High School and Wilson High School. A total of 75 teens participated. Each of these four schools will be represented in the May 7th and 8th readings.

Visions & Voices has been made possible this season by generous grants from **THE PAUL G. ALLEN FAMILY FOUNDATION** and **THE WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST FOUNDATION**, substantial funding from **The PacifiCorp Foundation for Learning**, **The Regional Arts and Culture Council**, **The Autzen Foundation**, **The Charlotte Martin Foundation** and **The Harold and Arlene Schnitzer CARE Foundation** and the additional support of **The Boeing Company**, **The Fred Meyer Foundation**, **QWest Foundation**, **RBC Dain Rauscher Foundation** and **The Holzman Foundation**.

For more information, or to attend either FREE event, contact Darius Pierce at dariusp@pcs.org or 503.796.6514. To learn more about Portland Center Stage's Education and Outreach programs, visit www.pcs.org or contact Mead Hunter at meadh@pcs.org.