

A Journey Through Stories: Creating Dialogue with Youth about Violence

Presented by
Ralph Thornton Centre & Toronto Playback Theatre
A Youth Project

“Violence is the absence of dialogue.” –the Dalai Lama

We are pleased to announce that Ralph Thornton Centre (RTC) has received funding for a one-year project from the National Crime Prevention Centre’s Community Mobilization Program, a division of the federal Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness. RTC will be working in partnership with the Toronto Playback Theatre (TPT) to implement a youth violence prevention project. The funding will support a series of Playback Theatre programs and residencies addressing issues of violence prevention for at-risk youth in Toronto. The objective of the work is to deliver theatre-based programming in the context of community-based partnerships with organizations serving youth in order to develop comprehensive and sustainable strategies to prevent crime and victimization. We are currently reaching out to individuals and organizations who have an interest in partnering with us in this work. If you would like further information about this program or would like to contribute in any way, please either contact Winnie Lee, Programme Director of RTC at (416) 392-6810 Ext 227 or at winniel@ralphthornton.org, Lisa Patterson, Project Co-ordinator, at (416) 466-7112 or at imagineit_music@sympatico.ca or visit the Toronto Playback Theatre website at www.torontoplayback.com or contact Chris von Baeyer, Artistic Director of the Toronto Playback Theatre at cvonbaeyer@torontoplayback.com

What is Playback Theatre?

Playback Theatre aims to create space where every voice and any story - however ordinary, extraordinary, hidden or difficult - might be heard and told. Playback Theatre performances are created through a unique collaboration between actors and audience. Facilitated by an on-stage “conductor,” audience members are invited to tell a story or episode from their lives, choose actors to play the different roles, and then watch as their stories are immediately recreated and given artistic shape and coherence. Playback Theatre serves as an opportunity for creative expression to enter into an experience shared by a gathering of people. It is grounded in everyday life and stories, where the spontaneous enactment of personal experience builds connection between people by honoring the dignity, drama and universality of their stories. Over the course of a performance three fundamental principles are being honored and illustrated:

- The sanctity of each individual storyteller’s unique experience
- The universal quality of stories as a vehicle for building empathy, shared understanding and a sense of community.
- The value of the theatre as a tool for illustrating and communicating the depth and diversity of the human experience

How can my community become involved?

During the Fall of 2005 and Spring of 2006 we will be presenting Playback programs to communities of youth who have been impacted by violence and/or who are at-risk of

being involved in violence. A Playback program within a community that serves young people has several phases:

1. Dialogue and agreement between Playback facilitators and leaders of the community as to themes and approaches that will best serve the youth.
2. Presentation of a 90 minute Playback Theatre program by Toronto Playback Theatre for youth.
3. (Optional) Workshops in which participants are introduced to theatre-based approaches for telling their own stories to one another.
4. (Optional) Residencies in which Toronto Playback Theatre offers a series of programs over the course of several months.

If your work serves youth who fit the criteria above, and you are interested in learning more about Playback Theatre programming, please contact us.

Thank you!

Winnie Lee
Programme Director
Ralph Thornton Centre
winniel@ralphthornton.org

Chris von Baeyer
Artistic Director
Toronto Playback Theatre
cvonbaeyer@torontoplayback.com

Lisa Patterson
Project Co-ordinator
Ralph Thornton Centre
imaginit_music@sympatico.ca