In the spring of 2019, to celebrate the opening of the renovated Paul Robeson Community School for the Arts, George Street Playhouse’s Ensemble After-School Program performed an original musical they developed about the life of the school’s namesake. Students in grades three through six researched the life of Paul Robeson and worked as playwrights and actors to illuminate his extraordinary accomplishments as an athlete, scholar, singer, actor, political activist, and humanitarian. This process asked them to step into character to portray Robeson, but also to understand the nature of his character as a person and the strength he demonstrated when confronted by adversity, racism, and bigotry.

Renditions of the African American spirituals that made Robeson famous as a singer were woven throughout the production. However, the final number, “Here We Stand,” was an original song inspired by the students’ knowledge of Paul Robeson’s integrity, fortitude, and commitment to justice for all people. Raising their voices as an ensemble, the students sang about their collective stance to make this world more compassionate and equitable:

NOW WE CHANGE THE WORLD PIECE BY PIECE
AND WE ASK FOR EQUALITY
WE DEMAND TO BE HEARD
HERE WE STAND

George Street Playhouse Education develops not only the mind and imagination, but the spirit and character of the students we serve. Our Academy, Tour, Residency, and Community programs help students explore the complex circumstances of our past and present so they can understand and define for themselves where they stand. In the 2018-2019 Education Annual Report, we are proud to share with you how this investment in character is reflected across the scope of our programs.

Jim Jack
Director of Education and Community Artistic Programming

Our Mission

The mission of George Street Playhouse is to enrich people’s lives by producing world-class theater. To accomplish our mission, we seek:

• to produce the highest quality of intellectually and emotionally challenging new works, re-imagined classics, and educational programs that speak with relevance to society;
• to serve as a vital cultural institution in New Jersey and a creative force nationally;
• to positively shape and be shaped by the diverse character of our community; and
• to create a nurturing home for the highest level of professional in the arts.
George Street Playhouse’s Artist-in-Residence programs bring theater artists into the classroom to create imaginative, dynamic learning for students.

Ten Years of Partnership

In 2010, we launched an Artist-in-Residence program in eight classrooms in two New Brunswick schools reaching less than 200 students. Today, we celebrate our 10th year in partnership with New Brunswick Public Schools and the Civic League of Greater New Brunswick, serving over 75 classrooms and 1,700 students annually with our in-school and after school programs. This growth is a reflection of the unique partnership we have with NBPS and the Civic League, two institutions that share our commitment to providing exceptional theater arts education to positively shape the academic, creative, and social-emotional development of students.

Social-Emotional Learning—Creative Dramatics

We are always working to develop new, innovative Artist-in-Residence programs that respond to the needs of students. Knowing we had an opportunity to expand our programming for early childhood education, we developed Creative Dramatics. Creative Dramatics emphasizes a theatrical exploration of creative play and social-emotional development for kindergarten and first grade students. Students engage their natural curiosity about their world as they learn how to work together to investigate characters, settings, and stories.

Starting with open-ended, sensory-rich materials, students work in teams to build environments that become the settings of their stories. From these settings, the students decide who the characters are that live there—and then bring those characters to life with dialogue, fabric, and music. From the impulses of their imaginations, a rich story emerges that is filled with complex relationships, requiring students to think about the point-of-view of their own characters, as well as those of their classmates. This process empowers students’ creative thinking and conflict resolution skills while strengthening their understanding of storytelling to support early literacy development.

Creative Dramatics is made possible by an Arts Education Special Initiative grant from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and major support from the Provident Bank Foundation.

2018-2019 ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE and PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

Carteret Public Schools  
Civic League of Greater New Brunswick  
Cranford Public Schools  
Greater Brunswick Charter School  
Highland Park Public Schools

HOPES Community Action Partnership, Inc.  
New Brunswick Public Schools  
Teaneck Public Schools  
Union County Vocational-Technical Schools: Academy for the Performing Arts

2018-2019 Reach: 150 Residencies 2,820 Students
Performances that speak with relevance to society

An eleven-year-old boy arrives in America from a country called Homeland. He cannot speak English, and on his first day of school is mocked, subjected to prejudice, and bullied. Unfortunately, this is not an uncommon story. But, in the hands of playwright Dennis Foon, New Kid is transformed by having the boy from Homeland speak English, and the Americans speak gibberish, so the entire audience gets to experience what it’s like to be in a new place confronted by a new language.

For the past 30 years, George Street Playhouse has toured New Kid to schools throughout New Jersey, as the centerpiece of our commitment to Character Education. By performing New Kid in one of the most diverse states in the country, hundreds of thousands of students have been touched by this story and learned to empathize and build positive relationships with people who might initially have appeared different from themselves. Prejudice and racism are learned behaviors that children are taught, and New Kid teaches us that the most powerful way to confront these negative behaviors is through compassion, courage, and friendship.

Following the performance, the actors return to the stage to facilitate a post-play conversation with the students to wrestle with the conflicts at the heart of the show. This process helps students gain deeper insight into the themes of the show and develop new strategies to create positive relationships with their peers.

ANYTOWN

Book by Jim Jack
Music and lyrics by Anna K. Jacobs
Directed by Portia Krieger

“Quite simply, this was one of the best assemblies I have seen in my career. It struck the perfect balance of entertainment and education.”
Steve Droske, Principal

Last season, we premiered ANYTOWN, a new musical about the devastating impact of the opioid crisis on communities throughout New Jersey. In our first year touring ANYTOWN to middle and high schools, the production raised awareness and provided preventative strategies to over 11,000 students, helping to keep them safe from the dangers of substance use disorder. This important work would not be possible without the support from our state-wide sponsors, The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey and RWJBarnabas Health.
A core value of George Street Playhouse is to cultivate the artistic instincts, collaborative skills, and positive social-emotional development of youth, regardless of their financial circumstances. Through support from the Rutgers Community Health Foundation and George Street Playhouse’s Inspirers’ Circle donors, New Brunswick Public School students receive full-tuition scholarships to attend our Summer Theater Academy. Through their participation in George Street’s Artist-in-Residence programming during the academic year, students are nominated by their classroom teachers based on how fully they demonstrate their passion for theater, interest in collaboration, and commitment to academic achievement. Scholarships are made available for up to two students per grade, per school, and all applications are reviewed by Education Department staff who offer additional insights into the potential of each student to benefit from the goals of our program.

Once enrolled, students experience an immersive, four week theater camp where they develop their abilities as actors, writers, and musical theater performers. They learn to create theater as a member of an ensemble, based on the belief that every voice is important and essential to the whole. As a result, students engage in every aspect of the theatrical process—from writing and performing original plays, to developing sets and costumes. They learn to research and suggest ideas, listen to and validate the thoughts of others, and develop a collective vision about the work they ultimately want to share. On the final day of each program, the students present fully produced plays and musicals for an audience of their friends and family.

We offered 28 full scholarships this past summer, which was 30% of our total enrollment. In addition, we provided discounted programming to another 50 students. This approach aligns with our commitment to make Summer Theater Academy a joyous, collaborative, artistic environment for all students, despite financial need, to develop lifelong skills and friendships.

“Before we went on stage, the teachers gave us a pep talk. I remember Mr. Sam said, ‘You guys should be so proud of yourselves. You created this from the bottom up.’ For a moment, I stopped and thought, ‘Yeah. We really did. We went from complete strangers to friends within a few weeks.’ The work was gonna be so worth it.”

—RCHF Scholar (Rising Company B)
Theater Arts Integration for educators

Theater Arts Integration: An interdisciplinary teaching practice in which non-arts and theater arts are taught and assessed together to deepen students’ understanding of both.

Professional Development is integrated into all of our Artist-in-Residence programs to help teachers and administrators understand and effectively utilize theater arts-based strategies to improve student engagement, creativity, content knowledge, and social-emotional development.

This process begins by how we prepare our teaching artists to deliver exceptional theater arts experiences to students in schools statewide. Before an artist can join our roster, they must complete rigorous training in theater arts integration. Building on their unique artistic strengths, teaching artist candidates observe work in schools, attend triannual, multi-day training with Education Department staff, and shadow and then co-teach a residency with a master teaching artist before they are given a residency of their own, what we call the “Solo Flight.” During each step of this process the artists receive constructive feedback as they develop lesson plans and classroom management skills in an effort to elevate student artistry, collaborate with teachers, and fulfill defined learning outcomes. This process often takes a year from first interview to Solo Flight, but the results are worth it. Our teaching artists consistently receive outstanding feedback from teachers and administrators alike.

“Laura was amazing to work with. She’s incredibly passionate and she works very well with the students. You can tell she loves her job, and she always puts in maximum effort. We loved working with her in class.” – Jamie Schoenbach, Educator

We believe in the value of lifelong learning, and once an artist joins our roster we continue to develop their capacity by placing them in residencies that will challenge them. Whether it is working with students of different ages and learning styles, requesting them to draw on new artistic strategies to elevate student achievement, or asking them to become aware of artistic and instructional habits that limit their growth, professional development is ongoing.

“We can always better ourselves by being challenged by each other, being reminded of the fundamentals, and taking a moment to understand how the ever-changing environment of our world affects our work.” – Lucas Pinner, Teaching Artist
Healing Voices

In addition to post-play conversations and symposiums that illuminate the artistic process, each season we select a project that connects with our mission to support the development of new work. In March of 2019, in partnership with the New Jersey Theater Alliance, we produced Healing Voices: Caregiver Stories on Stage.

Each year, the New Jersey Theater Alliance partners with a number of member theaters to solicit submissions of playwriting, poetry, and prose reflecting the caregiver experience. Director of Education and Community Artistic Programming Jim Jack and Teaching Artist Dustin Ballard led the project, reading through each of the submissions before gathering the writers together for a workshop to clarify and deepen the work. Fourteen writers of radically different ages and backgrounds attended the workshop, unified in their experience of caring for chronically ill friends, lovers, parents, and children. They shared excerpts from their writing, observations about the challenges of giving care, and the gratitude they felt for the cathartic release this process gave them. After feedback and revision, each writer submitted a finalized piece that was woven into a staged reading performed on the mainstage by professional actors.

Because of your startling young age, We never suspected that this demon called dementia had chosen us. First came your inability to vocalize the names of certain objects. Eventually, you lost your job. Your employer attributed this to the sinking economy; and, so did we initially.

The performance explored the complicated feelings and depth of compassion needed to give care. Some of the pieces were funny, others heartbreaking, but each in its own way celebrated the human spirit. They spanned from the perspective of a service dog denying his natural instinct to chase squirrels as he tends to the needs of a young boy with cerebral palsy, to a son caring for his estranged father with terminal cancer. Following the performance, the audience participated in a talkback with the writers. They reflected how moved they felt by the work, and how comforting it was to be in the room with a community that understood the complex nature of caregiving.
George Street Playhouse’s Education Department relies on the support of our passionate individual, foundation, corporate, and government donors. Their generosity and belief in the power of theater arts education to make a positive impact on communities throughout New Jersey make all of our programs possible. This list reflects gifts of $1,000 and above made to George Street Playhouse Education during the 2019 fiscal year.

**Income Fiscal Year 2019 $789,250**

- **Earned Income** - $465,360
  - Tour - $48,360
  - Academy - $76,760
  - Artist-in-Residence / Professional Development - $340,040

- **Contributed Income** - $323,890
  - Individual - $74,540
  - Government - $15,000
  - Foundation - $37,500
  - Corporate - $196,850

**Expense Fiscal Year 2019 $789,250**

- **Mainstage Audience Initiatives** - $17,500
- **Program Development** - $252,645
- **Direct Student / Educator Programming** - $519,105

Grant funding has been provided by the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders through a grant awarded from the Middlesex County Cultural and Arts Trust Fund.
Inspirers’ Circle Members are core funders for George Street Playhouse’s Education Department who make annual gifts of $1,000 and above. Their support strengthens theater arts education initiatives and provides scholarships for students to attend Academy and Artist-in-Residence programs.

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Lora Tremayne

EDUCATION STAFF
Erica Leigh, Stage Manager
Ally Schiller, Stage Manager
Akoni Steinmann, Actor
Eileen Doan, Actor
Emma Wagner, Actor
Joe Piserchio, Actor

2018 - 2019 EDUCATIONAL TOURING COMPANY
Erin Leigh, Stage Manager
Ally Schiller, Stage Manager
Akoni Steinmann, Actor
Eileen Doan, Actor
Emma Wagner, Actor
Joe Piserchio, Actor

TEACHING ARTISTS
Dustin Ballard
Laura Bozzone
Carol Foose
Larissa Garcia
Brooke Garfinkle
Emily Goggin
Sam Leichter
Annie Rutherford Lutz
Rachel Matusewicz
Angela Peletier
Lucas Pinner
Dave Seamon
Jamie Ward

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Jim Jack, Director of Education and Community Artistic Programming
Christa Cillaroto, Assistant Director of Education
Catherine Del Castillo, Manager of Tour and Academy Programs
Diana Gundacker, Manager of Tour and Academy Programs
Annie Rutherford Lutz, Resident Teaching Artist/Project Coordinator
Angela Peletier, Education Administrative Assistant

2018 - 2019 SUMMER ACADEMY INTERNS
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Gemma Gao
Amelia Jerden
Rene Mayo
Maya Mitterhoff
Emily Prestby
Clarissa Vickerie