

YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS' THEATER STRATEGIC PLAN 2009-2011

Vision Statement

Young Playwrights' Theater (YPT) gives voice to a new generation through the art of playwriting. A nationally recognized leader in arts education, YPT strives to make the arts, and specifically theater, a core part of every student's education.

YPT proves the value of the arts in the classroom by demonstrating the direct and positive impact of an active, arts-integrated process on student learning. By exploring playwriting, revision and performance with professional artists in the classroom, students learn the power of language and create exciting new plays that reflect and engage their communities. YPT shares student-written work with local, national and international audiences to provide a window into students' lives, cultivate an appreciation for young artists and inspire others to write. By seeing their work brought to life for their community, students realize their ability to affect the world around them.

Mission Statement

Young Playwrights' Theater (YPT) teaches students to express themselves clearly and creatively through the art of playwriting. YPT activates student learning and inspires students to understand the power of language and realize their potential as both individuals and artists. By publicly presenting and discussing student-written work, YPT promotes community dialogue and respect for young artists.

Scope

Young Playwrights' Theater serves students in the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

Guiding Principles and Beliefs

Each student has a story worth telling. We believe the stories that our students have to tell are valuable and provide communities with a powerful perspective about the youth experience. The YPT process invites students to share their ideas, dreams and beliefs through the playwright's craft.

The arts are critical to excellence in education. We believe that theater and the art of playwriting are powerful tools in developing creativity and self-expression and in fostering learning across disciplines.

The process is more important than the product. We involve students in an ongoing creative process that enhances their learning and literacy while providing them with appropriate building blocks to construct a play. While we strive for artistic excellence, we believe the effect of the YPT process is ultimately more important than the work produced.

We strive for high standards from all who participate in our programs. The YPT process honors and respects the value of the work of its professional artists, students and partners. YPT expects the same self-discipline and respect from students as it does from the professionals involved in the process.

We meet students where they are. By reaching out to students through organized in-school, after-school, and summer programs at neighborhood schools and community centers, YPT provides students of diverse backgrounds with a supportive environment where they can exchange ideas and express themselves freely.

We value collaborations and partnerships to leverage resources to accomplish our purpose. YPT fosters partnerships and forges strategic alliances that both advance and are consistent with our mission and brand. We hold ourselves accountable to optimally use our resources to fulfill our commitment to the community.

Comparative Advantage

YPT is the only professional theatre in Washington, DC dedicated entirely to arts education. Deeply engaged with local schools, YPT:

- Fully integrates into existing curricula, using its innovative approach to learning to help classroom teachers teach the required standards.
- Helps students learn the importance of writing, revision and grammar as a way to communicate what is important to them -- their ideas, dreams and beliefs -- to the world around them.
- Employs accomplished teachers, who are also seasoned artists, to teach students the craft of theatre and playwriting.
- Seeks to have long-term impact on student growth by working with a limited number of students each year and tracking their progress after their completion of the program.
- Shares only its students' original works through professional productions and tours that include the area's finest actors, directors and designers.

YPT is sought after as a partner and has an established network in the arts and arts education communities. The quality of YPT's work attracts attention and support from local, national and international companies and funders.

Strategic Direction

During the next three years, YPT will approach achievement of its vision and mission by:

- Focusing on strategic program development and planned growth with realistic expectations
- Ensuring long-term sustainability by focusing on organizational and financial capacity building
- Utilizing strategic partnerships and collaborations to expand awareness of and engagement in its work.

Strategic Goals:

Goal One: Ensure the authenticity and effectiveness of YPT's arts education process.

Goal Two: Increase public awareness and engagement in YPT's work.

Goal Three: Ensure YPT's autonomy by developing sustainable resources to support achievement of its vision and mission.

Goal Four: Continue to develop the infrastructure (the human resources, systems and facilities) needed to support achievement of YPT's vision and mission.

Strategic Goals with Objectives:

Goal One: Ensure the authenticity and effectiveness of YPT's arts education process.

Indicators of Success:

- In-school curriculum and assessments at all grade levels are finalized and implemented.
- Programs with Workshop after-school and with in-school program are replicated in VA or MD.
- Assessments results are consistently utilized in further curriculum development and planning.

Objective A. Continue to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of YPT's arts education process and develop a model that can be replicated regionally and nationally.

1. Finalize curricula and assessment for the in-school program.
2. Continue YPT's program evaluation process and incorporate evaluation results to strengthen process as necessary.
3. Investigate national models of arts education programs in the schools (such as, the Washington Opera/Metropolitan Opera schools project) for lessons learned about program replication.

Objective B. Explore and evaluate opportunities for YPT to expand its programs.

1. Develop Young Playwright's Workshop outside schools.
2. Identify populations to work with on a special project.
3. Define criteria/priorities for selection of in-school or after-school program expansion possibilities.
 - Ensure that there is a diversity of youth voices.
4. Assess the staffing needs and administrative costs of expansion possibilities.
5. Explore expansion possibilities in DC.
 - Replicate In-School program throughout DC.
6. Identify potential for expansion into Virginia (Arlington) and Maryland (Prince George's County).

Goal Two: Increase public awareness and engagement in YPT's work.

Indicators of Success:

- Clear, well branded and strategic communications are consistently planned, implemented and evaluated.
- Measurable increase in the number of strategic alliances that provide community exposure for YPT's programs.
- Measurable increase in community engagement in YPT's programs and services.

Objective A: Develop a strategic communications plan to ensure consistent and well-branded communications with YPT's various stakeholder groups.

1. Develop clear descriptions for YPT programs for use in all communication tools.
2. Identify and implement a communications strategy and action plan for each stakeholder group – current and potential participants, parents, patrons, grassroots community members, current and potential partners, etc.
3. Establish strategic alliances to advance the YPT Mission
 - Continue to utilize events, like Busboys and Poets, as opportunities to engage and educate stakeholders.
 - Create links with youth clubs and other organizations and engage them with invitations to attend performances.
 - Establish board-level links and strategic alliances with partner organizations.
4. Utilize the Advisory Council to expand YPT's profile and resources.
 - Define expectations for Advisory Council members
 - Establish recruitment process for Advisory Council modeled on YPT board recruitment process.

Objective B: Ensure the growth of grassroots community engagement in YPT.

1. Identify special projects that will enhance public awareness of YPT.
 - Establish methods to engage parents and community members.
2. Track student involvement and achievement outside/after programs
3. Develop plans to expand the Express Tour in metro area.
4. Publish student plays to expand public awareness.
5. Attract more community members to public events.

Objective C: Establish a network/consortium of young playwrights' organizations throughout the United States.

1. Develop a network of East Coast young playwrights' organizations to exchange information.
2. Establish an initial goal of sharing best practices and program ideas.
3. Establish an intermediate to long term goal to engage in collaborative projects, such as regional play festivals.

Goal Three: Ensure YPT’s autonomy by developing sustainable resources to support achievement of its vision and mission.

Indicators of Success:

- Three-year budget that projects YPT’s operations and capital needs is in place.
- Measurable increase in individual donors and corporate sponsorships.
- Clear, written expectations for YPT’s program and funding partners are in place.

Objective A: Project a three-year budget for YPT that will enable achievement of strategic plan goals and objectives.

1. Set achievable goals for the percentage of earned and contributed income during the next three years.

Objective B: Implement a comprehensive individual donor program to increase levels of support from individual donors.

Objective C: Develop and implement a corporate sponsorship program.

Objective D. Articulate expectations for YPT’s partners – both program and funding partners – to ensure commitment of all partners.

Goal Four: Continue to develop the infrastructure (the human resources, systems and facilities) needed to support achievement of YPT’s vision and mission.

Indicators of Success:

- A multi-year plan to ensure YPT’s has adequate and sustainable levels of staff at appropriate salary and benefit levels is in place and being implemented.
- YPT personnel policies and procedures are clarified in a handbook that is provided to all staff.
- Procedures and policies are established to ensure continuity of YPT’s operations in an emergency.
- A multi-year facility, technology and equipment plan is in place and being implemented.
- YPT board policies, processes and procedures are strengthened to ensure a strong, more active board.

Objective A. Ensure that YPT has the staff resources necessary to support its operations and programs.

1. Analyze staffing needs to ensure adequate staff with appropriate salary and benefits levels.
2. Evaluate YPT's staff policies and procedures.
3. Establish an emergency staff leadership succession plan and business continuity plan.

Objective B: Ensure that YPT has a strong governance structure with an active and engaged board.

1. Establish specific governance policies and procedures.
 - Develop a YPT board handbook.
 - Develop an annual board calendar and work plan.
2. Develop a board leadership succession plan.

Objective C: Ensure that YPT has updated technology and systems and that staff is trained to use them.

Objective D: Evaluate existing physical space and project future needs.