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*Our mission—
to educate, entertain
and enrich the lives
of young audiences*

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Release Date
September 11, 2012

Kill Date
May 26, 2013

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NW Children's Theater & School Acquires Young Players to Become One of Portland's Largest Arts Educators

Heading into fall of 2012 NW Children's Theater & School has acquired The Young Players, an after-school drama program that provides theater education to Portland area schools. This dramatically increases the reach of NWCT's already robust theater education department and ensures the continued growth and success of the popular Young Players after-school drama club. The combined programs will reach over 70 schools in the first year, with a goal of reaching 100 schools by year three.

Founded in 2003, The Young Players was the inspiration of Janea Dahl, whose son had just begun his elementary school education. With arts programs disappearing from Portland schools she was determined to do her part to reverse the trend. Consisting of after-school drama clubs and in-class residencies, Young Players teaches creative expression through movement, improvisation, and scene study.

In 2010 Dahl approached NWCT to see if they were interested in taking the reins. With her online drama curriculum business taking off she wanted to make sure that Young Players found a home with a like-minded organization. NWCT has for years operated a large Educational Outreach program (NWCT ran theater classes in over 30 Portland schools in 2012), and the two programs seemed a perfect fit.

Both programs will now be managed by Suezann Kitchens, NWCT's Educational Outreach Director, herself an actor, director, and former teacher with six years in public school education under her belt. "With arts budgets shrinking throughout the Portland school system there is tremendous need for this kind of outside arts education, now more than ever," says Kitchens. "Outreach classes bring theater directly to the school, allowing every child to participate even if they cannot get to the Children's Theater."

Interested parents and educators can find out more about Young Players and other NWCT programs at nwcts.org/youngplayers. NWCT's Educational Outreach office can be reached via email at youngplayers@nwcts.org or by phone at 503-222-2190 x11. Participation is approved through the school administration and directly supported by parents and PTA's, costing roughly \$10 per student per class. Registration is now open online with the first after-school classes beginning on Oct. 2, 2012.

PHOTOS

Download "Young Players" high-resolution promo photo at:
<http://nwcts.org/content/press-photos>
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