

CENTER STAGE PRESS

Center Stage Announces Honorees for 30th Annual Young Playwrights Festival

Baltimore—April 6, 2016. Center Stage is pleased to announce the honorees for the 30th Annual Young Playwrights Festival, a yearly competition that invites student playwrights in kindergarten through 12th grade in Maryland to submit their original works. The winning playwrights will be honored with workshops, in-school performances, and select pieces staged at the Annual Young Playwrights Festival performance at **7 pm Monday, May 2**, at Towson University's Center for the Arts.

"We received more than 600 entries from all over the state for this year's festival," said Rosiland Cauthen, director of Center Stage's Department of Community Programs & Education, which presents the festival each year. "There is so much creativity pouring out of these young people. It was very hard to choose plays that would be staged for this year's festival, but we're excited to bring to life these exceptional stories."

The Young Playwrights Festival performance May 2 will include an awards ceremony and staged readings of work by Sumi Saahir, Lamontia Crawford, Kristina Buchanan, Miguel Fernandez, Hannah Bauer, Anastasia Strouboulis, and Meredith Riley. The Young Playwrights Festival performance is free and open to the public, with a suggested donation of \$5 to support Center Stage Community Programs & Education programming. To reserve free tickets, visit www.centerstage.org or call the box office at 410-332-0033.

Honorees receiving in-school readings of their work include Greta Giese, Emma Jamka, Jordan Person, Ethan Van Orden, Sam Myrick, Daria Kerschenbaum, Erin Lemonds, and Kellen Franklin.

The Young Playwrights Festival is made possible through the generous support of Center Stage's many community partners, including Transamerica, Wells Fargo Cultural Excellence Grant, BGE, McCormick, The Kennedy Center VSA, and Classic Catering.

2016 Young Playwrights Festival Honorees

Staged Honorees

Sumi Saahir

The Worry Keeper

Grade 4, The GreenMount School, Baltimore City

Sumi's list of worries is 13 worries long, but with the help of her worry dolls Alexa and Brea, she whittles that tally down to just a few until... they reach the most worrisome worry of them all.

Lamontia Crawford

Soldiers or Princesses

Grade 7, Sisters Academy, Baltimore City

Fed up with being told to "go play with dollies," Harmony designs a secret plan—and a secret identity—to fight the ethos that prevents the girls and boys in her neighborhood from playing together.

Kristina Buchanan

The Veteran's Son

Grade 8, Harford Day School, Baltimore County

The effects of war can be detrimental not only to the soldiers themselves, but also to the families they return home to. In this moving and topical play, we see how the PTSD of a soldier returning home from war affects those closest to him.



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Miguel Fernandez

Enlightenment in Skyzone

Grade 11, Centennial High School, Howard County

Never. Stop. Jumping. These are words to live by—both in trampoline park Skyzone and in pursuit of the American dream. Longtime Skyzone employee Joseph has doubts about his future, his drive, and social Darwinism, but his doubts are assuaged when the best capitalist in all of American history makes an appearance.

Hannah Bauer, Anastasia Strouboulis, & Meredith Riley

Hot Sauce

Grade 12, Dulaney High School, Baltimore County

Ten years of training to increase his hot sauce tolerance is about to pay off when man-boy runs into his one true love from middle school, Margot Lorraine Schnozenheimer. He is confident that now—unlike all those years ago in middle school—he will be able to drink a bottle of Sriracha in one sitting and capture Margot's heart.

In-School Reading Honorees

Greta Giese

What Actually Happened in the Purse

Grade 4, The Odyssey School, Baltimore County

As you go through your day, have you ever wondered what goes through the minds of your cell phone and chapstick as they are jostled about? When their home is carelessly dropped onto the floor and they are left to fend for themselves in this cold, cold world, we find out...What Actually Happened in the Purse.

Emma Jamka

Billy's Troublesome Name

Grade 5, Roland Park Elementary/Middle School, Baltimore City

Little half-worm, half-caterpillar Billy Wonky-Grass hates his name, but there is a law in the Manual of Bugs that no bug is allowed to alter his moniker. Undeterred, Billy squirms to the Manual-maker's house in what he hopes will be a successful bid to change the laws—and his name.

Jordan Person

The Roby Bodyguard

Grade 6, Baltimore Lab School, Baltimore City

The time of Robots walking among us is no longer confined to our imaginations—it is here. What will happen when a less-than-perfect politician hires an ambitious and cunning...Robot Bodyguard?

Ethan Van Orden

A Tale of Four Kitties

Grade 8, The GreenMount School, Baltimore County

Inheritance brings out the worst in everyone, and the members of the Vjord family are no exception. But, as our washed-up emcee explains in this quirky family dramedy—not to be confused with hit Broadway musical Cats—not everything is as it seems.

Sam Myrick

Explosive Elders

Grade 8, Harford Day School, Harford County

Ira is surprised to find that the cruel rules of popularity at her new retirement home are disconcertingly similar to those governing middle-school cliques. While she is learning to navigate this new social landscape, an explosion at the therapy pool propels all the residents to question their loyalties as they solve the mystery of who detonated Thelma.



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Daria Kerschenbaum

Marriage Suite

Grade 11, Thomas Sprigg Wootton High School, Montgomery County

They used to do parties—"wedding receptions" they were called—with music and food. But now, coupling has become a sterile and state-controlled process. Through small acts of rebellion, Kenneth and Brynne forge a tenuous companionship, but that defiance puts them at greater risk with each passing day.

Erin Lemonds

Exposed

Grade 12, Governor Thomas Johnson High School, Frederick County

Though pining for each other, David and April find themselves on diverging paths at the end of high school. The expressive score for this musical explores the complicated journeys of love, loss, and how we deal with them.

Kellen Franklin

Enhance

Grade 12, Governor Thomas Johnson High School, Frederick County

The Emotional Enhancing medicine is a marvel!—a revolution!—a necessity!—the invention of the century! But this controlled substance also has a darker side: one of addiction, deception, and emptiness. Young and privileged Eloise seems to have her act together, but can she handle the pressure of being a good role model to her younger brother, the feeling of rejection from her mother's apathy, and the attention from her new friend Sawyer?

