



THE NEW VICTORY® THEATER A PROJECT OF THE NEW 42ND STREET, INC.

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First Lady Awards New Victory Usher Corps at White House

The New Victory Theater Presented with Nation's Highest Honor for After-School Arts and Humanities Programs

New York, NY (November 10, 2014) -- The New Victory Theater received the 2014 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award today from First Lady Michelle Obama for the New Victory Usher Corps, the 42nd Street theater's creative youth development program for New York City teens. The New Victory Usher Corps, one of only 12 programs to receive the award this year, accepts the nation's highest honor for programs that excel in developing learning and life skills in young people through the arts.

"You teach kids more than just skills in the arts and humanities – you light a fire in them; you help them grow emotionally and socially," said Mrs. Obama at the award ceremony. "And as all of you know, that has an impact on our kids not just their success in the arts and in the humanities but on their success in school and in life."

The New Victory Usher Corps provides paid employment, job training, academic support, mentorship and an introduction to the performing arts for 50 young New Yorkers each year. Created to address the urgent need for youth employment in New York City, the rigorous three-year program offers an opportunity for teens to invest in their future while earning a paycheck. At every performance, these hard-working and enthusiastic young people assist audience members, ensure public safety and work as teaching assistants in arts-based workshops for families. Between shows, New Victory Ushers interact with professional artists from all over the world, participate in job and life skills workshops like time management, resume writing and personal finance, and discover how a theater runs--all while experiencing new cultures and art forms.

"For many of our teens, The New Victory represents the first time they've experienced live performance, the first time they've committed to a job, the first time they've considered college and the first time they are valued for their contribution to the community," says Cora Cahan, President of The New 42nd Street and The New Victory Theater. "We are incredibly proud of our Ushers and their achievement."

Committed to the transformational power of the arts, The New Victory Theater launched the New Victory Usher Corps the day the theater opened nearly 20 years ago; since then, the program has provided over 400,000 hours of paid employment to over 500 NYC teens from across the city. While some New Victory Ushers are recruited from social service agencies, some are recent immigrants and others are from families who have called the City home for generations. For most participants, however, The New Victory marks their first introduction to the rich world of the performing arts.



The National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award recognizes the country's best creative youth development programs for using engagement in the arts and the humanities to increase academic achievement, graduation rates, and college enrollment. The awardees—chosen from a pool of more than 350 nominations and 50 finalists—are also recognized for improving literacy and language abilities, communication and performance skills, and cultural awareness.

First presented in 1998, the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award is the signature program of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH). The awards are presented annually in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

In addition to their recognition at the White House, the New Victory Usher Corps will receive \$10,000 to support its programming and to engage more young people from the community.

For more information about the New Victory Usher Corps, please visit <http://www.newvictory.org/Support-Us/UsherCorps.aspx>. For more information about the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards, visit www.pcah.gov.

About The New Victory Theater

The New Victory Theater introduces extraordinary performing artists from around the world to extraordinary audiences in New York City, bringing kids to the arts and the arts to kids. Created in 1995 for young New Yorkers, their families and schoolmates, The New Victory Theater presents a diverse season of international companies at low ticket prices year after year. Through the theater's award-winning education programs, The New Victory continues to provide access to schools and communities of New York City who seek to experience and engage with the work on our stages, often for the very first time. The theater's contributions to the cultural landscape of the city were celebrated by the prestigious New York critics' organization, The Drama Desk, which presented The New Victory Theater with a Special Award for "providing enchanting, sophisticated children's theater that appeals to the child in all of us, and for nurturing a love of theater in young people."

About the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards

The National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award is the nation's highest honor for after-school arts and humanities programs. The award recognizes and supports outstanding programs that lay new pathways to creativity, expression, and achievement outside of the regular school day. These programs excite and engage a range of students, cultivating imagination, collaboration, discipline and academic success, with demonstrable results. They also provide safe harbors after-school, weekends and evenings for children and youth in some of our country's most at-risk urban and rural settings.

About the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities

Created in 1982 by Executive Order, the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) is an advisory committee to the White House on cultural issues. The PCAH works directly with the Administration and the three primary cultural agencies—National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)—as well as other federal partners and the private sector, to address policy questions in the arts and humanities, to initiate and support key programs in those disciplines, and to recognize excellence in the field. Its core areas of focus are arts and humanities education, cultural exchange, and community revitalization. Mrs. Michelle Obama, like other first ladies before her, serves as honorary chairman of the committee, which is composed of both private and public members. For more information, visit: www.pcah.gov.