



Education in Action

SUMMER/FALL 2011

Dear Friends of Wayside Theatre's Education Program

I am writing to you with an urgent request for your help. Many of you know me both as an actress at Wayside Theatre and as a teacher of your children in our Educational programs. Because our Education programs work hard to focus on each child's needs in any given class, I have had the pleasure of getting to know so many of you through both of these avenues over the past 10 years. That is why I am reaching out to you now on behalf of the theatre, as those programs, and indeed, the Theatre itself, are in jeopardy of closure. The Theatre has reached a critical juncture in its life in this 50th Anniversary Season. Throughout its past, Wayside Theatre has struggled to make ends meet, and many patrons and parents such as you have always responded to its call for support. I am reaching out on its behalf once again, and if we have done anything over the years to help your child in their personal growth, we are humbly asking you to please heed that call.

Wayside Theatre is your theatre and for many of you, a place where your child has had the opportunity to succeed, to build self-esteem through positive reinforcement, or simply to learn that hard work begets rewards. Some of you even have children who now make the Arts their career because of the opportunities for performance and coaching they have had here. Believe me when I say that those associated with the running of this institution have taken every step that they can before making an emergency public appeal. But as the economy lags, we find ourselves having no other recourse beyond shutting the doors. We know you would like to have the opportunity to help before we reach that unthinkable step. This is that opportunity. We hope the good work we've done over the years and the promise of more to come will lead you to action.

There are many reasons we face this current crisis. In brief, a continually depressed economy has led to an industry wide slump in ticket sales for theatres across the country in these last months. This, coupled with Wayside Theatre's current long and short-term debt has put us in a position of having to pay some major creditors quickly if we are going to continue. We need to raise about \$90,000 in the next 45 days if we are to keep Wayside Theatre open. Four of our sister theatres across the country have shared with us that unless they have a good Christmas season they will be shutting the doors following the holidays. Our situation is even more dire. We need your help to even get to our Christmas Season. *(Continued on pg. 2)*

Creating Mary Shelley

There's nothing quite like seeing a new work of theatre grow from idea to fully-realized production. Last spring, the Young Ambassadors' Guild voted to have this year's New Work center around author Mary Shelly (Frankenstein). Four playwrights jumped on board to the project: Libby Powell, Emily Lunde, Kaitlin Duley and Claire Haskins. These four young ladies have taken the idea of Mary Shelley and written an original one-act play, *Mary Shelley's Monsters*, which will be performed on the Wayside stage November 11th and 12th.

But the experience is more than just about learning to write. It's also about working as a group. "I love exploring the other writing styles of my fellow playwrights," Libby says, "I love how incredibly helpful and open to creative criticism they are, and I especially love how much fun we all have together." Each playwright has been assigned three scenes that are their responsibility. After every draft, they receive feedback from the rest of the group, which is then incorporated into the next draft. The challenge is to make the play flow and keep the dialogue and characters consistent despite the multiple playwrights. Despite the challenges, Kaitlin finds her fellow playwrights to be an inspiration: "I've always enjoyed writing but I've never worked with a group to compile a work together. That has been really inspiring—the teamwork part of it."

According to director and playwrighting consultant Rebecca Calkin, the script is already "a production of which seasoned writers would be envious. It is deep, compelling, emotional and riveting..." By the time the performances occur in November, the playwrights will have gone through many more drafts. But don't think it's tedious! As Emily says, "I hope those who come and see the play enjoy it because we enjoyed making it."

Don't miss performances of *Mary Shelley's Monsters* November 11th and 12th at 8pm, November 12 at 2:30pm

Dear Friends of Wayside Theatre's Education Program, Cont.

Here's what we're asking. We're trying to reach 5,000 individuals who have participated in a Wayside Theatre activity in hopes that we can receive at least a \$50 donation from as many of them as we can. Our goal is \$90,000 in 45 days. If, as an example, each of our 800 subscribers gave \$50 we'd quickly be close to half way towards that goal.

If you are interested in reading more specifically and in depth about Wayside Theatre's situation we have prepared a document that you can find on our website at www.waysidetheatre.org that goes into greater depth about the historic and mounting challenges that we face.

Given the urgency, we'd like to suggest that calling our Box Office at 540 869-1776 to make a donation with your credit card would be the best way to make your donation count as soon as possible. But certainly, you can send a check or visit us at www.waysidetheatre.org and hit the Donate Button to give that way.

We know that some of you reading this letter have been annual donors. We also know that some of you recently gave to the \$50,000 challenge. We're grateful, as always, for that support. As we reach out to those who enjoy the fine quality of professional live theatre or our rich educational programs, we also know that some of you may receive more than one letter for this emergency appeal. Please have patience with us, as we try to contact as many Wayside Theatre fans as we can in a quick manner. Please also know that we have reduced even further our already small staff recently in order to cut costs during this challenging time.

If you have any questions please contact any of us at Wayside Theatre at 540 869-1776 or via info@waysidetheatre.org. Thank you for your support of the Wayside Theatre over the years and we hope in this appeal to keep your theatre up and running.

Sincerely,

Thomasin Savaiano,
YPW Coordinator, Teacher and Actress

Update: Since this letter was originally written, we have surpassed the halfway point to our goal. We're excited and optimistic but we can't let the momentum fade: Please call today to donate!

Staff Changes in the Education Department

As the letter above mentions, there have been some staff changes at Wayside due to our economic situation. One of those changes is that Sarah Blackwell is no longer serving as Education Director. After spending the last year as Education Assistant, I am now stepping up to fill the role of Education Director.

I remember the first play I ever saw at Wayside. I was about 11 and I came with my family to see *A Christmas Carol*. I was immediately enamored. I had been in small plays before and taken an acting class or two, but seeing the children on stage made me realize that I could join them. I could actually be a serious actress, with my picture hanging in the Wayside lobby. A few years later, my mother signed me up for a Young Performers' Workshop led by Thomasin Savaiano, who had founded the YPW program the year before. That decision changed my life. Despite my age, Wayside treated me like a theatre artist. While I was not expected to have the talent of a professional actor, I was expected to have the professionalism and work ethic of one. Being on a first-name basis with the staff made me feel as if I were an equal, and respect was due to them not from age (as in most institutions) but rather from respect for the work that they did. Wayside helped to instill me with the skills needed to pursue my love of theatre and provided me opportunities to try new things and excel. Theatre provided me a chance to explore and experience life while escaping from it at the same time. It gave me social opportunities, as well as the pride in knowing I did something well. Without theatre in my life, I never would have learned to speak up in a crowd, talk in front of a classroom or examine life through a creative outlet. In short, I wouldn't be who I am.

For several years now I have sought to give that experience to other youth. I am forever grateful for what Wayside gave me as a young adult and am so honored to be in a position to give that to others. My goal for my time as Education Director is to continue to strengthen and grow the wonderful programs that Sarah and Thomasin have built.

Thank you to my Wayside Family for this opportunity and thank you to all of the youth and their families for making this job such a pleasure.

Megan McShea

Student Profiles: Kaitlin Duley and Brandon Shockey

Each year, Wayside sees hundreds of youth walk through its doors. Last year alone, our programs served nearly 3,000 young people in the Shenandoah Valley and surrounding counties. Here we have chosen to spotlight two of the many youth who stand out.

Kaitlin Duley

When Kaitlin Duley walks into a room, it's like a whirlwind of energy and enthusiasm: You can't help but get swept up in the excitement. Assistant to the Artistic Director Rebecca Calkin calls her enthusiasm "incredibly refreshing." Kaitlin credits her friend, Libby Powell (YAG member and a fantastic stage manager), for her involvement with Wayside. When the deadline for finding playwrights for *Creating Mary Shelley* (our fall New Work) was drawing near, Libby approached Kaitlin about joining the team. At the time, Kaitlin had never done any theatre, but loved writing and thought that a writing-based summer activity would be fun. Since then she has participated in Summer YPW, volunteered at the theatre, helped with YAG events and was one of the first to sign up for Auditions. Oh, and she wrote a few fantastic scenes about Mary Shelley as well.

Most people ease themselves into something new, but Kaitlin has jumped right in. When I asked her about this, she said, "When I find something that I love with people I love – I can't stop thinking about it. I'm very passionate about what I enjoy. If I find something I can be proud of and enjoy- I just don't want to stop!" And she has no plans of stopping anytime soon. Theatre (and the acting bug) have definitely caught Kaitlin. She can't wait for the fall show and is already excited about joining YAG next spring. While waiting for her official induction, she plans on attending all their events. What's so awesome about YAG? "There's a group of people my age that are doing theatre because they love it and not because they just want to goof off."

I am confident that by the time YAG nominates new members, Kaitlin will be at the top of the list. Her positive attitude and great work ethic have already made her a key person in this season's education programs. Thanks, Kaitlin, for all you do!

Brandon Shockey

When Brandon Shockey's family passed through Middletown three years ago, they noticed Wayside Theatre nestled into the buildings on main street. Soon after, Brandon's mother signed him up for his first YPW classes. Since then, he hasn't really left. Brandon has taken and stage managed numerous YPW classes, is the chair of the Young Ambassadors' Guild, performed in almost every Emerging Artist production as well as several Season Productions (the most recent being *Shenandoah*). He also has the honor of being the first high school student to serve as a summer intern on our staff.

Brandon has certainly grown since he first walked through our doors. Last spring, he performed as Harry Houdini in the Fall New Work *Harry Houdini: The Truth Behind the Myth*. His performance was marked by a depth of character that is hard to find in such a young actor. As the chair of YAG he has organized a Sponsorship Campaign (See pg 4) which has raised about \$2,800 for our education programs. Being an Intern helped Brandon develop an understanding for the many facets of theatre. "When I think of theatre, all I've ever known is to get up on stage and act. I've gained a lot of respect for the people who don't get seen." He also made quite an impression on the staff who worked with him in the shop: "Brandon is kind, sincere, eager, likeable, funny, and incredibly talented," Production Manager Heather Reid says, "There is no doubt in my mind that he is going to be famous one day."

Don't forget: Auditions for *Glory Bea: A Shenandoah Christmas!*

We are looking for 6 boys and 6 girls of various ages, so make sure to call and sign up!

October 10,11,15,16

Call the box office at 540-869-1776 to sign up for your audition slot. Children should bring a poem, story or monologue to recite (no need to be memorized) and should be prepared to sing a verse of your favorite Christmas song .



Wayside Theatre

P.O. Box 260
7853 Main Street
Middletown, VA 22645
540-869-1776
eia@waysidetheatre.org

Moving Forward to Build our Children's Future!



Our goal is to encourage youth to contribute to the arts in meaningful ways by providing opportunities which create confidence, instill discipline, build esteem and foster creativity.

Since its inception in 2000, Wayside Theatre's Education in Action programs have provided youth in the Northern Shenandoah Valley with much-needed theatre education. Last year almost 3,000 youth participated in immersive theatre experiences from performing Shakespeare to playwriting; touring productions to backstage assignments.

For more information on any of our programs or to get involved, contact Education Director Megan McShea

YAG Sponsors

Our YAGers have been busy finding sponsors for our Education Programs. Brandon Shokcey was trying to think of a fundraiser that would really make a difference, and thought of his Little League Baseball Team Sponsors. After Brandon had the idea, the YAGers jumped on board, raising about \$2800 in two months. The money raised has already made a huge difference, helping us support our YPW Summer Camps and get a mailing out on time. They truly are acting as our Young Ambassadors and we can't thank them enough for their dedication to our programs and this theatre. A special Thank You to Chris Clark and Zoe Pettler, two new members of YAG who really went above and beyond.

In addition to helping a great cause, our sponsors get theatre tickets, ad space and more. It's a great way for any business to promote themselves while helping bring quality theatre experiences to area youth. Help us make their investment worthwhile by supporting these businesses.

Our new sponsors include: **Harrison and Johnston Attorneys at Law, Apple Valley Hyundai, BCK Anesthesia, Thomas and Rebecca Lawson, Harvest Moon Natural Foods, Dewein**



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Dates to Remember

Don't miss these events!

YPW Fall Session begins : September 10th, 12th and 13th

Performances , October 29th, 31st and November 1st at Wayside. These performances are FREE and open to the public

Registration for YPW Winter Session Begins: November 11th. Winter classes start in January.

Creating Mary Shelley performance: November 11 and 12 at Wayside

Auditions for Glory Bea! A Shenandoah Christmas Story: October 10, 11, 15, 16 at Wayside.

(We are looking for 6 boys and 6 girls of varying ages– call the Box Office for details)

Steel Magnolias : Runs through September 24th at Wayside

The Woman in Black: Runs October 8th-November 5th at Wayside

Glory Bea! A Shenandoah Christmas Story: Runs November 26th-December 24th at Wayside