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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



The Will Power To Youth Program Comes To Richmond

(Richmond, Virginia) July 30, 2007 - Will Power to Youth, Shakespeare Festival/LA's arts-centered youth employment and development program, is expanding to the east coast. Will Power to Youth Richmond launches the national replication of this award-winning Los Angeles program, bringing together Richmond's highly respected Gang Reduction and Intervention Program (run by the Office of the Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Virginia) with the creative forces of Richmond Shakespeare.

Supported by the United States Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs' Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the National Endowment for the Arts, Will Power to Youth has a proven fourteen-year track record of successfully combining rigorous training in arts instruction, academic literacy, human relations, and pre-workforce skill development for young people who are not traditionally involved in the arts and may never have held a job.

Will Power to Youth Richmond is an on-the-job training program specifically focused on youth living in severe economic situations that are interested in exploring what it means to work respectfully in a creative environment. The program pairs professional adult Mentor Artists and Human Relations Facilitators with underprivileged youth in a unique employment setting in which they explore a work by William Shakespeare and create their own adaptation, relevant to their own lives and experiences.

For its inaugural session, Will Power to Youth Richmond will present *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare's classic tale of star-crossed lovers torn apart by violent circumstances. Participants in the 7-week session will explore the themes of community and culture, using the play as a guide and their own experiences as inspiration. Performances will be held August 23, 2007 at both 2pm and 7:30pm and August 24 and 25, 2007 at 7:30. All performances will be held at the Firehouse Theatre in Richmond. Performances are FREE to the public but reservations are required. For ticket reservations or for more information on Will Power To Youth in Richmond call (804) 937-0299.

Shakespeare Festival/LA, www.ShakespeareFestivalLA.org & Richmond Shakespeare, www.RichmondShakespeare.com

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