



Young Audiences Western New York

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Buffalo Conference Focuses on Serving Youth at Risk of Educational Failure

Featured presenters include international touring dance company and MoMA Art Educator

BUFFALO, NY (4/10/12) –Young Audiences of Western New York, in collaboration with the Arts Partners for Learning initiative, has opened registration for the 5th Annual Patricia Cotsen Arts Abilities Conference. This year's conference will be hosted at Babeville's Asbury Hall in downtown Buffalo on May 4, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with additional activities taking place throughout the day at Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center and Starlight Studio.

Focusing on utilizing arts integration strategies - across all curriculum topics - as a tool for supporting young people at risk of educational failure, the Arts Abilities Conference is designed to engage a diverse group of attendees including educators, artists, human service workers, instructional leaders, mentors, teachers, and parents.

"I believe art is a springboard to a world of new ideas for everyone," said conference presenter Nancy Spector, Associate Curator of Education at Albright-Knox Art Gallery. "Looking at or creating works of art creates an opportunity for people from different backgrounds and ages to come together, learn from each other, learn about themselves, and stretch the boundaries of their experience."

Throughout the day, participants will learn innovative and applicable techniques for creating engaging learning environments through the arts. The workshops exemplify best practices and explore opportunities for working with young people with disabilities, those with special needs, immigrant and refugee communities, incarcerated youth, and others at risk of educational failure. This year's workshops will be presented by over 15 leaders in the field, including featured presentations by PUSH Physical Theatre and Gordon Sasaki.

PUSH Physical Theatre: PUSH Physical Theatre is an innovative and exciting acrobatic dance and theater troupe. The award-winning ensemble performs at schools, artist residencies, special events and concerts, touring both nationally and abroad. Their inspiring performances have been profiled on PBS and NPR. PUSH will perform a dynamic lunchtime performance demonstration on differentiated learning techniques at the conference.

Gordon Sasaki: Sasaki currently teaches in the community and access programs of the education department at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, which aim to bring art experiences to the disabled and underserved. He has been a wheelchair user since a 1982 automobile accident. At the Buffalo Conference, he explores the application of Universal Design in the classroom.

Registration and additional information are available online at www.yawny.org. The conference attendance fee is \$40 per person, with discounted \$20 tickets available to college students. Individuals interested in attending or volunteering at this event should contact Theresa Woehrel at 716.881.0917 or by email at Theresa@yawny.org. Conference participation contributes to the 175-hour requirement for New York State Professional Development Standards for teachers.

The 5th Annual Patricia Cotsen Arts Abilities conference is presented by Young Audiences of Western New York and the Arts Partners for Learning initiative. Support has been provided by Fund for the Arts, John R. Oishei Foundation, Marks Family Foundation & Young Audiences, Inc.