



Young Audiences Western New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Theresa Woehrel

PHONE: 716.881.0917 **EMAIL:** theresa@yawny.org

YOUNG AUDIENCES EXPANDS ARTS RESIDENCY WITH HERITAGE CENTERS

BUFFALO, NY (05/15/12) – With support from The Children’s Guild Foundation through a grant of \$20,712, Young Audiences of Western New York has expanded its partnership with Heritage Centers After School Program to provide increased arts programming to young people with special needs. The partnership, now in its 3rd year, has become a core element of the Heritage Centers After School Program. During this three-year period, The Children’s Guild Foundation has awarded Young Audiences WNY \$48,350 to provide this unique and much needed programming in the community.

Titled *A Rhythm Runs Through It*, the residency is an arts integration program incorporating dance, music, and visual arts for young people with special needs that attend the Heritage Centers After School Program. It uses the arts to apply the findings of current research on how kinesthetic activities enhance brain development, physical and mental coordination, and language processing, to help young people with special needs become more independent, confident, and productive.

The program expanded for the 2011-2012 school year to include professional development and training opportunities for participating staff at Heritage Centers, and to incorporate increased “life-skills” development for older students soon to be exiting the program. Classes focus on providing the skills that participants will need to transition into adulthood and find their place in the community.

“The program has given the Heritage Centers staff and teaching artists the opportunity to mentor students on respecting themselves and others,” said Young Audiences teaching artist Sarah Haykel. “Through my salsa dancing and partner dancing workshops, I was able to introduce and develop students skills in interpersonal communication, collaboration, and self-management.”

Haykel is one of seven professional teaching artists working with Heritage Centers students and staff this year. Other outstanding artists include Rodney Appleby, Ringo Brill, Kris Crosson, John Lombardo, Jen Russo, and Reynold Scott.

Created by Young Audiences WNY, *A Rhythm Runs Through It* is funded by The Children's Guild Foundation. Individuals interested in learning more about this residency can visit www.yawny.org or contact Young Audiences WNY directly at 716.881.0917.

ABOUT YOUNG AUDIENCES: Founded in 1962, Young Audiences WNY programming is designed around the fact that an arts-rich education provides a child with the ability to look beyond facts and figures; to creatively meet new challenges as they arise. Plus, the arts make learning fun. Introducing curriculum-supportive, arts-based learning provides a varied and compelling environment-engage even the most reluctant learners and give day-dreamers a classroom as rich as their imagination.

ABOUT THE CHILDREN'S GUILD FOUNDATION: Incorporated in 1910, The Children’s Guild Foundation funds non-profit organizations within the eight counties of Western New York that provide programs and services for special needs children in the areas of healthcare, research, education and therapeutic recreation. The Foundation also seeks to effect change, provide opportunities, and promote inclusion & diversity for children with special needs and their families by advocating on their behalf. The research initiatives funded by The Foundation are concentrated in the area of pediatric developmental disabilities. For more information, visit www.thechildrensguild.org or call 716-362-9650.

###