



Young Audiences Western New York

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YOUNG AUDIENCES HONORS LOCAL ARTS EDUCATORS FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE & ACHIEVEMENT

BUFFALO, NY (9/1/11) – Young Audiences of Western New York, the region’s leading arts education organization, has announced that it will honor the achievements of local arts educators **Lorna C. Hill** and **Helga MacKinnon** at its 2011 benefit event, *Young Audiences Goes To Town*. The benefit, which is open to the public, will be hosted on October 12 at Town Ballroom in Buffalo, and features a headline performance by popular world beat ensemble N’Dias (The Mix).

Young Audiences WNY’s annual benefit brings community leaders together to celebrate the important work of engaging young people through the arts. This year’s program boasts live musical performances, amazing appetizers by Torches, auctions, raffles, and an awards ceremony recognizing the outstanding achievements of the 2011 honorees. Tickets to the awards ceremony and reception are available for \$50.

Each year, honorees are nominated by the public and selected by the Young Audiences benefit committee. The committee selected this year’s nominees for their outstanding contributions to the arts, education, and their communities.

Lorna C. Hill – Hill is an accomplished director, actor, teacher, storyteller, poet, and playwright. She is the founder of Ujima Theatre Company, Inc. and has served as the organization’s Artistic Director for 32 years. Ujima Company is a multi-cultural membership organization dedicated to providing a vehicle for African American performers, theatre crafts people and administrators. Additionally, Hill has been the Founder and Director of the Youth Theatre Workshop at St. Augustine’s Community Center; a performing artist for Western New York Institute for the Arts and Rochester Institute for the Arts; a writing artist in the schools for Just Buffalo; and a guest artist in the schools with Project Unique.

Helga MacKinnon – MacKinnon is an accomplished educator and artist. She built Young Audiences WNY to be a sustainable, outstanding institution as the organization’s former Executive Director, a position that she held for 12 years. She continues to serve as a volunteer docent at Albright-Knox Art Gallery. She has held positions on numerous boards and committees of arts in education organizations, including the Board of the New York State Alliance for Arts Education (NYSAAE), the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) Field Council, the Young Audiences, Inc., Program Committee, ArtSPAES, Special Population and Alternative Educational Settings, Steering Committee, and the Arts Council in Buffalo and Erie County Regrant Committee.

Proceeds from this event support Young Audiences programming, bringing arts programs to children throughout the eight counties of WNY. Tickets and additional information are available online at www.yawny.org/town or by contacting the Young Audiences office at 716.881.0917.

ABOUT YOUNG AUDIENCES: Young Audiences of Western New York is a not-for-profit arts-in-education organization whose mission is to make the visual, performing, and literary arts a part of young people’s lives in order to enhance their development as creative and productive human beings. This mission is fulfilled every day within the eight counties of Western New York with performances, workshops, and residencies in educational, cultural, and community centers. In operation for 49 years, Young Audiences’ teaching artists support children learning core curriculum subjects through the arts, with over 100,000 artist contacts for children and families each year. Visit www.yawny.org for more information about Young Audiences of Western New York.

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