### YOUR OFFICIAL RECAP OF THE LAST SIX MONTHS OF PROJECT HISTORY.



FULL-COLOR WEB EDITION . VOL. 73 - MARCH, 2016 . GEORGE BABIAK, EDITOR



Lauren Amador-Cruz, age 10, wrote The Unfound Blanky, which starred Sofiya Akilova and Lisa Benavides as a fox and a lion forced to battle a really tall Mother of Snakes puppet. Sarah Krohn directed.



In Ayman Musa's Weird Friends, directed by Jeremy Stoller, Ceci Fernandez and Jose-Maria Aguila were a robotic zombie terminator and the king of the undead. And, yes, they were wonderfully weird.

### LARGER THAN LIFE: THE SUPERSIZED PLAYS

THE FALL 2015 PLAYMAKING SHOWS This past December, after being assigned the finest actors we could find to work for free, the newest batch of Project kids journeyed to Stone Ridge, NY for a weekend Playwriting retreat. As usual, the 9 scripts were brilliant! Here are some photos taken at the dress rehearsal.

# THE DESIGN AND TECH TEAM

Composer/Music Director
Costume Designer
e construction de la congritor
Lighting Designer
Juning Doolghol
arickman Sound Designers
Channe M
Stage Manager

# THE HOST FAMILIES

Steve Gorn & Barbara Bash, Anita Flanagan, Deborah Freedman & Bill Woods, David Curtis & Ann Morris, Debbie Wierum & Steve Ramsay, Charlie & Naomi Miles, Jeff Madalena & Jason Gnewikow, Lethe & Jaques Black, and Iris Brown, Joe White, and Walker White.

Genny and Mark, written by Bryanna Ohene Kari Kari and directed by Alexandra O'Daly, featured a king (Frank Wood) who was too busy to attend a Sweet 16 party for his daughter (Edie Falco). Tory Delahunt was a lady-in-waiting.



Bobby Cannavale was a guy who had been adopted by ducks and Mozhan Marnò was a girl who'd been raised by dragons. This led to serious conflict in Derek Rey's Two People in a Different Family, which John Sheehy directed.



Llfe's Complicated, by Selena Sanchez, was a drama about a rich girl (Carra Patterson) and a homeless musician (Joe Paulik) who almost found romance. Emma Weinstein directed and although Spike the dog was very well-behaved, even foam-core animals steal the show.

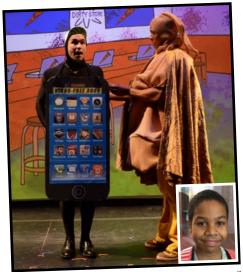


The Wings and the D.J.?, written by Beyonce Thomas, told the bittersweet tale of a young waitress (Arielle Goldman) and her mean chef of a dad (Bhavesh Patel). In the end, she made her own mechanical wings and escaped to her mom.

### FALL PLAYMAKING, CONTINUED:



Carl Hendrick Louis and Jonathan Bock were the good and bad sides of a schoolboy's conscience in Leonel Perez's *The Bad and The Good*, directed by Korey Jackson.



Gage Simmons explored the friendship of a cell phone (Joe Tapper) and a heap of peanut butter (Bjorn DuPaty) in *Peanut Butter and Phones*, directed by Kareem Lucas.



The Internet Is In Your Mind, by Lily Kuzminski, cast Nehassaiu DeGannes and Mallory Portnoy as manifestations of actual apps and websites. Rebecca Martinez directed.

### BE AGGRESSIVE: THE COMPETITIVE PLAYS THE 2015 PLAYBACK SHOWS

Once a year, in our Playback show, kids aged 13 and 14 write for THEMSELVES (and an adult partner who also directs). This year's Playback was rehearsed in Bridgehampton, NY, and staged at the Five Angels Theater Oct. 23-25, 2015.

# THE DESIGN AND TECH TEAM

Freddy Hall	Composer/Music Director
Lara De Bruijn	Costume Designer
Crog MacPherson	Lighting Designer
Tran Delebunt	Sound Designer
Iory Delanunit	Stage Manager
Kaleigh Bernier	Oldge manage

### THE HOST FAMILIES

Alex Gersten-Vassilaros, Cathy Dantchik, and Louis & Patrice Friedman.



Monkey Disaster was Tiffany Miller's aptly named play. In it, Tiff played a girl determined to deal with a pack of thieving monkeys, played here by Christin Tetteh, Jose Gamo, Martin Sanchez and Tiffany's adult Playback partner Corey Ruzicano. As one might expect, disaster ensued.



Ricardo Currin's *Oblivious Frenemies* (one of our favorite titles in 2015) had Ricardo and Stephen O'Reilly as roommates who found out that they were super arch-enemies in their secret identities outside the apartment.



Charlie O'Rourke and David Ortiz played rivals in a ravaged, post-apocalyptic landscape in David's *Bloodshed and Tears*. David's character eventually sacrificed himself for the sake of Charlie's character.



### PLAYBACK, CONTINUED:



Jim the Jaguar (Ka-Ling Cheung) and Tia the Turtle (Karen Tineo) ran themselves ragged in a race over all 7 continents in Karen's *Wristwatches and Family Tragedies*.



Ezekiel Albarron's *Paid Off* was a caper play in which Jeremy Rishe was the bumbling accomplice of Ezekiel's mastermind as they attempted to knock over a bank. George Babiak, in the background, was a surly middle-aged man. The role was a real stretch for him.



Joshua Gomez's *What Makes the Two of Us* was a slice-of-life park bench drama about two friends who both happened to have moms that needed medical help. Rodney Richardson was the older friend.



Arden and Tabatha was Chyanne Peña's spin on the classic "let's-trade-lives" scenario. Arden was the girl from the tropics who wanted to experience colder climes and Ashley Marie Ortiz was her North Country counterpart who wanted to bask in the sun and SCUBA dive.





Joseph Cruz (3rd from left) was a young up-and-comer being trained by Kayla Matos's character (4th from left) to go for The Power Dance Walker's Gold in the play of that name written by Lucas Kavner and directed by Tina Chilip. But would he use the performance-enhancing, bone-crumbling "juice?" John Sheehy, Natalie Hirsch, Charles Pisano, and George Babiak (all seen above) joined in for some Power Dance Walking along the way.



In Polar Bear Service and Repair, by Tim J. Lord, Adam Alkindi and Justin Bannister played a couple of misfits who join forces for a road trip. Unfortunately, they wind up in Churchill, Manitoba, the polar bear capital of the world. Amanda Tralle, Karen Tineo, and Charles Pisano played the bears while Sean Kenealy directed.



Bamba Thiam and Bryan Lopez were a pair of novice Lynn Rosen's The Best/Worst Day gave us a glimpse skydivers determined to scatter the ashes of a dead friend. What We Do, We Do For True was written by Beto O'Byrne and directed by Sathya Sridharan.

into Disneyland workers' lives. Allyssia Feliciano was a petulant Cinderella and Kayla Ortiz was a naively enthusiastic Cruella de Vil. Arielle Goldman directed.

## THE NICK OF TIME: THE PUNCTUAL PLAYS THE 2016 TWO-ON-TWO'S

Every January we line up 6 pairs of kids and match each team with an adult playwright and an adult director. The plays were rehearsed in Nyack, NY, over the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day weekend and performed Jan. 29-31, 2016 at the Five Angels Theater.

# THE DESIGN AND TECH TEAM

Greg MacPherson Sam Barickman	Composer/Music Director Costume Designer Lighting Designer
	Lighting Designer Sound Designer Stage Manager

# THE HOST FAMILIES

Susanna Styron, Wendy vanden Heuvel, John Paul Newport & Polly King, and Patricia Kahn.



Strangers on a Train (you can't copyright a title!), written by Cate Yu and directed by Colette Robert, was about the rendezvous of a secret agent (Wilhelmina Ohene Kari Kari) and the world's finest jewel thief (Christin Tetteh). Yes, it happened on a train.



Sabrina Caldona and Lambert Whitney got to see what the 60's were like in Flower Children. Kerry Whigham directed Melisa Tien's ode to the Beach Boys.

PROJECT UPDATE, MARCH 2016

# WELCOME, SHAUNICE AND TAHNEE!

Well, we will miss Laura Lane (who now hangs her hat at Planned Parenthood) and Melissa Gundling (holding down a desk at Herrick, Feinstein LLP) but they will always remain special friends. Taking their places are two NEW special friends who are not only cool, but photogenic.

# Shaunice Jordan - Manager of Individual Giving

Shaunice signed on to the Project staff in February, 2016. She comes to us most recently from Purchase College where she was the Coordinator of Advancement for The Performing Arts Center. She comes from Kansas City, Missouri, just like Tech Director Tim J. Lord! They are already having a competition to see who knows more of the most cool, most obscure, and most delicious barbecue places in KC. She says, "I'm winning."

Shaunice holds a BA in Psychology, '04 and a MA in Higher Education Administration, '10 both from the University of Missouri – Kansas City. She knows a lot about the East Coast, too: she worked as a Resident Director for six years at The University of Southern Maine in Portland, Maine and at Emerson College in Boston, Mass. Apart from The Project, Shaunice is a vocalist experienced in a variety of genres from opera/classical to R&B and jazz. She loves to travel, shop, and collect photographic prints. Shaunice is thrilled to bring her experience and enthusiasm for art to The Project!

# Tahnee Cadrez – Development and Management Associate

Tahnee Cadrez is our newest newbie. She just joined us in March of 2016 and hails from the scorching desert of El Centro, California. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Visual and Performing Arts Studies from the University of Southern California and acted as Executive Producer at Cardinal Theatre Productions during her time there. She spent 3 years living in Los Angeles and decided last August to make the big leap to the East Coast. Her main artistic focus has been playwriting, for which she won the Dilling Yang fellowship at UC Santa Barbara in 2012.

Tahnee just recently returned from a trip to Europe, where she visited Paris for Christmas, Barcelona for New Year's, and London for good measure. One highlight of England was seeing a genuine "panto" with Verne Troyer (remember "Mini-Me?"). She loves to cook and she loves dogs, but she has no intention of cooking dogs. Hey, there's Spike the Dog, again (see p. 1)!



The following foundations, corporations, and government agencies recently made generous grants to the Project. We are grateful to them for their support as well as to the many individuals who help sustain the Project's programs year-round.

Altman Foundation	\$35,000
Cramer Fund	\$1,000
Dramatists Guild Fund	\$1,000
Dramatists Play Service	\$1,000
Friars National Association Foundation	\$2,000
Google	\$5,000
Heisman Trophy Trust	
Frederick Loewe Foundation	\$4,000
Markel Corporation	\$900
New York State Council on the Arts	
Newman's Own Foundation	\$20,000
Pixar	\$10,000
Harold & Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust	\$25,000

# WANT TO DONATE?



It's as easy as 5 + 2! Just visit www.52project.org and click "You Can Help."

# RESULTS OF THE 16TH ANNUAL SMART PARTNERS PING-PONG TOURNAMENT



THE CHAMPIONS: *Can't Keep Score* - Chayse Peña and Joe Paulik, standing in for Chayse's regular SP, Korey Jackson.



5TH PLACE: *The Homies* - Sarah Johnsrude and Darby O'Donnell were proud to be our top all-female team. You go, girls!



BEST NEW PLAYERS: *Team* Boss - Jeremy Stoller and Aramis Jimenez played with the concentration and calm of seasoned vets.



2ND PLACE: *Hip Turtle Grandparents* - Stevens Velasquez and Sathya Sridharan did pretty well in the first tourney for both of them.



HONORABLE MENTION: Team Commando Squad Squad - Patrick Clair and Lucas Ruedel took 4th last year and came close to doing it again.



BEST TEAM NAME: Desmond the Moon Bear - We don't know where that name came from but Emmanuel Goicuria and Tim Lord made it work.



3RD PLACE: *RED* - Karen Tineo and George Babiak played together for the first time ever and feel pretty good about how they placed.



WACKIEST TEAM: *The Pizza Eaters-* Rosneyri Rosario and Natalie Hirsch had to eat chicken wings at the tourney, but they played well.



BEST DRESSED: The Mystery Boys - Josh Moody and Ethan Perez wore super-cool and super-warm customized knit caps!



4TH PLACE: *I'm Confused* - Justin Bannister and Eric March. Eric was off on his honeymoon in 2015, but this duo is back with a vengeance.



MOST IMPROVED: ORB - Kaylee Zambrano and HannaH Allen got this honor in 2015 and improved even more this year.



GOOD SPORTS: Lakshmooary - Lakshmi DeJesus and January LaVoy never let down their smiles throughout the games.



The Project's Smart Partners are keenly aware of when the Christmas season is upon us because that's when they start preparing their performances for the Annual Smart Partner Open Mic Show, held this year on December 21.

There were many terrific acts: Kaylee and HannaH showed a mysterious movie they made, Nicole and Jillian had a lip-sync battle, Emmanuel and Tim did a fast-paced puppet show, Ginaija, Charly, Jayleen, and Alyssa premiered a circus-themed film, Karen and Lauren presented a video about the eruption of a model volcano, and Justin and Eric recited inspirational sayings. The most dramatic of all the acts was Lakshmi and January's reenactment of the climactic scene in "Titanic" (seen at right). It was pretty amazing.





Gus Rogerson, Artistic Director Natalie Hirsch, Playmaking Director Carol Ochs, Executive Director THE 52ND STREET PROJECT PRESENTS



# THE SPRING 2016 PLAYMAKING PLAYS

10 new plays written by kids & performed by adult actors

Friday, April 1 at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, April 2 at 3:00 and 7:30 p.m. Sunday, April 3 at 3:00 p.m.

All performances at

The 52nd Street Project's Five Angels Theater

789 10th Ave., between 52nd and 53rd St.

Admission is free, but we urge you to reserve seats by visiting www.52project.org.



# HEY, GROWN-UPS! JOIN THE PROJECT!



Are you crazy about The 52nd Street Project and wonder how you can become even MORE involved with us over the next year? Well, why not consider becoming a member of Crew 52, the Project's adult membership program?

Crew 52 will increase your access and exposure to the Project and get you awesome benefits such as early access to show tickets, discounts at local businesses, and invitations to exclusive member-only events. Plus, you get a customized Crew 52 membership card! Don't worry, it's not some absurd foam-core monstrosity. It's on card stock, sized to fit a wallet, and it's LAMINATED!

Membership in Crew 52 is \$250 a year (and only \$175 if you're in the under-40 crowd). All donations are 100% tax-deductible and allow us to continue to run our programs, provide our kids fun and exciting learning opportunities, and keep the lights on!

Feel free to contact Shaunice Jordan, our new Manager of Individual Giving (meet her on page 5) at jordan@52project.org if you have any questions about joining, or visit the Project website to learn more. Become a member today!

# LOTS-O-LANTERNS

Here are some of the Smart Partner teams with the pumpkins they carved last Halloween. They created some incredible orange sculptures (as well as an incredible orange mess) and everyone had a terrific time.















Krvstel & Tati

Charly & Ginaiia

Alvssa & Ja





# FILMMAKING 2016

During the February school break, three budding auteurs spent a week at the Project creating original films with adult "cinematurges" and professional actors. A fourth team did their own film on their own time! Here's what they made:

# **∢** WORK OF ART ►

Carl Hendrick Louis and Wrenn Schmidt are two foreign visitors (from Norway and Australia) applying for the same job. Ginaija Hires made the movie and played the boss. Charly Evon Simpson (G.'s Smart Partner) was the cinematurge.

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Emma Ramos is Japan's greatest jewel thief and David Costabile is assigned to stop her. After realizing they are brother and sister, they join forces and flee Japan on a private plane with Mom and Dad. Maria Martinez wrote, shot, and played the stewardess while George Babiak was her grown-up mentor.

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Tina Chilip and Jose-Maria Aguila are cavedwelling siblings who move into a construction site. Andry Moreno was the kid creator and played a "Pilgrim Thief." His cinematurge was Michael Stahl-David.

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Sofia Santoni (right) and her Smart Partner Grace Rex were the "indie" entry. The film documented their efforts to give an origami crane to everyone they met. They even gave one to local grocer Sonny (left). He liked it!

Below are some candid shots of moments during production. All of the films can be seen on your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

Just visit www.52project.org and look under the "Kid's Stuff" menu.







PROJECT UPDATE, MARCH 2016



# STORYTELLING

Shortly before we moved into the new Clubhouse six years ago, we decided to offer our kids opportunities to learn skills beyond the writing and acting we were already teaching. We started many new classes like Filmmaking, Poetry, Set Design, Dancemaking, Photography, and Stage Combat and collectively named them "New Platforms." Now we've just added a new one!

**Storytelling** is a class developed and taught by Program Director Garrett Kim that creates performances from personal recollections and other sources a la "The Moth." Kids are matched with adult partners (also known as "storyturges") and meet for 7 weeks to perfect the craft of spinning a good yarn. The kids presented their final stories at the Five Angels on Nov. 20 and the grown-ups were on hand to lend their support.



*When Trouble Happens* We found out how hard it is to take care of a dog from Jayla Alvarez and her partner Marinda Anderson.



**Cat-Dash-Trophe** Ethan Zenteno borrowed a story about the search for a lost cat from his adult pal Greg Hildreth.



STORYTELLING PHOTOS BY WINSTON RODNEY

*Hat-Trick or Treat* Milen Tokarev skillfully blended the twin worlds of Hockey and Halloween with the help of KeiLyn Jones.



*Why Did I Decide to Do Flips Today?* Charde Harvey flippantly told a scary story about acrobatics gone awry. Charly Evon Simpson coached her.



**The Day of the Fog** Natasha Davis told of how hard it is to learn to drive, especially in fog, in a story inspired by Rachel Bonds.



The Adventure of No-Name Jayleen Velez chose to tell a fictional tale about a doughnut (we like doughnuts). Therese Barbato helped.



Handling Anxiety Featuring Connor Brandon Leon told about the pitfalls of friendship. Nic Grelli was his companion through the process.



# MEGABITS



✓ Liz Bell, our Education Director, has a baby! And, of course, so does her guy, Andrew Stein! Enza Bell Stein was born in New York City on March 1 at 1:30 in the afteroon. She was 8 lbs., 4 oz. and showed up with a full head of hair. Liz says she looks just like Andrew... if Andrew didn't have a beard!

We haven't seen a photo of the little dude yet, but Bobby Cannavale (seen on page 1) and actress Rose Byrne had a little boy named Rocco on February 1.



▲ And while we're talking beards, Sofiya Akilova, last seen as a plucky, snake-killing fox in our December Playmaking show (see page 1) got married to impressively bearded (not to mention mustachioed) Alex Harvey on February 17.

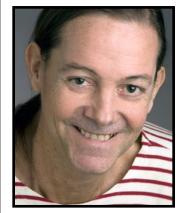


▲We Meant To Tell You This Earlier Dept.: Our long-time pal and volunteer Catherine Mueller got married to Dan Melwani at Frankie's Stable Gardens in Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn on September 9, 2015. This very romantic photo was taken just around the corner from there.



▲ Jeanine Serralles and Drew Cortese welcomed Antonia Iris Cortese on December 18, 2015. She was 5 lbs., 13 oz. Jeanine was scheduled to be in our December Playmaking show but had to drop out at the last minute because, well, Antonia was coming!

# IN MEMORIAM - KEITH ALAN BENJAMIN



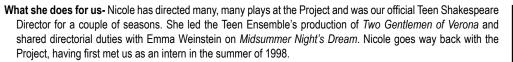
# DEC. 27, 1954 - FEB. 1, 2016

We are saddened to report the loss of our old buddy Keith Benjamin, a long-time friend of the Project who helped us out with sound designs, loadins, backstage crew assignments, and many other things over the years.

Keith designed sets as a kid, studied jazz drums at the Berklee College of music, studied acting with Sanford Meisner, helped create special effects for Robocop II and other movies, and went on to become a produced playwright, a published writer, and an expert on all things piratical.

He was a great husband and best friend to Anne O'Sullivan, another terrific Project pal, and we send our best to her.





Occupation- Theater Director. (Nicole is currently working on Our Lady of Kibeho at Smith College.)

Why she does what she does- "I love telling stories and working with people."

Hobbies- "Reading books. Running. Dancing in the living room."

Last book read- "We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families by Philip Gourevitch. It's for a play I'm working on. While the subject matter was hard to read about, I do enjoy reading non-fiction. People do wonderful things and people do terrible things and for me, it's important to study both."

Most recent accomplishment- "I have a plant that is actually growing and I've kept it alive for several months."

Best Project Memory- "There are so many! But I will never forget the first teen ensemble trip to Banff (For Two Gents). It was spectacular."

Credo- "It will work out."

Advice to kids- "Be kind."

Place of birth- "Kingston, Jamaica."

Habitat- "An apartment in Brooklyn with Tim J. Lord (the Project's Tech Director) and Henry the Dog."

Favorite thing about the Project- "The people."

On Flyer Bars- "Eat them. Share them."

# TRIP SNAPZ!



Bridgehampton: The Playback crew found new perspectives on the beach in October...



...and almost didn't find their way out of the Maize at Fairview Farm



Nyack: The Two-on-Two teen actors took a break from rehearsing by skating at Bear Mountain.



Stone Ridge, NY: Kids and adults alike had a great time at SkateTime...



...'cause that's the way we roll ...



...and you know the weekend was a success when the kids sleep all the way home.





