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June 19, 2014

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Local Arts Group Awarded Grant from Commonwealth Foundation

*Funding to support workforce development programming for
Prince George's County Youth*

Mount Rainier, MD: Local arts non-profit Joe's Movement Emporium has received a \$22,000 grant from the Commonwealth Foundation to support its workforce development program for at risk teens in Prince George's County. Joe's Theater Tech Program (TTP) provides youth ages 16-21 with technical instruction in theater production, operation and digital media along with critical supports such as tutoring, college exploration and life skills coaching. Funding provided by the Commonwealth Foundation will enable TTP to serve additional youth, include more in-depth instruction; provide access to state-of-the-art equipment; and offer work study opportunities that lead to meaningful employment opportunities.

TTP was created in response to the high teen unemployment rate in Prince George's County, MD where 74% of youth ages 16-19 and 36% of young adults ages 20-24 are jobless. Since 2008, it has served 127 youth, up to 180 hours per student of technical training, academic support, post-secondary exploration and work-readiness on-site in Joe's performing arts center with opportunities to work alongside professionals in the field. Stipends are awarded for work study, special achievements and as incentives for completing benchmarks, improving grades and attendance.

The TTP Class of 2014 completed the program with a **95% high school graduation rate**, a rate well above the county average. In addition, **70% of graduates will matriculate to college in fall 2014, a 20% increase over last year.** The remainder of the students will move on to additional training, full-time employment or military service.

TTP is recruiting participants for the Class of 2014-15. Candidates must be either a senior in a Prince George's County Public School or out-of-school and working towards completion of a GED. For more information contact shonique@joesmovement.org or 301-699-1819.

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The **Commonwealth Foundation** operates and supports educational programs and projects assisting underserved children and youth. Founded in 1968 by Stewart Bainum, the Foundation focuses on primary and secondary education. It is based in Silver Spring, MD. More information at www.cweal.org.

Joe's **Theatre Tech Program (TTP)** receives major support from the Prince George's Economic Development Corporation. Additional support is provided by Bank of America, BB&T, Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, The Honorable Will Campos, Commonwealth Foundation, Joseph Greenwald Laake, Jos. W. McCartin Insurance, The Maryland State Arts Council, Law Offices of Michael D. Herman Esq., The Honorable Mary Lehman, O'Malley Miles Nysten & Gilmore, Pepco, Petro Design/Build, Prince George's County Bar Association, Prince George's Arts & Humanities Council, Prince George's Community Foundation, Prince George's County Public School System, Prince George's County Department of Housing & Community Development, Safeway, VOCUS, and many generous individual supporters. World Arts Focus dba **Joe's Movement Emporium** is the largest independent performing arts center in Prince George's County, MD. Founded in 1992, it is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that incorporates dance, movement and performing arts traditions from around the world into exceptional educational and artistic experiences. For more information call 301-699-1819 or visit joesmovement.org.