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Workforce Development Program for Local Teens Opens Young Eyes to New Possibilities

Joe's Theater Tech Program celebrates 5th year with Showcase & Graduation

Mount Rainier, MD: Performing arts and workforce development may seem strange bedfellows; but through Joe's Movement Emporium's **Theater Tech Program (TTP)** that pairing has proved to be a game changer in the lives of at-risk teens in Prince George's County. On June 5, 2014, the program will celebrate the completion of its fifth year with a student **Showcase and Graduation** at the organization's Mount Rainier facility, highlighting film, video and photographic work created throughout the year by student participants.

TTP provides students with technical instruction in theater production, operation and digital media along with critical supports such as tutoring, college exploration and life skills coaching. This forward-looking combination gives young people aged 17-21 life and employability skills toward a successful future. Through TTP students receive 90 hours of academic support, post-secondary exploration and work-readiness; 30 hours of experience on professional sound, lighting, photography, video and film equipment; and 60 hours of off-site, training with professionals at organizations such as Women in Film and Video, Round House Theater and the University of Maryland.

"TTP participants come to us from very low income households with numerous challenges," said TTP Program Director Anthony Henderson. "They may be behind in school, have excessive absences, live in a single parent household, homeless, in foster care or face other barriers to success. Our program is like a village that literally embraces these kids with one-on-one supports, mentoring and a belief in their abilities that they may have never experienced before."

TTP was created in 2008 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. Last year, 96% of TTP students completed its training AND graduated from high school bucking a county-wide graduation rate of just 77%. Half of those went to college with the remainder pursuing military service, additional training or full-time employment.

The TTP Showcase and Graduation will be held on Thursday, June 5, 2014 from 5:00-7:00pm at Joe's Movement Emporium, 3309 Bunker Hill Road, Mount Rainier, MD 20712. For more information, contact Anthony Henderson at anthony@joesmovement.org or visit joesmovement.org.

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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. Joe's unique ability to utilize the arts as a vehicle for progressive education, workforce training and economic growth have made it one of the most well-respected nonprofit organizations in the region. For more information call 301-699-1819 or visit joesmovement.org.