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Local Performing Arts Center Offers Workforce Development Initiative For At-Risk Youth in Prince George's County, MD; Nominations sought for Class of 2014-2015

Mount Rainier, MD: Joe's Movement Emporium is currently recruiting participants for its Theater Tech Program (TTP) Class of 2014-15. TTP is a workforce development initiative that provides at-risk youth ages 16-21 with instruction in theater production, operation and digital media paired with critical supports such as college exploration, life skills coaching and real work experience. This forward-looking combination gives young people life and employability skills toward a successful future. Candidates must be either a senior in a Prince George's County Public School, recently out-of-school or working towards completion of a GED.

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. Through TTP students receive up to 180 hours of technical training, academic support, post-secondary exploration and work-readiness on-site in Joe's performing arts facility with opportunities to work alongside professionals in the field. Stipends of up to \$1,440 are awarded for work study, special achievements and as incentives for completing benchmarks, improving grades and attendance.

The TTP Class of 2014 graduated on June 5, 2014 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** – and 30% will move on to additional training, full-time employment or military service.

"TTP participants come to us from very low income households with numerous challenges," said Joe's Executive Director Brooke Kidd. "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. TTP is like a village that embraces youth with one-on-one supports, mentoring and a belief in their abilities that they may have never experienced before."

The program receives major support from the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation through Workforce Investment Act funding. Additional support is provided by the Commonwealth Foundation, Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, Maryland State Arts Council, VOCUS and many other generous supporters.

For more information or to nominate a student, contact shonique@joesmovement.org or call 301-699-1819.

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World Arts Focus dba **Joe's Movement Emporium** is the largest independent performing arts center in Prince George's County, MD. Founded in 1995, 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.