

## Yale University President's Public Service Fellowship

### Proposal for Fellowship Placement • Summer 2017

---

- Organization: Yale Repertory Theatre/Yale School of Drama's "Dwight/Edgewood Project"
  - Full street address of organization: 222 York Street, PO Box 208244, New Haven, CT 06520-8244
  - Website: [yalerep.org](http://yalerep.org) and [drama.yale.edu](http://drama.yale.edu)
  - Name and title of the Direct Supervisor (*please note: the Direct Supervisor must be available to supervise Fellow on a daily basis*): Emalie Mayo, Project Coordinator
  - Phone number and e-mail address of Direct Supervisor: 2-1591; [emalie.mayo@yale.edu](mailto:emalie.mayo@yale.edu)
  - Placement dates (*8-11 weeks between Tuesday, May 30 and Friday, August 11, 2017*): 8 weeks - Monday, May 15 – Friday, July 14
  - Are placement dates flexible? If so, please describe: The dates of this placement are not flexible due to the specific calendar demands of the program dictated by the New Haven Public Schools academic calendar.
  - Hours of the program (*placements should be equivalent to full-time*): Actual hours may vary but generally the day runs from 10:00am – 6:00pm, Monday- Friday, with some weekend/evening responsibilities; the 8 hour day span may vary again, based on the partner school's regular day as well as during technical rehearsals.
-

## Placement Description

---

- Organization description (*Mission statement, population served. 150 words or less.*):

Dwight/Edgewood Project (D/EP) is a community outreach program started in 1995 by Yale School of Drama in concert with Yale Repertory Theatre. Modeled after the acclaimed 52<sup>nd</sup> Street Project, D/EP pairs children in grades 6-7 from New Haven's Barnard Environmental Studies School with students from Yale School of Drama (YSD). Over an intensive four weeks, students learn how to write a play, while experiencing success and empowerment through the arts on Yale's campus. The youth, identified by the school's administration and teachers, are children interested in writing and whose families can support this commitment. The children are partnered with the graduate students through the entire creative process, beginning with a blank page and culminating in a performance of their original works, performed by their YSD mentors. Additionally, the program offers participating YSD students an opportunity to hone their teaching skills while providing a valuable way to connect with their community.

- Please write a 1-2 sentence summary of the work that the Fellow would be conducting (*50 words or less. This will be used as your agency's project description summary on the PPSF website, so please be succinct*):

The Presidential Fellow will serve as a Mentor and will be paired with one middle school student throughout the Playmaking process. Additionally, the Fellow will provide critical administrative support for the program's Management Team and the Project Coordinator.

- Please write a complete description of the specific project you propose and list the duties/outcomes expected of the Fellow. (*Suggested length: one to two pages.*)

Dwight/Edgewood Project's 23<sup>rd</sup> season will continue to celebrate not only the program's longevity, but also our partnership with New Haven's Barnard Environmental Studies School. These two elements will serve to enhance an already strong arts education initiative while committing to its core objectives of fostering positive self-esteem, self-awareness, and self-respect through the theater. D/EP offers Yale School of Drama students the opportunity to share the love of their craft with the community in which they reside for three years, while learning valuable skills that often transcend their specific program of study. Also, D/EP gives the participating company of young playwrights the skills of learning how to write a play and all the elements involved by

---

taking their written word from the page to the stage, as well as offers them an avenue where their voice is validated. All components are within the context of a larger company where different generations come together in pursuit of a common goal.

On the quality of the student works, the New Haven Register has noted, "The content of the plays is often surprising, even to parents, ranging from comedies to poignant observations of life as the kids see it, some quite revelatory. They have addressed the issue of bullying, what it's like not to fit in, how it feels to be in a single-parent home, watching friends take the wrong path."

D/EP is a four-week afterschool program with a time-tested curriculum:

Week 1 is about company building. Playwrights and Mentors (the Fellow as one of the 8 Mentors) learn about each other through theatre games and social/emotional activities, followed by learning about theatre components through activities led by the adult company. The objective of this week, beyond getting to know one another, is to begin building a theatre vocabulary, which will be incorporated into their learning process in week 2.

Week 2 is dedicated to the Playmaking curriculum. Led by a Teaching Artist, and guided by the Mentors (Fellow as Mentor), the Playwrights learn the step-by-step process of playwriting through visualization and writing exercises. At the end of week 2, every playwright will have written a practice play that is read by the adults. This week also ends with the one-on-one pairing of Playwright and Mentor; this partnership will grow over the weekend writing retreat that begins at the end of week 2.

At the end of week 2, the company of Playwrights, Mentors, Teaching Artist, two Directors, Producing Director, General Manager, and Project Coordinator travel to a camp in northeastern Connecticut where they will stay for the weekend. This 2-½ day writing retreat is where the Playwrights, supported by their Mentors and the Teaching Artist, will write their original play. The weekend also features games, waterfront activities (weather permitting), mandatory campfires and eating of s'mores, as well as one more opportunity for this company of artists to strengthen their relationships.

It should be noted that the adult company members who participate in the writing retreat (this includes the Fellow), do not get a day off between the retreat and the start of the next week.

In Week 3, the company jumps right into rehearsals, and prop/set building. These activities fully include the Playwrights into the entire process. Mentors are assigned

---

acting roles in two of the eight plays (acting in their playwright's play and one additional play). The week will end with final run-throughs of all 8 plays, where everyone gets to see the progress each team has accomplished.

Week 4 includes technical rehearsals, performances, receptions, and strike. This final week is a whirlwind; the adult company rehearses in the morning and then again in the afternoon when the playwrights are present as lights, sound, and costumes are added. The Playwrights will also spend time outside of rehearsal recording voice-overs, which serve as the introduction to each of their plays during performances; writing thank-you letters to their mentors; and mandatory ice cream eating (fear not, we also find time for the entire adult company to get their share of ice cream). An additional component for the Playwrights, as yet another team-building layer, is hosting a teaching artist from Yale School of Drama community for an afternoon. The intent for this activity is to offer the Playwrights the chance to come back together after having been separated for several days by virtue of rehearsals and the nights on which their plays will be performed. Using the concepts of contact improvisation, the playwrights will learn about trust, specifically how their bodies can physicalize an element of their play - adding another storytelling layer. It culminates in a short piece they then share with the adult company on the day of the final dress rehearsal.

Week 4 culminates with performances of all 8 original plays for families and friends; 4 on Friday night, 4 on Saturday night; each night concluding with a reception.

Following Saturday's final reception, the Playwrights will say their final goodbyes, and then the entire adult company will strike the production.

The next two weeks are dedicated to closing the program; the Fellow is a critical part of this process. Once D/EP has been "put to bed", the Fellow will then assist the Producing Director, General Manager and Project Coordinator with any remaining D/EP requirements (final reports to funders, delivering packages of materials to the playwrights and their school, inventory of materials, etc.), followed by possible research associated with Yale Repertory Theatre's academic year initiative, WILL POWER!

Although D/EP appears to be fully structured, it is important to note that each year is enhanced by what is learned the previous year; in 2012, two training sessions with a social worker from the Yale Child Study Center were added for the adult company as a means of providing them with tools to better respond to some of the challenges experienced by children from the New Haven community. Additionally, each new company of adults offers the program new insights and experiences.

---

D/EP's success is based on building on what has worked while leaving room for the gifts each adult and playwright brings to the table.

We can't wait for this year's D/EP program to kick off, and we hope the adult company will again include a PPSF. (*See attached photo montage from D/EP 2016*).

- Specific skills/experience required for the project (*Please list*):

The Fellow:

- Should have a strong commitment and interest in working with the New Haven community
  - Should have experience and enjoy working with middle school aged children
  - Should have a love of theater as they will perform in at least two of the original plays written by a middle school student
  - Will be expected to assist in the creation and implementation of introductory theatre curriculum in concert with other members of the adult company as well as have experience leading theatre games for children ages 11 - 14
  - Will be expected to assist in the building of scenery and props; production load-in and strike
  - Should be able to work both collaboratively and independently; take direction from peers serving in Managerial positions
  - Must have high computer literacy; for example, this person will assist in the creation of a digital photo archive of at least 1,000 photos taken over the course of the four-week program
  - May be asked to assist with marketing and/or publicity
  - Must be able to multi-task and be self-motivated; have good organizational and time management skills; be flexible
  - Will assist in the closing of the program including but not limited to creating final reports; sponsor and participant correspondence. Administrative office skills very helpful.
- Additional requirements (e.g. a car or weekend working hours). If a car is required, please include information regarding parking arrangements and mileage reimbursement:
    - Pass a background check
    - Valid driver's license a must (*NOTE: company vehicles & parking are provided*)
    - Yale University driver safety training class a must
-

- Program includes a mandatory weekend writing retreat off campus
  - Outside of work with students during the regular work week, the program will include theatre load-in on one weekend, as well as one Saturday rehearsal, performance and strike (attendance mandatory)
  - Hours may vary throughout the program and may involve some evening rehearsals and/or administrative work.
- Briefly describe the work that Yale PPSF Fellows have done with your agency in the past and present. If you have not worked with Yale Fellows, please describe any work that Yale students have done with your agency.

Since D/EP's inception in 1995, students from Yale School of Drama (YSD) have played crucial roles in the development and continuity of this initiative. Sixteen YSD students have now worked with D/EP through the President's Public Service Fellowship in the following capacities: Producers, General Managers, Designers, and Mentors.

In each of those capacities, the Fellow was a critical piece in ensuring the success of the program, either by assisting with the general management, partnering with an individual student, creating the world of our playwrights' work, assisting in the close of the program, as well as providing support to Yale Rep's education initiatives - specifically its annual WILL POWER! Initiative following D/EP's close.

All YSD PPSF Fellows are trained to serve as mentors to the young D/EP participants, work one-on-one with each child, actively join in classes/workshops/ group theater games, and participate in the mandatory two-day retreat where the original plays are developed under the direction of a teaching artist (who is typically a former Dwight/Edgewood participant and YSD graduate).

---



Dwight/Edgewood Project 2016 company at Camp Wightman



2016 PPSF Francesca and her Playwright Julia

**DWIGHT/  
EDGEWOOD  
PROJECT  
2016**



Playwright Tony painting props



Playwright Shyanne and Mentor Melissa

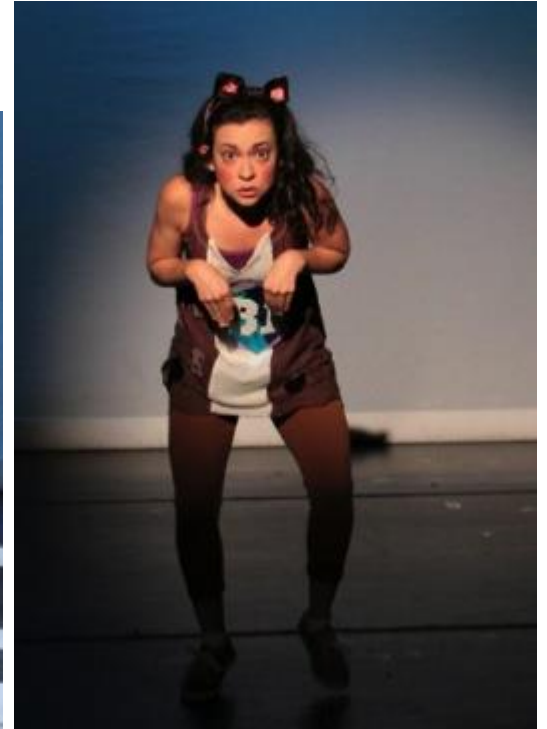


Teaching Artist Helen with Playwrights Keiara (L) and Shayla (R)





Mentors Brendan (L) and Chad (R) in Playwright Jose's play



Mentor Cat in Playwright Shyanne's play



Mentor Cat in Playwright Keiara's play



Mentors Francesca (L) and Anna (R) in Playwright Shayla's play



Mentors during the finale of Playwright Tony's play



Mentors and Playwrights take a bow!