



TulalipCares.org

## Tulalip Charitable Contributions Funds Distribution Report

**NAME OF AGENCY:** Seattle Repertory Theatre

**ADDRESS:** 155 Mercer Street, Seattle, WA 98109

**CONTACT:** 206-443-2210; <http://www.seattlerep.org>

**GENERAL GOALS:** Seattle Repertory Theatre creates productions and programs that surprise, entertain, challenge and uplift our community through a shared act of imagination.

**SPECIFIC USE FOR THIS AWARD:**

To support the Y-WE Speak-program, a program for young women to create theatre pieces based on their life experiences to empower and increase leadership skills

For more information, see the attached report from Seattle Repertory Theatre.

**Seattle Repertory Theatre**  
**Report to Tulalip Tribes Charitable Contributions**  
**For Support of Y-WE Speak**

On behalf of all of us here at Seattle Repertory Theatre, we raise our hands in thanks and celebration of the [REDACTED] gift we received from Tulalip Tribes Charitable Contributions in March 2015, which helped to support the Rep's Y-WE Speak program. Held in partnership with Young Women Empowered (Y-WE), the goal of Y-WE Speak is to empower young women ages 12-18 from diverse backgrounds to step up as leaders in their schools, communities and the world. Through the program, young women are introduced to a broader circle of mentors and peers from the community, engaged in projects and activities that improve their writing and public speaking skills, and help them build confidence in themselves and their self-worth, all of which translates into their educational and life goals.

The Y-WE Speak program at Seattle Rep used the transformative power of theatre as a means of confronting broader issues such as race, gender identity, and social pressures. With the help of Tulalip Charitable Contributions, 11 students and eight mentors took to the Leo K. stage at Seattle Rep with an original theatre piece written to share their stories and explore the concept of personal legacy. Following four months of rehearsals, the final performance took place on Saturday, March 14, 2015, and was attended by 183 family members, peers and other invited guests from the community—45% of whom were youth attendees. Attached you will find photos from creative sessions, rehearsals and the culminating performance.



*Students develop and rehearse their original theatre piece with their mentors and Rep teaching artists.*

In the third and final year of this program, the Rep led a diverse group of young women from the Northwest to explore their pasts, envision their futures, and share what they discover with their community. With cuts to arts curriculum in many schools and with the dramatic wealth disparity in our region, Seattle Repertory Theatre is in the unique position to provide teen girls with access to professional theater and arts education opportunities. Through this program, diverse young women were encouraged to reflect on and tell their own stories, in their own voices. By sharing these stories as a group and crafting their narratives into a performance piece that was then shared with family, friends, and community members, these young women discovered that their voices are valued and vital to our whole community.

This year's participants were recruited from Y-WE events and programs, as well as through referrals from social workers and counselors in the community. Y-WE also integrated additional theatre-based

activities and performance opportunities into their twice-yearly retreats, which replaced the introductory workshop model used in the past, but drawing interest from the wider organization as a whole to encourage a committed group of participants for Y-WE Speak. The 11 teen girls were paired with eight women mentors who chose to participate in the full residency held at the Rep. Final participants of all ages came from an array of neighborhoods, religions, cultures and economic backgrounds, many from cultures or areas where women may struggle to be heard or take leadership positions in the community. With help from two Rep Teaching Artists, the teens were guided through theatre games, exercises, reflective and creative prompts, each built to support the creative development and self-confidence of these young women through an artistic outlet. Workshops were held on nine Saturdays from December 2014 to March 2015, each lasting from four to six hours.

The Y-WE Speak residency group attended the January 29 performance of August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson* together at Seattle Rep, followed by a Q&A session with the artists involved in performing and producing the show. At the weekly session following the show, participants gathered to discuss the performance and the content of the play itself. They used this discussion as a springboard into the exploration of personal legacy—the stories and values they have inherited from their families, combined with their own life experiences, and what they would like to leave behind for the next generation.



*Students and mentors reflect on the performance they attended, and share related stories from their life experiences.*

Seattle Rep facilitators asked them the question, “*What difference do you want to make in your own life and the lives of others?*” Through the process of sharing, writing and presenting on this topic, each young woman produced a powerful, personal and finely articulated narrative that was further refined and woven together into the final performance of short monologues and group pieces, song and dance, becoming a rich and full reflection of their unique stories and experiences. On March 14, 2015 the Rep hosted the final performance in the Leo K. Theatre before an audience of 183 friends, family and community members. Admission to the event was free to the public, and as always the show played to a supportive and enthusiastic audience.

Following the culminating performance in March 2015, Seattle Rep’s partner, Young Women Empowered, has taken over administering the Y-WE Speak program and is planning a summer camp-style program in summer 2016. Arlene Martínez-Vázquez, Y-WE’s former External Relations manager and a freelance teaching artist, has also since been appointed Education Director at Seattle Rep. While Seattle Rep will no longer be delivering Y-WE Speak, we are delighted that one of the key artists in charge of the program will be bringing her extensive experience working with and teaching diverse groups of students to help with direction, outreach, and impact here at the Rep.



