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by BWW News Desk March 24 <http://www.broadwayworld.com/new-jersey/article/Premiere-Stages-Teams-with-The-Provident-Bank-Foundation-for-Elizabeth-Playwriting-Residency-20150324>



Premiere Stages, the professional theatre company in residence at Kean University, is partnering with The Provident Bank Foundation to offer an innovative seven-week, in-school playwriting residency this spring at the Terence C. Reilly School No. 7 located in Elizabeth. The residency, which affords twenty-one 7th grade students with access to professional actors and teaching artists, is held in partnership with William Culp, a history teacher at the school.

Premiere Stages' residencies are specifically designed to support classroom learning objectives and are designed to support the Common Core Curriculum,

reinforcing literacy skills, encouraging creativity and collaboration, and bolstering student self-esteem. Professional teaching artists work closely with classroom teachers to specifically tailor each residency to the needs of the students. Over the course of seven weeks, students will learn the basics of playwriting and collaborate to write original short works for the stage. The residency will culminate in an in-school presentation of student-written plays read by professional actors on Thursday, April 16. Students have the option of writing about the following topics when creating their plays: The Star-Spangled Banner or the Burning of D.C. (War of 1812), The Trail of Tears (American Indian Removal Policy), The Alamo (Annexation of Texas), or The Gold Rush (Expansion West).

"It is exceptionally rewarding to see the students create characters and stories that align with the topics being explored in Bill's class, and funding from the Provident Bank Foundation makes it all possible. I applaud the Foundation's commitment to helping serve the local community with programs that combine the arts and literacy," said [John J. Wooten](#), producing artistic director of Premiere Stages.

"The Provident Bank Foundation places a strong emphasis on educational programs for the youth in the communities served by Provident Bank," said Jane Kurek, executive director of the Provident Bank Foundation. "Premiere Stages' in-school playwriting residency program provides an opportunity to reinforce literacy skills, encouraging creativity and collaboration, and bolstering student self-esteem."

The Provident Bank Foundation was established by New Jersey's oldest bank in 2003 to enhance the quality of life in communities served by Provident Bank. The Foundation supports not-for-profit groups, institutions, schools and other organizations that provide services in these communities. Since its founding, the Foundation has provided more than \$19 million in grants for programs focusing on

education, health, wellness, recreation, the arts and social and civic services. Additional information on The Provident Bank Foundation can be found at www.providentnjfoundation.org.

The Premiere Stages residencies are just one facet of Premiere's larger educational initiative, known as the Premiere Play Factory. Play Factory programming also includes Camp Premiere, a summer theatre camp for middle and high school students, and the Play Factory Performance Series, an annual summer performance series featuring dynamic, professional theatre presentations designed specifically for young audiences.

For more details regarding the Premiere Play Factory Residency Program, call 908-737-4092 or contact the staff via email at premiere@kean.edu.

Founded in 1855, Kean University has become one of the largest metropolitan institutions of higher education in the region, boasting a richly diverse student, faculty and staff population. Kean continues to play a key role in the training of teachers and is a hub of educational, technological and cultural enrichment serving nearly 15,000 students. The Nathan Weiss Graduate College offers three doctorate degree programs and more than 60 options for graduate study leading to master's degrees, professional diplomas or certifications. The University's five undergraduate colleges offer 50 undergraduate degrees over a full range of academic subjects. With campuses in Union and Toms River, NJ, and Wenzhou, China, Kean University provides a world-class education. Visit Kean online at www.kean.edu.

Premiere Stages offers affordable prices, air-conditioned facilities and free parking close to the theatre. Premiere Stages also provides free or discounted tickets to patrons with disabilities. All Premiere Stages facilities are fully accessible spaces, and companion seating is available for patrons with disabilities. Assistive listening devices and large print programs are available at all times; publications in alternate formats are available with advanced notice. Please call (908) 737-4092 for a list of sign-interpreted, audio-described or open-captioned performances. For more information, visit Premiere Stages online at www.kean.edu/premierestages.

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