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MOVING IN THE SPIRIT AND 7 STAGES THEATRE PARTNER TO TRANSFORM ATLANTA'S YOUTH THROUGH ART

**ATLANTA, Georgia – June 9, 2010**—Moving in the Spirit is partnering with 7 Stages Theatre's "Youth Creates" program this summer, providing teens in Atlanta with the opportunity to create their own work and experience multiple genres of performing arts.

Moving in the Spirit transforms the lives of youth and creates compassionate leaders through the art of dance, while Youth Creates provides experiential learning and performance opportunities for teenagers, guiding them as they create an original work of theatre. Both programs are dedicated to helping young people communicate their dreams and developing their voices as artists.

Teens in the programs will create and share work with each other, culminating in a series of community performances. The collaboration kicks-off with performances from Moving in the Spirit's teen touring company, The Apprentice Corporation, on June 30<sup>th</sup> and July 1<sup>st</sup>. These shows, with production and lighting designed by Youth Creates team members, mark the beginning of the teens' summer dance tour through the South. While on tour, the Moving in the Spirit teens will individually choreograph solos based on their personal hopes and dreams. Youth Creates teens will view all solos, and select two for inclusion in the theatrical piece they create for performance on July 30 & 31.

"It is a dream realized to be collaborating with Heidi Howard, founder of 7 Stages' Youth Creates program," shares Dana Lupton, Moving in the Spirit's co-founder and Executive/Artistic Director. "I have admired Youth Creates, and the artistic work of 7 Stages founders Del Hamilton and Faye Allen, for the last two decades. When Youth Creates started both Heidi and I knew our missions aligned and it was a match made in heaven. I am so curious to see what our young people create while on tour, and equally fascinated with how Youth Creates will weave it into their original script."

Heidi Howard adds, "By working and creating together, we learn that regardless of differences, we can accomplish great things, pieces of art that are unique to those differences. I have always felt that Dana and I share a love for the art that exists within the youthful mind. Through our efforts to create a space for our youth companies to collaborate together, we are creating a space for expression and new relationships that will result in art making. I am amazed and encouraged at the beauty in that simple fact and am so looking forward to our collaboration!"

As high ticket prices are often a barrier for youth wishing to experience art, 7 Stages and Moving in the Spirit will present one free community showing of the Moving in the Spirit tour show, titled *Tour Explosion!*, to youth development organizations on June 30<sup>th</sup> at 3pm. Youth organizations can make

reservations for the free community performance by calling 404-624-5295. A public showing of *Tour Explosion!* will be held on July 1 at 7pm. Ticket prices and info can be found at [www.movinginthespirit.org](http://www.movinginthespirit.org). Youth Creates will present its new, original work on July 30 & 31 at 8pm. Info can be found at [www.7stages.org](http://www.7stages.org). All shows will be held at 7 Stages' Main Stage theater.

Founded by Dana Lupton and Leah Mann in 1986, Moving in the Spirit is a nationally recognized youth development program that integrates high quality dance instruction with performance, leadership and mentor opportunities for young people in Atlanta's urban communities. Moving in the Spirit educates, inspires and unites young people through dance, in order to help them become compassionate leaders.

7 Stages is a professional, non-profit theatre company devoted to engaging artists and audiences by focusing on the social, political, and spiritual values of contemporary culture. 7 Stages gives primary emphasis to international work and the support and development of new plays, new playwrights, and new methods of collaboration. Youth Creates is 7 Stages' training program providing experiential learning and performance opportunities for teenagers. Through playwriting, design, and performance, students collaborate to create an original work of theatre.

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