

ENTERTAINMENT

Play to chronicle modern teen life

By Lee Brown
Sentinel-Voice

Drugs. Gangs. Teen pregnancy. Peer pressure. Pitfalls lurk at every turn for today's teens.

Set for Nov. 29-30 at the West Las Vegas Library Theater, a play titled "Passages" will probe the different obstacles facing today's youth. Performed by the Community Youth Theatre Ensemble and the Youth Writer's Workshop, the play will use drama, poetry, song and dance to provide insight into the difficult world of being a teen.

The free production is set for 7 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 29 and 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 30.

"This production deals with the sometimes complicated lives of today's youth," said Ellis Rice, who along with Wille Daugherty are directing the production. "It's just as much about learning as it is about performing for those involved."

"The primary goal of Community Youth Theatre Ensemble is to empower them (student participants)," said Rice, cultural activities specialist for the West Las Vegas Arts Center.

This is the theater group's first scripted production. "We've combined with the

Youth Writer's Workshop to incorporate the skills of both (groups) — (us on) the performance end, (them) producing the written work," Rice said.

The Community Youth Theatre Ensemble formed in May 1996 as a way for youth to use theater to combat daily troubles, Rice said. The group has a core of 12 members, but that number usually fluctuates between 17 and 22, all of whom are high school and middle school students.

Similarly, the Youth Writer's Workshop was formed to give youth a creative outlet. "A lot of the work comes right from the minds of these young people," said Keith Brantley, who runs the workshop with Pendelita Toney and helps young writers develop their skills.

Brantley praised the goals of both groups.

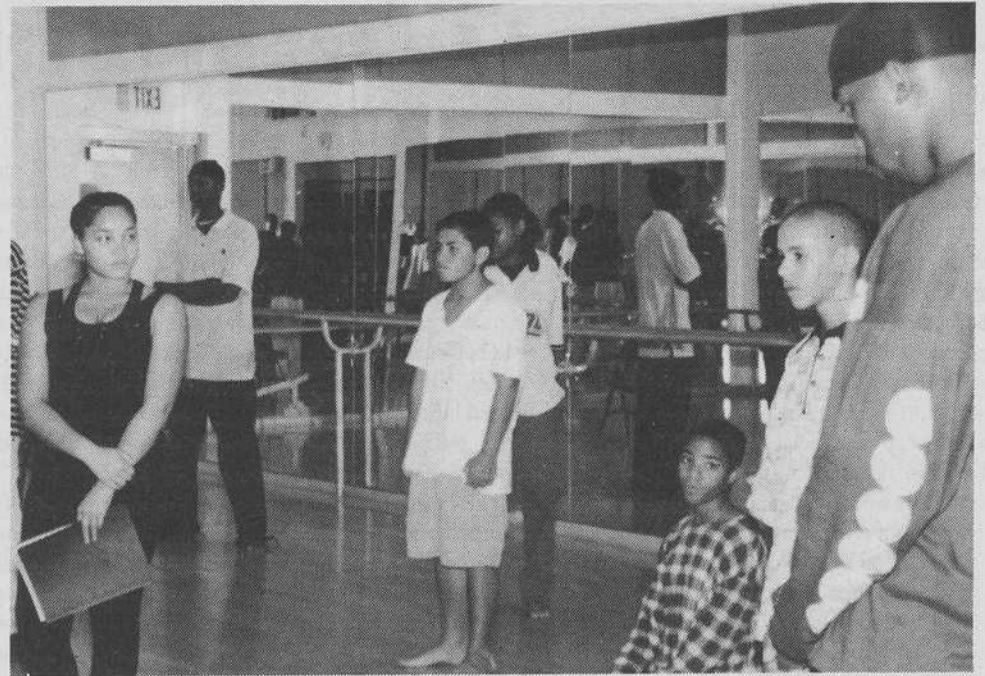
"More so than it being a performing situation, it's a learning situation," he said. "A lot of young people are learning not only to be performers, but also how to produce and how to write."

"I like the reality of it," said Barry York, a 17-year-old junior at Bonanza High School who will be performing in Passages. "It's a real realistic piece," said York who has been

a member of the theater for two years.

"I like that it deals with our own issues," said Shanell Bagley, a 13-year-old eighth-grader at Wayne Middle School, who will also be performing. "It's basically about what goes on in our lives, not anyone else's. The lives of teenagers in general."

Additional free performances will be held in January at: 7 p.m. Jan. 7 at Spring Valley Library; 2 p.m. Jan. 10 at the Clark County Library; 2 p.m. Jan. 17 at the Sunrise Library Auditorium; 7 p.m. Jan. 22 at the West Charleston Library Theatre; 2 p.m. Jan. 24 at the Whitney Library Theatre; and 7 p.m. Jan. 29 at the Summerlin Library Theatre.



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Production on Passages is ongoing. Participants in the play will relay messages about the difficulty of being a teen in today's American society.

Africa

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The forum was a prelude to the annual Freedom Fund Banquet, the NAACP's yearly fund raiser held at Bally's also. School Board Trustee Shirley Barber, who would like to visit Africa, came to learn more about the coalition.

Education Chairman Wendell Williams said the forum was timely because many cities and states are involved in professional and civic dealings with Africa.

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I believe I can fly

Practicing her tap dancing routine for the December performance at the West Las Vegas Theatre is Austin dancer Dahlia Bass.

Dance

(Continued from Page 1)

Doolittle and now the West Las Vegas Arts Center. Given the program's increasing popularity, a new facility will be needed in the near future. Despite these obstacles, Austin said the group will continue to be united by love.

"We do a lot of hugging," she said. "That's what they need. They don't get enough of that. I can tell when a child doesn't get it because they don't even know how to do it."

Austin often cries when she watches some performances, remembering how far the children have come since they met her. The nostalgia is overwhelming.

"I think they are special," she said. "We're a big family. All my children know my number. They know they can call me anytime. My line is always open for them."

Austin also enjoys the very art that has provided the foundation for her program, dancing. "Dancing is always something I loved to do," she said, "plus, it keeps you young."

The Austin Dancers will be performing December 5th and 6th at the West Las Vegas Arts Center. The Friday performance will begin at 7:30 pm and Saturday's show will start at 6:00 pm. Tickets can be purchased for \$10 in advance at the West Las Vegas Arts Center and \$15 at the door. For ticket information call 242-9551.

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Timothy Williams is a member of the Nevada & Illinois State Bar, practicing primarily in personal injury cases.

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