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PUP (Playwrights Under Progress) Fest 2020 Goes Virtual– Six Scripts Written by Teens Selected

DALLAS, TX - Junior Players and **Kitchen Dog Theater** are excited to announce that Playwrights Under Progress (PUP) Fest, the culminating event of their annual partnership with the **Dallas Independent School District** known as the **Dallas Playwriting Arts Collective (D-PAC)**, will continue virtually this year despite ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Six scripts written by local high school playwrights have been selected for this year's production and will be presented as virtual staged readings during a single performance via the Zoom platform, as part of Kitchen Dog Theater's annual New Works Festival. 2020 marks the **nineteenth year** of the collaborative program.

This year's scripts include: **207th STREET** by **Max Black** (Conrad HS), **CHIRP** by **Spencer Bolding** (Booker T. Washington HSPVA), **BEAST OF BURDEN** by **Alaska Davidson** (W.T. White HS), **POPULATION: 15** by Avery Echols (Irma Rangel YWLS), **GOLD'S GYM – NORTHLAKE & BUCKNER** by **Manon McCollum** (Booker T. Washington HSPVA), and **A FALL TO REMEMBER** by **Yalani Warren** (Skyline HS). These six scripts were selected from a field of 64 submissions from a variety of high schools from all over the Metroplex.

PUP Fest allows high school playwrights the opportunity to be mentored by some of Dallas' most renowned playwrights. Each script that is chosen is paired with a cast of teen actors and directed by local professional actors and directors. This year, PUP Fest mentors are local playwrights **Erin Ryan Burdette** and **Haley Nelson**. Serving as PUP Fest 2020 directors are **Vikas Adam, Kristin Colaneri, Chris Ramirez, Camika Spencer, Jamal Sterling** and **Montgomery Sutton**. Additionally, there will also be three mini master classes led virtually by teaching artist and PUP Fest alum Montgomery Sutton, which will be free and open to all participating PUP Fest student actors and playwrights.

Performances will take place over the Zoom Webinar platform on **Saturday, June 6, 2020 at 1:00pm**. The performance is **free** and open to the public. To join the virtual performances, **audience members must RSVP in advance at juniorplayers.org/tickets**. Patrons will then be emailed their virtual access link prior to the performance. More information can be found by visiting www.kitchendogtheater.org or www.juniorplayers.org.

PUP Fest 2020 is supported, in part, by Diane and Hal Brierley Foundation, Dallas Office of Arts and Culture, Dallas Tourism Public Improvement District, Fichtenbaum Charitable Trust, George Family Foundation – Next Generation Fund, Milfred and Patricia Hammerbacher, The Hersh Foundation, Holloway Family Foundation, Carl B. and Florence E. King Foundation, Moody Fund for the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, National New Play Network, The Rea Charitable Trust, The Shubert Foundation, Simmons Sisters Fund, John & Bonnie Strauss Foundation, SVP Dallas, TACA, and Texas Commission on the Arts as well as individual donors.

About PUP Fest: Junior Players and Kitchen Dog Theater started Playwrights Under Progress (PUP) Fest in 2002 as a new piece of Kitchen Dog Theater’s New Works Festival. An annual anticipated event, PUP Fest is also a component of the Dallas Playwriting Arts Collective (D-PAC), a partnership between Junior Players, Kitchen Dog Theater, and the Dallas Independent School District to provide innovative programs and opportunities for high school playwrights. Now in its fourth year, the D-PAC partnership will enable Junior Players and Kitchen Dog to serve an additional 1,000 DISD students through ongoing playwriting master classes throughout the school year. PUP Fest was recognized in September 2003 with a Special Award from the Dallas-Fort Worth Theater Critics Forum.

About Junior Players: Junior Players was founded in 1955 and is the oldest non-profit children's theater organization in Dallas. Over its sixty-five-year existence, Junior Players has striven to meet the changing needs of the community. From 1955 to 1989, Junior Players presented traditional children's theater productions performed entirely by children and teenagers. In 1989, the Board of Directors changed the focus of Junior Players activities, deciding that, Junior Players can best serve the youth of Dallas by providing free programming accessible to all the children of North Texas. Junior Players, therefore, exclusively provides free arts education programs in local recreation and cultural centers, housing projects, elementary and middle schools, and through social service agencies serving youth at risk.

About Kitchen Dog Theater: For 29 seasons, Kitchen Dog Theater (KDT) has provided a place where questions of justice, morality, and human freedom can be explored, whether they are found in the classics, contemporary works, or new plays. KDT provides a vibrant home base for Dallas theater artists by maintaining a 33-member Artistic Company of the area’s best theater artists. Over the years, Kitchen dog has received over 400 awards, including D Magazine’s “Best Theater Company” for 2019. KDT is proud to be one of only two theaters in Texas to receive National Endowment for the Arts “Art Works” Awards in the previous six consecutive years. A mission-driven company, Kitchen Dog is also staunch champion of new work and is a founding member of the acclaimed National New Play Network, producing timely, provocative plays that may have otherwise never been seen in Dallas.

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