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PUP (Playwrights Under Progress) Fest Brings 6 New Plays to Life

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 return to the stage this year for its **landmark 25th anniversary**. Six scripts written by local high school playwrights have been selected for this year's production and will feature some of the area's top student actors. These plays will be presented as staged readings on **Saturday, June 6, at 12 pm and 2 pm at Dallas College - Richland Campus in the Black Box theater in Fannin Hall.**

This year's scripts include, in alphabetical order: ***A Heart Found in Code*** by **Hailey Bautista** (W.H. Adamson High School), ***Fruit Bowl*** by **Makayla Leija & MacKayla Rodriguez** (W.T. White High School), ***Making Lemonade*** by **Bailey Lusk** (Marvin E. Robinson School of Business and Management), ***Object Zero: The Receptionist*** by **LeCalvin Wiggins** (David W. Carter High School), ***Voices*** by **Graham Raney** (Judge Barefoot Sanders Law Magnet), and ***[We Know His Name]*** by **Natalie Lugo** (Greenhill High School). These six scripts were selected from a field of over 100 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 **Omar Padilla** and master class instructors are **Jamal Sterling, Lee George, and Omar Padilla**. Serving as PUP Fest 2026 directors are **Emily Lopez, Jamal Sterling, Raven Garcia Lawes, Rudy Lopez, Sasha Maya Ada, and Sinan Beskok.**

Performances will take place on Saturday, June 6, 2026 at 12 pm and 2 pm, in the Black Box theater in Fannin Hall Building F at Dallas College – Richland Campus, located at 12800 Abrams Rd, Dallas, TX 75243. Free parking is available in Lot W, adjacent to the building. The performance is **free** and open to the public. To join the performances, **audience members must RSVP in advance at juniorplayers.org/RSVP.** More information can be found by visiting www.kitchendogtheater.org or www.juniorplayers.org/RSVP.

PUP Fest 2026 is supported, in part, by Adolph and Pauline Weinberger Fund at The Communities Foundation of Texas, Anonymous, BBK Pest Control, Junior Players Center Stage Members, Junior Players Champion Circle Members Holloway/Skinner Family, Junior Players Champion Circle Members

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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. PUP Fest was recognized in September 2003 with a Special Award from the Dallas-Fort Worth Theater Critics Forum.

About Junior Players: Since 1955, Junior Players has been empowering young voices by providing high quality, arts programming to North Texas children and youth at no cost to our participants. Over its 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 35 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 35-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 and "Best Theater Production" for 2024. 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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