

# FESTIVAL

Powerstories Theatre  
Powerstories Theatre of Tampa Bay Inc.  
TAMPA, FL

*Powerstories*

**THEATRE**  
REAL LIFE. ACTED OUT.

**PRESENTS**

**READ FULL CAST AND  
CREATIVE TEAM BIOS AT  
[POWERSTORIES.COM/VOW-2026](https://www.powerstories.com/vow-2026)**



**2026**  
**6TH ANNUAL**  
**VOICES OF**  
**WOMEN**  
**THEATRE FESTIVAL**  
EMPOWHER. INSPIHER. AMPLIFIHER.

**MARCH 5 - 8, 2026**

Supported by the Hillsborough Hillsborough  
County Board of Commissioners. County Florida

*Powerstories*

**THEATRE**

REAL LIFE. ACTED OUT.

# 6th Annual Voices of Women Theatre Festival

**Thursday, March 27 – 7:30 PM - Full-Length Staged Reading**

- Sam Hernandez: "How To Rob the Art Institute of Chicago"  
(General Category)

**Friday, March 6 – 7:00 PM - Full-Length Staged Reading**

- Kira Rockwell: "The Tragic Ecstasy of Girlhood"  
(General Category)

**Saturday, March 7 – 7:00 PM - Short Plays & Stories**

- Jessica Burchfield: "Love, Lost (Rings), and What We Wore"
  - Ashley Burgess Laster: "Black Barbie"
  - Charlene Dorsey: "What about Ruth?"
  - Alaina Rahaim: "Zeus Gets Cancelled"
- Seek and Speak Your Powerstory presentations:  
Chloe Corwin, Richedean Hills-Ackbar,  
Stephanie Kiser, and Niki Kissell

**Sunday, March 8 – 3:00 PM - Full-Length Staged Reading**

- Shelli Pentimall Bookler: "All My Mothers"  
(Women Playwrights Over 40 Category)

# Founder's Message

Celebrating the 6th Annual Voices of Women Theatre Festival fills me with both joy and reflection. Over the years, this festival has become a powerful home for women's stories, a place where creativity, truth, and resilience take center stage. In a season dedicated to the Greater Good, these performances remind us how storytelling can heal, unite, and move communities toward understanding and compassion.

As I prepare to step down from my role as Executive Director on March 31 and pass the baton to Clareann, I am especially moved by what this festival represents. It has been an honor to champion women playwrights and witness the impact their voices have made. I will continue to be part of Powerstories, supporting the mission that has shaped so much of my life. Thank you to every artist, volunteer, attendee, and supporter who has helped build this tradition. Your belief in the importance of women's voices has made the six years of this important festival extraordinary. May this festival continue to inspire all of us to keep working for the Greater Good.

With delight,  
Fran Powers



## COMMUNITY SPONSORS



## SILVER SPONSOR

Women of Resistance

*Thank you to Kristina Keough, Assistant Dean, College of Design, Art and Performance at USF St Pete for loaning us rehearsal space.*

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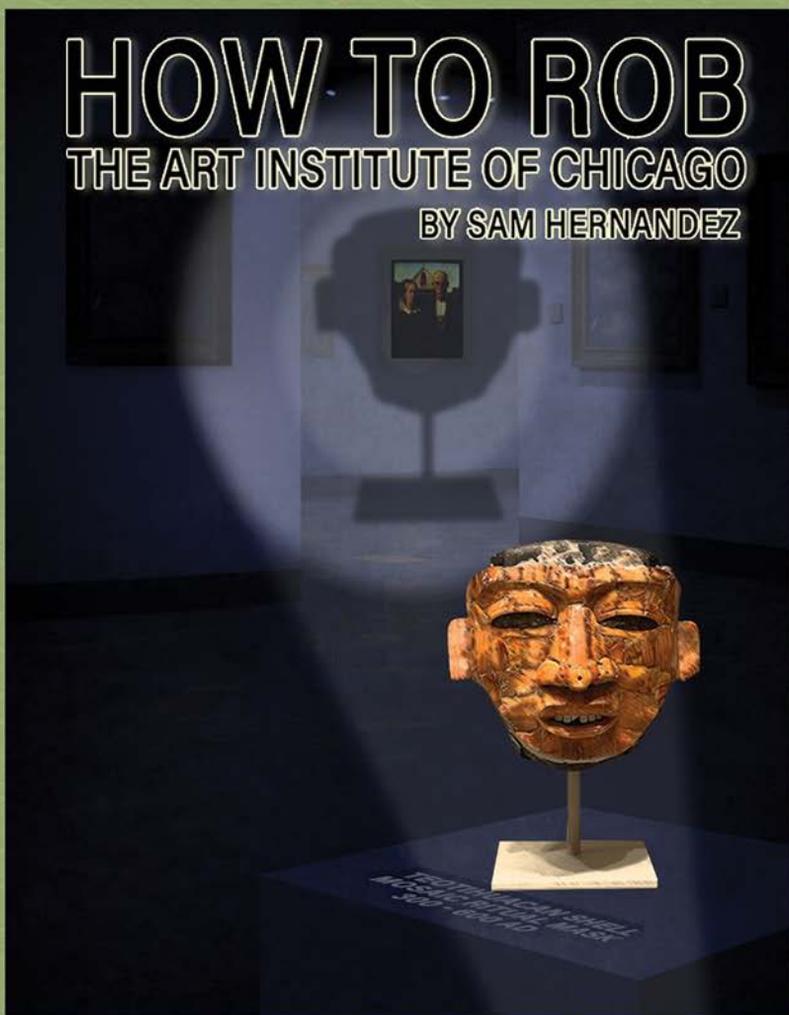
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Ivy Sunflower - Girlstories Leadership Theatre Teaching Artist

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# HOW TO ROB

THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO  
BY SAM HERNANDEZ



**Thursday, March 5, 2026**  
**Full-Length Staged Reading**

# How To Rob the Art Institute of Chicago

Thursday  
March 5, 2026

## Creative Team

Alexa Pérez - Director

Bree Brand - Production Stage Manager

Jenny Kokai - Festival Dramaturg

Harley Jones - Asst. Festival Dramaturg

## Cast

Melanie Martinez - Emiliana

Matthew Gasperino - Elijah

Jessica Baca Aguilar - Vicky

Dylan Lauricello - Luis

Alec Ortiz Calderòn - Jose

Ariana Perera - Stage Directions

Written by Sam Hernandez - Texas



*On a cold Chicago night, four friends debate a serious question: Is stealing Indigenous art of Latin America a radical act of decolonization or a stupid way to get arrested? In *How to Rob the Art Institute of Chicago*, a comedy about friendship, identity, and colonialism, four college seniors plan the most important heist of their lives.*

**Sam Hernandez** is a costume designer, artist, and playwright who recently graduated from Northwestern University with a major in Theatre and a minor in Art, Theory, and Practice. She was a finalist for the Agnes Nixon Playwriting Award at Northwestern University in 2024 and won the award in 2025.

## CAST



Melanie  
Martinez -  
Emiliana



Matthew  
Gasperino -  
Elijah



Jessica  
Baca Aguilar -  
Vicky



Dylan  
Lauricello  
- Luis



Alec  
Ortiz Calderon -  
Jose



Ariana  
Perera -  
Stage Directions

## CREATIVE TEAM



Alexa Pérez -  
Director



Brianna "Bree"  
Brand - Production  
Stage Manager



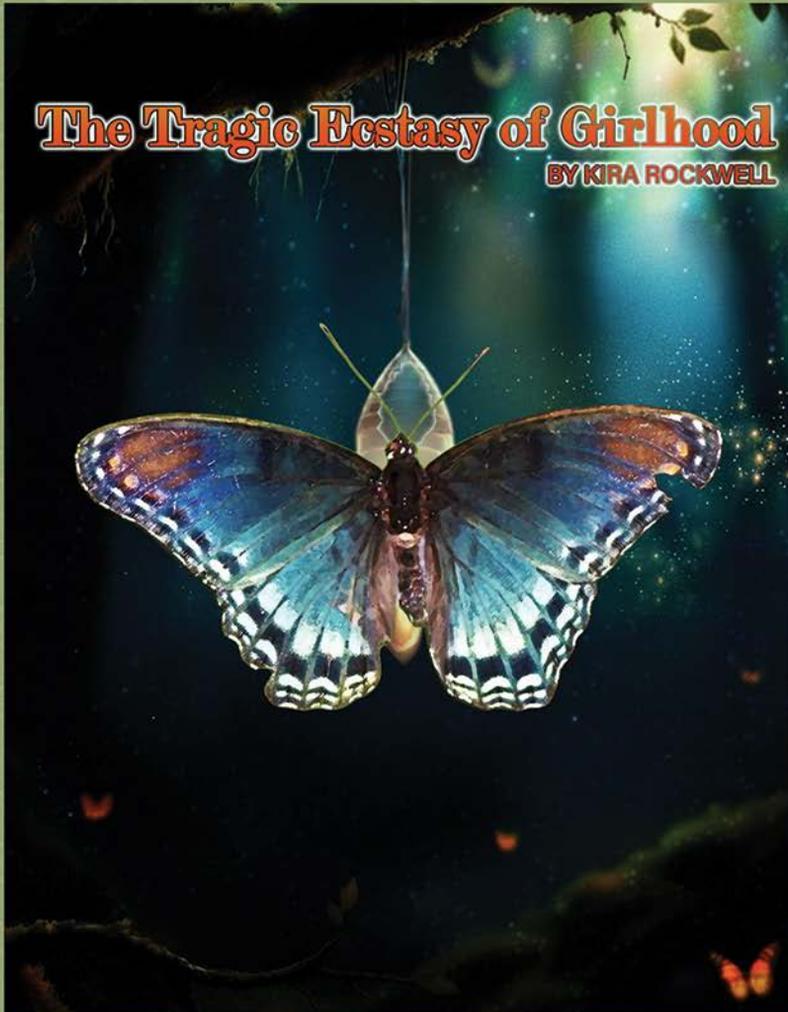
Jenny Kokai -  
Festival  
Dramaturg



Harley Jones -  
Asst. Festival  
Dramaturg

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**The Tragic Ecstasy of Girlhood**  
BY KIRA ROCKWELL

**Friday, March 6, 2026**  
**Full-Length Staged Reading**

# The Tragic Ecstasy of Girlhood

Friday  
March 6, 2026

## Creative Team

Ivy Sunflower - Director  
Bree Brand - Production Stage Manager  
Jenny Kokai - Festival Dramaturg  
Harley Jones - Asst. Festival Dramaturg

## Cast

Payton Bradley - Charlie  
Azealia Jordan - Izzy  
Elizabeth "Lizzie" Diamond - Adriana  
Zuri Warren - Mercy  
Ryleigh Amoriello - Amber  
Amiyah Baker - Stage Directions

Written by Kira Rockwell - Georgia



*After the sudden death of a housemate, four teenage girls living in a group home try to combat their grief. A poetic, heartfelt drama that explores the chrysalis of female adolescence and demands our attention be on the youth of America who are living in the shadows of a broken system.*

**Kira Rockwell** (she/her) is a playwright and Atlanta-based educator, originally from the heart of Texas. Rockwell is a Fellow with the Mass Cultural Council, a recipient of the Judith Royer Excellence in Playwriting Award, Gene Gabriel Moore Playwriting Award, Second Place recipient of the Paula Vogel Playwriting Award, Three-time Finalist for the O'Neill, Runner-Up for the Princess Grace, and more.

She holds a BFA in Theatre Performance from Baylor University and an MFA in Playwriting from Boston University.

Before graduate school, Rockwell worked at the intersection of mental health, youth advocacy, and arts education. Through a trauma-informed, healing-centered lens, she aims to nurture communal spaces that disrupt passivity and empower agency.

## CAST



Payton  
Bradley -  
Charlie



Azealia  
Jordan -  
Izzy



Elizabeth "Lizzie"  
Diamond -  
Adriana



Zuri  
Warren -  
Mercy



Ryleigh  
Amoriello -  
Amber



Amiyah  
Baker -  
Stage Directions

## CREATIVE TEAM



Ivy Sunflower  
Director



Brianna "Bree"  
Brand - Production  
Stage Manager



Jenny Kokai -  
Festival  
Dramaturg



Harley Jones -  
Asst. Festival  
Dramaturg

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**Saturday, March 7, 2026**  
**Full-Length Staged Reading**

# Seek and Speak Your Powerstory

Saturday  
March 7, 2025



**Chloe Corwin**



**Stephanie Kiser**



**Richedean Hills-Ackbar**



**Niki Kissell**

# What About Ruth?

Saturday  
March 7, 2025

## Creative Team

Charlene Dorsey - Co-director  
Indi Rivers - Co-director/Creative Advisor  
Bree Brand - Production Stage Manager  
Jenny Kokai - Festival Dramaturg  
Harley Jones - Asst. Festival Dramaturg

## Cast

Natasha McKenzie - Ruth  
Vette Berrian - Sister Vett/Church Lady

Written by Charlene Dorsey - Florida



*What About Ruth? is a 10-minute monologue play told fully from the biblical character Ruth's point of view — reclaiming the story that history, scripture, and tradition have always told about her, but never from her. Through poetic language, soulful vocal riffs, and internal testimony, Ruth questions loyalty, obligation, womanhood, and self-worth. This play challenges the romanticized “Boaz narrative” and instead centers the truth inside the woman who was expected to serve everyone’s lineage but never got to speak her own. This time — Ruth speaks.*

**Charlene Dorsey** is a multifaceted creator, educator, and entrepreneur whose work bridges faith, identity, memory, and womanhood. As founder of One Woman, Many Passions, Charlene explores narrative through multiple creative branches — from travel writing to spiritual education to brand storytelling — with a consistent focus on integrity, transformation, and the reclamation of voice. A native of Tampa, Florida, she has spent more than two decades empowering women and young adults through teaching, arts mentorship, and narrative expression.

Her work centers the inner lives of women who have been historically spoken for — specifically giving language to the silence, survival, humor, and spiritual knowing that often sits underneath tradition. What About Ruth? is Charlene’s first staged theatrical offering under her Rooted Media branch — disrupting biblical assumptions by asking the most human question of all: “What was HER truth?”

## CAST



Natasha  
McKenzie -  
Ruth



Vette Berrian  
- Sister Vett/  
Church Lady

## CREATIVE TEAM



Indy  
Rivers -  
Co-Director/  
Creative  
Advisor



Brianna "Bree"  
Brand - Production  
Stage Manager



Jenny Kokai -  
Festival  
Dramaturg



Harley Jones -  
Asst. Festival  
Dramaturg

# Love, Lost (Rings), and What We Wore

Saturday  
March 7, 2025

## Creative Team

Jessica Burchfield - Director  
Bree Brand - Production Stage Manager  
Jenny Kokai - Festival Dramaturg  
Harley Jones - Asst. Festival Dramaturg

## Cast

Isabelle Sparks - Tara  
Alaina Rahaim - Jenna  
Michael Kenneth Fahr - Jeff  
Elizabeth Bell - Mom  
Jessica Burchfield - Stage Directions

Written by Jessica Burchfield - Florida



*What happens when the wedding rings are lost, someone gets stuck in a closet, and the bride has no idea what's going on? Chaos! This short play dives into the farcical aspects of wedding day excitement and highlights the chaotic nature of family, love, and aging gracefully.*

**Jessica Burchfield** is the Director of the Performing Arts program at St. Petersburg Catholic High School and a local director at area community and professional theatres. Her works highlight the heartwarming moments that make up her crazy life story through farce, comedy, and drama. She wouldn't be who she is without her lifetime boyfriend, hubby Rob, and is grateful to you, the audience, for supporting local playwrights. Always remember to love one another!

## CAST



Isabelle  
Sparks -  
Tara



Alaina  
Rahaim -  
Jenna



Michael  
Kenneth Fahr -  
Jeff



Elizabeth  
Bell -  
Mom

## CREATIVE TEAM



Jessica  
Burchfield -  
Director/  
Stage  
Directions



Brianna "Bree"  
Brand - Production  
Stage Manager



Jenny Kokai -  
Festival  
Dramaturg



Harley Jones -  
Asst. Festival  
Dramaturg

# Black Barbie

Saturday  
March 7, 2025

## Creative Team

Indi Rivers - Director

Bree Brand - Production Stage Manager

Jenny Kokai - Festival Dramaturg

Harley Jones - Asst. Festival Dramaturg

## Cast

Michaela Gibson - Janelle

Noah Krusch - Rick

Julia Rose - Karen

Dylan Lauricello - Ben

Blake Ballard - Stage Directions

Written by Ashley Burgess Laster - Florida



*During a Monday morning staff meeting in a sleek Tampa office, Janelle, the only Black woman on her team, learns that everyone but her was invited to the CEO's weekend boat party. As small talk turns sharp, she faces microaggressions masked as humor and inclusion. What begins as an ordinary meeting spirals into a moment of truth when Janelle confronts the hypocrisy of corporate culture and claims her identity with the words, "I am not a Black Barbie." Black Barbie is a ten-minute drama about power, perception, and the courage to stop performing and start being seen.*

**Ashley Burgess Laster** is a Tampa-based playwright, community leader, and Medicare sales professional whose work explores identity, inclusion, and resilience. Drawing from her real-world experiences as a Black woman in corporate America and her passion for storytelling, Ashley writes with humor and heart about belonging, courage, and the power of speaking truth. *Black Barbie* is her first stage play.

## CAST



Michaela  
Gibson -  
Janelle



Noah  
Krusch  
- Rick



Julia  
Rose -  
Karen



Dylan  
Lauricello -  
Ben



Blake  
Ballard -  
Stage Directions

## CREATIVE TEAM



Indy  
Rivers -  
Director



Brianna "Bree"  
Brand - Production  
Stage Manager



Jenny Kokai -  
Festival  
Dramaturg



Harley Jones -  
Asst. Festival  
Dramaturg

# Zeus Gets Cancelled

Saturday  
March 7, 2025

## Creative Team

Alaina Rahaim - Director

Bree Brand - Production Stage Manager Christopher Collier - Producer

Jenny Kokai - Festival Dramaturg

Harley Jones - Asst. Festival Dramaturg

## Cast

Alaina Rahaim - Zeus

Written by Alaina Rahaim - Florida



*In this ten-minute, two-person comedy, Zeus hosts "ZEUS: On the Loose," a late-night talk show for the gods, demigods, and mortals. Defying the wishes of his studio executives, Zeus goes off script to clear the air about some recent, and not-so-recent, allegations. Through charades, puns, Dr. Seuss rhyme, and spoken word poetry, Zeus shares his apology, rather than his apology.*

**Alaina Rahaim** is a native Floridian playwright and actor who grew up in the West Palm Beach area, yet remains a kid at heart living in Tampa. A number (and that number is precisely three) of her plays have been produced locally through staged readings at The Beach Theatre and the Carrollwood Cultural Center, as well as the Tampa Bay Theatre Festival. Making people laugh has been a lifelong love for Alaina. She began acting at the age of five and wrote her first play at twelve. She would rather not keep doing the math on how long ago that was. Alaina majored in Theatre at Dreyfoos School of the Arts, earned degrees in Communication and Literature from the University of Central Florida, and obtained her Master of Science and Educational Specialist degrees from Florida State University. Because while laughter may be the best medicine, comedy tragically does not cover dental. Alaina is excited to share her love of comedy with others!

## CAST



**Alaina  
Rahaim  
- Zeus**



**Christopher  
Collier -  
Producer**

## CREATIVE TEAM



**Alaina  
Rahaim -  
Director**



**Brianna "Bree"  
Brand - Production  
Stage Manager**



**Jenny Kokai -  
Festival  
Dramaturg**



**Harley Jones -  
Asst. Festival  
Dramaturg**

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# *All My Mothers*

By Shelli Pentimall Bookler



**Sunday, March 8, 2025**  
**Full-Length Staged Reading**

# All My Mothers

Sunday  
March 8, 2025

## Creative Team

Ami Sallee - Director

Bree Brand - Production Stage Manager

Jenny Kokai - Festival Dramaturg

Harley Jones - Asst. Festival Dramaturg

## Cast

Alli Bica – Sophie

Suzy Devore – Adele

Janice Nepon-Sixt – Doris

Trish Parry - Ellen

Kal Cadet - Stage Directions

Written by Shelli Pentimall Bookler - Pennsylvania



*As Sophie searches for her birth father for a sense of connection, she navigates complex relationships with her birth mother, an emotionally distant former competitive swimmer; her adoptive mother, who faces the potential loss of her cherished neighborhood restaurant, and her restless mother-in-law. Ultimately, Sophie's quest to heal her sense of abandonment leads her to discover renewed strength within the community surrounding her.*

**Shelli Pentimall Bookler** holds an M.F.A. in Playwriting from Temple University and an M.A. in Theatre Arts from Eastern Michigan University. Productions of her full-length plays include the musical *Snyder v Phelps*, *Addicted*, *All the Dead Biddles*, and *Bird in the Window*. Short plays featured in play festivals include *Committed* (Montgomery Theatre, the Brick Playhouse), *Decision* (Village Players of Hatboro), *Jugs* (Colonial Playhouse), *Global* (Heartlande Theatre Company), and *Vanity*, featured in *Seeds of Spring*, *A Night of Feminist Performance Art*. She was the New American Voices Playwriting Series finalist, Midwest Dramatist Center's Playwriting Conference finalist, American Association of Community Theatre semi-finalist, Dayton Playhouse PlayFest finalist, and winner of audience favorite, and completed a residency with Out of the Box Theatrics in New York City. She is a member of The Dramatist Guild, Philadelphia Dramatist Center, and the Witherspoon Circle, as well as an actor, director, dramaturg, and choreographer in Philadelphia.

## CAST



Alli  
Bica –  
Sophie



Suzy  
Devore –  
Adele



Janice  
Nepon-Sixt –  
Doris



Trish  
Parry -  
Ellen



Kal  
Cadet -  
Stage Directions

## CREATIVE TEAM



Ami  
Sallee  
Director



Brianna "Bree"  
Brand - Production  
Stage Manager



Jenny Kokai -  
Festival  
Dramaturg



Harley Jones -  
Asst. Festival  
Dramaturg

# COMING IN JULY

*Powerstories*

**THEATRE**  
REAL LIFE. ACTED OUT.

**PRESENTS**

# PREDICTOR

**BY**  
**JENNIFER**  
**BLACKMER**



**JULY 17 - 26, 2026**

**GREATER GOOD: INVENTING THE HOME PREGNANCY TEST**

**Powerstories Theatre**  
@Stageworks Theatre  
1120 E. Kennedy Blvd., Ste. 151  
Tampa, FL 33602  
813-205-3451  
[powerstories.com](http://powerstories.com)

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Hillsborough  
County Florida

# SPONSOR A SHOW



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Hillsborough Supported by the Hillsborough County Trade County Board of Commissioners

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- Your business will be listed under "Co-Produced By" on the inside cover of your individual show's playbill.
- Your business will be listed as a community sponsor in your individual show's playbill.
- Your business will be listed in all print and digital promotional materials.
- You will have a half-page business ad in your individual show's playbill.
- You will have a quarter-page business ad in your individual show's playbill.
- Your business will appear as a sponsor on our website with a link to your web page for the season.
- Your business will be listed as a sponsor in a bi-weekly mass email to patrons.
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- You will receive 12 sponsor tickets to your individual sponsored show.
- You will receive 8 sponsor tickets to your individual sponsored show.
- You will receive 4 sponsor tickets to your individual sponsored show.
- You will receive 2 sponsor tickets to your individual sponsored show.
- Reserved front-row seats for opening night to your individual sponsored show.

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Your business will be listed under "Presented By" on the front cover of your individual show's playbill.	✓			
Your business will be listed under "Co-Produced By" on the inside cover of your individual show's playbill.		✓		
Your business will be listed as a community sponsor in your individual show's playbill.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Your business will be listed in all print and digital promotional materials.	✓	✓	✓	✓
You will have a half-page business ad in your individual show's playbill.	✓	✓	✓	✓
You will have a quarter-page business ad in your individual show's playbill.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Your business will appear as a sponsor on our website with a link to your web page for the season.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Your business will be listed as a sponsor in a bi-weekly mass email to patrons.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Your business will be listed in all press materials.	✓	✓	✓	✓
You will receive 12 sponsor tickets to your individual sponsored show.	✓	✓	✓	✓
You will receive 8 sponsor tickets to your individual sponsored show.	✓	✓	✓	✓
You will receive 4 sponsor tickets to your individual sponsored show.	✓	✓	✓	✓
You will receive 2 sponsor tickets to your individual sponsored show.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reserved front-row seats for opening night to your individual sponsored show.	✓	✓	✓	✓



## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Staging true stories of women and girls to open minds and hearts and inspire action worldwide.

**Powerstories.com**