

Media:

[Mouthful podcast trailer](#)

Quotable:

*“In Mouthful’s 22 minutes I learn so much about the world I live in and care about, and the next generation who will care for our world. Thank you for this real news, this beautiful work.”*

--Phila Young Playwrights alumna, Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Quiara Alegria Hudes

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[Philadelphia Young Playwrights Celebrates 30 Years of Amplifying Students’ Voices](#)  
*Season Two of “Mouthful” Podcast to Launch April 3*  
*Mouthful Monologue Festival Opens April 13*



PHILADELPHIA—(March 21, 2018)— What do [The Goldbergs’](#) creator Adam Goldberg and Pulitzer- and Tony-award winner [Quiara Alegria Hudes](#) have in common? As high school students in Philadelphia, both had their first play produced by [Philadelphia Young Playwrights](#) (PYP), the non-profit which helps students find their voice by teaching them playwriting.

This year PYP turns 30, and its mission of cultivating the young voices remains as relevant—if not more so—as ever. “So many people are dismissive of this generation, but I’m struck by their agency. They are highly capable and very in tune with the world around them. Our artists cultivate, nurture and provide a platform for their voices.” says Lisa Nelson-Haynes, executive director of PYP.

PYP’s teaching artists are teaching playwriting in 101 public and independent middle and high school classrooms this year. Each class receives a customized experience designed around its curriculum and infused with 21-century skills, such as collaboration, creativity and communication.

*In every classroom, students are asked what they want to write about.*

“Students are experiencing stress and trauma we could not imagine 30 years ago. So much, in fact, that we have developed a trauma-informed teaching curriculum.” Nelson-Haynes says. “More than ever, students need us to provide them with a platform and lend their voices credibility,”

### Mouthful Monologue Festival

On April 13, [PYP’s Mouthful Monologue Festival](#) opens at the the Louis Bluver Theater at The Drake, 302 S. Hicks Street, Philadelphia. Each 100-minute festival performance weaves together 18 bite-size monologues written by PYP participants and performed by professional actors.

The 18 monologues were chosen from more than 600 submissions from students in 28 schools PYP serves. Winners represent the full ethnic, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic and racial diversity of our region.

Winners work with a director, actor and dramaturg to revise their piece for performance, experiencing the playwriting process from blank page to performance.

“In a year marked by #MeToo revelations and the need for students to carry the gun control torch, this show offers adults a window into the serious social issues students are grappling with, and can serve as a catalyst for dynamic family dialogue,” says Nelson-Haynes.

Among other topics, this year’s festival winners address: the fear of deportation and the pain of being different and being bullied; questioning one’s sexuality; jail; disabilities; difficult family relationships; and poverty and neglect.

Students are invited to eight free performances; six additional performances are open to the full public on a pay-what-you-wish basis. For details and to access tickets, visit [www.phillyyoungplaywrights.org/on-stage](http://www.phillyyoungplaywrights.org/on-stage).

### Mouthful Podcast

Seven of the winning monologues will be featured during Season Two of Mouthful, PYP’s podcast featuring student voices. Mouthful launches on April 3; a new episode is uploaded each Tuesday for ten weeks.

“I’m particularly proud that all 10 of our podcast writers are female. Nowhere in the theatre world are women’s voices being given such dominance,” says Nelson-Haynes. “These young women are talking everything from disabilities in the workplace to harassment to the intensive pressure of juggling school, a job and applying for college.”

Each podcast episode features one student monologue performed by a professional actor, followed by interviews with the student and content area experts. For instance, the episode slated for release on May 28th—World Menstrual Hygiene Day— features

a performance by actor Donovan Lockett of Central High School student Kaltra Zabiku's monologue, "The Initiation," about menstruating for the first time. Podcast host and 2017 Rad Girl Storyteller of the Year Award winner Trenae Nuri will interview Zabiku and *Teen Vogue* 21 Under 21 winner [Nadya Okamoto](#), founder of Period, a youth-run non-profit that provides menstrual products to women in need.

"The introduction of our Mouthful podcast is emblematic of how we are using current technology to fulfill Young Playwrights' 30-year-old core mission," says Nelson-Haynes. "The podcast extends the reach of the students' voices and the expert interviews deepen the connection with the content. It's powerful when students realize how the content they've developed resonates with other communities and constituents far beyond their classroom. They become the catalyst for connections made far outside their own world, where others are experiencing the same issues and feelings they are."

Find the Season 2 Mouthful schedule and listen to podcasts at <https://www.mouthfulpodcastphilly.com/>.

### About Philadelphia Young Playwrights

The mission of Philadelphia Young Playwrights (PYP) is to tap the potential of youth and inspire learning through playwriting. This year the organization celebrates its 30th full year of service to this mission. PYP began its first full year of operations in 1987 and quickly established a reputation for its innovative classroom practices, focusing on playwriting as a literacy-learning tool and as an opportunity to engage students in new, creative ways. The organization's commitment to new work began the next year in 1988 through readings, workshops, and full-fledged professional productions of student-written plays and monologues that have launched and shaped the careers of dozens of playwrights, writers, businesspeople, and professionals of all stripes including, notably: Quiara Alegria Hudes, Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright; Adam F. Goldberg, creator of ABC's *The Goldbergs*; Roger J. Hobbs, the late *New York Times* bestselling-author; Genne Murphy, recipient of the 2016 Leah Ryan Prize for Emerging Women Writers prize; and Emily Acker, *Orbiter 3* founding playwright and recent Eugene O'Neill New Play Conference Finalist.

Approximately 2,100 students participate in PYP's core classroom program each year through placements in public, private, and parochial schools throughout the five-county Greater Philadelphia region. PYP places a special emphasis on the School District of Philadelphia, with whom the organizations has partnered in each year since its founding.

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