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## Payne commends Vanguard in the House of Representatives

By *Editor* on December 13, 2019 · Comments Off



MONTCLAIR, NJ — On Dec. 5, U.S. Rep. Donald Payne Jr. read of a commendation of Vanguard Theater Company into the record of the House of Representatives.

Payne said the following of Vanguard: "I rise today to honor a small group of artists with big dreams: Vanguard Theater Company. The company began ... with one goal. It wanted to increase diversity in theater acting, directing and training. The company is based on a DREAM: Diversity, Reciprocity, Education, Awareness and Mentorship.... Vanguard has run several programs and camps to connect young artists with skilled performers.... I am proud of Vanguard for encouraging youths to pursue their dreams in theater. I wish them all the best."

Vanguard recently received its second grant from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts for its program DREAM VTC. This program takes middle and high school students through a professional-style rehearsal process and four performances, and then embarks on a reciprocity tour to bring live theater to communities without traditional access. In past years, DREAM VTC performed for Nassan's Place, an autism after-school program for underserved youth and their families, the Actors Fund Home for seniors in Englewood, and collaborated with Covenant House on a concert at the First Congregational Church in Montclair to raise funds for and awareness of teen homelessness in Essex County. This concert, and the sleep out on the lawn of St. Lukes that followed, earned Vanguard a commendation from the Montclair Town Council, proclaiming March 30 Teen Homeless Awareness Day.

This winter, Vanguard's two DREAM VTC productions are "Spring Awakening," performing Jan. 15 through 17 at the American Theater of Actors in New York City, and "For the Love of Charlie Brown," performing at the Montclair Art Museum from Feb. 14 to 17. Both programs rehearse at the Montclair Cooperative School.

"For the Love of Charlie Brown" is part of a new community partnership between Vanguard Theater Company and the Montclair Art Museum, which is funded in part by a donation from Investors Bank Foundation. As part of this partnership, Vanguard will present theatrical performances consistent with its mission of DREAM at the museum, as well as collaborate with the museum to develop performance art that enhances and complements the museum's exhibits.

"The Montclair Art Museum is one of the few museums in the United States to focus exclusively on American and Native American art," said Janeece Freeman Clark, artistic and founding director of Vanguard Theater Company. "It is also a leader in exhibits that highlight our region. These qualities and its emphasis on educational programs make the art museum the perfect partner for Vanguard. We look forward to bringing new audiences to the museum, developing the works of local composers and lyricists, as well as creating unique song cycles to highlight the museum's collections, and more."

For more information about Vanguard Theater Company, visit

[www.VanguardTheaterCompany.org](http://www.VanguardTheaterCompany.org).

 [Donald Payne Jr., Vanguard Theater Company](#)



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