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Girlstories Leadership Theatre Seeking Middle School Girls for Summer Program

Girls from Hillsborough County are being sought

By [Deborah Bostock-Kelley](#) | [Email the author](#) | April 11, 2011



The stage at Patel Conservatory is empty now, but in a few months, it will be pulsating with energy from the 20 young actresses who will share their true stories on its wooden pedestal.

The award-winning nonprofit organization Girlstories Leadership Theatre, 1401 N. Governor Street in Ybor City, is currently seeking 20 girls who live in Hillsborough County. The girls must be entering sixth through eighth grade and have an interest in performing.

"Many of us wish we would have had a program like this when we were young," says Janice Nepon-Sixt, Director of Girl's Education. "Girlstories focuses on building performance and leadership skills, helping girls to develop a strong sense of identity. They learn about team-building while creating and rehearsing a show to be performed for elementary schools and community groups."

Girlstories is accepting applications for its 2011 summer theatre arts program. Selection is based upon a completed application, essay, two personal references and if selected for interview, a prepared creative piece.

"We are looking for team players who believe they have something to say," says Janice. "Most important- we are looking for girls who can commit to us 100 percent during the summer."

She stresses that they are not necessarily looking for a "star," but rather creative girls who enjoy acting, music, dance, art, writing stories and poetry.

"Though it costs \$2,000 to put a girl through the program, because of grants that we get, the total cost for the program is \$150," says Nepon-Sixt. "We even have scholarships to cover all or part of the fee. We don't turn anyone away."

Girlstories takes the girls' own personal stories and weaves them into a themed play. Emerging after six weeks of intensive summer training are 20 troupe members who have learned the fine art of capturing and mesmerizing their audience.

Interviews will be held at Children's Board of Hillsborough County, 1002 E. Palm Avenue on the following days:

Tuesday, April 26: 5pm-8pm

Thursday, April 28: 5pm-8pm

Saturday, April 30: 10am-noon or 1pm-3pm

"We meet every week for six weeks during the summer, and the program continues through December with one or two Saturday meetings," says Nepon-Sixt. "The last week of summer, we actually tour different schools and agencies to perform the show to elementary school-age students."

The summer intensive runs June 16 through July 29, and culminates with a performance at Patel Conservatory at Straz Performing Arts Center.

In October, Girlstories' dedication to making a difference in the lives of young girls was recognized in a huge way.

Girlstories' first Leadership Representative troupe member, Naomi Diaz and Founder Fran Powers received the prestigious *National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award* at the White House from First Lady Michelle Obama.

"I got to go to the White House and receive the award, and Michelle Obama hugged me," says Naomi. "That's a big honor."

Though it is Naomi's last year in the program, she plans to return as an intern. "My best memory is how I got to spend so much time with the girls, so now I'll help out the other girls during the summer."

To learn more information about Girlstories Leadership Theatre, or to receive an information packet, call or email Fran Powers at 813-205-3451, or fran@powerstories.com. Additional information can be found online at www.powerstories.com.

