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## **ARTSFAIRFAX Awards First \$25,000 Next Step Grant to NextStop Theatre Awards 3 Organizational and Professional Development Grants**

**Fairfax County, VA-** **ARTSFAIRFAX** announces NextStop Theatre as the first recipient of the newly created \$25,000 Next Step grant. The award pairs NextStop Theatre with consultant services firm, Capacity Partners, who will work to align NextStop's fundraising needs with its growth and evolution and meet its goal to expand access to diverse audiences and invest in ambitious and imaginative writers and performers.

"Fairfax County is on the cusp of an arts renaissance with many of our small emerging organizations taking their place as regional arts magnets, drawing audiences from across the greater metropolitan area. **ARTSFAIRFAX** 's Next Step grant seeks to fuel this renaissance by making every dollar work harder because of the services that come with it, multiplying its effect on the organization, its audiences and the community at large," says Linda S. Sullivan, President & CEO of **ARTSFAIRFAX**.

The Next Step grant provides the flexibility to be tailored to the needs of an arts organization with limited professional staff and resources. The grant is meant as a catalyst to help organizations tackle significant challenges such as increased marketing and audience development, program development, planning for strategic and operational growth, or execution of fundraising and capital campaigns.



Curtis McNeil and Shayla Simmons in "The Mountaintop" at NextStop Theatre through February 2. Photo: Lock and Company

"Capacity Partners is excited to collaborate with **ARTSFAIRFAX** to support the growth and artistic accomplishments of NextStop Theatre," says Mary Robinson, President & Founder of Capacity Partners. "The arts are essential to building thriving communities and building a sustainable future for any arts organization requires trust, time, and hard work. We look forward to guiding NextStop Theatre to achieve transformative results."

In addition to the Next Step grant, **ARTSFAIRFAX** made three smaller awards in the Organizational and Professional Development Grants to assist arts organizations in enhancing and strengthening their ability to thrive and grow. The three recipients for the Fiscal Year 2020 are:



American Youth Philharmonic Orchestra performers. Photo: AYPO

**American Youth Philharmonic Orchestras (AYPO)** to replace 12-year-old computers and professionalize AYPO's operations to provide greater capacity to manage programs and meet administrative needs.

**Traveling Players Ensemble** to invest in the development of a new 3-year strategic plan, including major gifts training to help mobilize its board around identified goals and opportunities.

**Virginia Winds Academy** to create opportunities for staff to engage with professionals in the field to stay updated on educational changes, the latest research, and

emerging best practices and support the participation of designated board members and an instructor in the Virginia Music Educators Association.

To learn more about grants available through **ARTSFAIRFAX**, visit [artsfairfax.org](http://artsfairfax.org).

### **About ARTSFAIRFAX**

**ARTSFAIRFAX** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization, incorporated in 1964, as Fairfax County's designated local arts agency. **ARTSFAIRFAX** is funded in part by Fairfax County, corporations, foundations, individuals, the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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