Performing arts company lifts off

“All the world’s a stage.” is an oft-quoted line from William Shakespeare’s play “As You Like It.” The popular phrase is used to compare the stages of life to a play. One of those life stages — adolescence — is being played out through workshops and performances shaped by the unique experiences of PEOPLE students. The new drama company, PEOPLE-to-PEOPLE, got off the ground in August. During weekly rehearsals, middle and high school students work alongside professional artists in music, dance and theater expressing their personal perspectives on life. We caught up with company director Ray Proctor, who is pursuing a Ph.D. in Shakespearean criticism and says teens make great actors because “their imaginations still work.”

When did your interest in theater begin?
I was a sophomore in high school in New Jersey. A theater company came and did production of Shakespeare’s “As You Like It.” Everybody wore black pants and shirts. There was no set. It was just people on stage. And it was what they did with language and the telling of a story that I found fascinating. It was like weaving magic. People on stage showed emotion and it was all pretend, but I was caught up in the pretending. I left my regular high school and went to a performing arts high school. I wasn’t very good. Really, I wasn’t.

What did you enjoy most as a young actor?
There’s a sense of power that comes with being the person in the room that all the other people in the room are listening to. It’s a lot of responsibility and you are carrying a story everybody in the room is waiting to hear.

Did anyone help you along the way?
I gave up for a while because I went on stage and I forgot all the lines in the show. At the end of the act, when my whole high school had laughed at me and there was nowhere else to hide, a woman named Danitra Vance took me out for ice cream. She said, ‘See how the cars keep going down the street?’ See how the lights keep coming on. The world is going to continue. Theater is a safe place because nothing is really real. All your friends will come to see you again.’

What is your career plan?
I’m in my third year of a doctoral program in the UW Theatre Department with an emphasis in Shakespearean criticism. I’m looking at "Othello" and examining whether performances of the play over time have reinforced stereotypes about African American men.

I’m trained to be a dramaturge [playwright]. And I love being an actor. But ultimately I’d like to teach at a university … in a warm climate.

How did PEOPLE-to-PEOPLE get started?
Walter Lane wanted to offer the kids in PEOPLE an opportunity to express themselves artistically. So he gathered a group of university artists, singers, actors and musicians in late spring 2005.

—continued on page 2
Writing her own future
Tashina Guzman
Sophomore, Menominee Indian High School

When one of her older brothers left home several years ago, Tashina Guzman found it easier to communicate her feelings to him on paper. And so began a book of poems from the heart of a young girl in the Menominee Nation.

Tashina’s most recent work was completed in the Writing Workshop taught on the UW campus this summer by Laura Busse. “We quickly learned that words are precious and sometimes difficult to find, especially when they are deeply personal,” Busse said.

Tashina agreed, but still finds personal narrative writing the easiest way to express herself. “I love writing poetry. What can be hard to explain in words, comes out easier on paper. I’m like my mom that way,” she said in a telephone interview after homework and sports practice one evening.

“I want to accomplish my goals. And most are hard goals. Whatever I do, whatever I succeed at, it’s because of the love and encouragement of my family.”

Tashina joined PEOPLE last summer, one of several top students at Menominee Indian High School invited to attend the three-week residential program that includes math and writing skills development; ACT preparation; workshops in the biological and physical sciences, engineering, biomedical research and health sciences; and an evening curriculum in the fine and performing arts.

School Days
Tashina has two older brothers and has always been active in sports, including volleyball, basketball and softball. At Menominee Indian High School in Keshena, she is a sophomore on the student council and likes to hang out with friend Romaine Waupoose, who is in the program.

“What I really enjoy is civics class with Kenny Molzahn. He inspires me to go far places in life,” Tashina said. Coming to Madison with PEOPLE was a first step in that direction.

Leaving home
“It was scary at first and a long time to be away from home,” she said. With encouragement from her family and friends she saw the opportunity as a way to accomplish her goals.

“I was overjoyed,” said her mother Ronnan Guzman. “I’m hoping she will end up going to UW-Madison. She is smart enough. But ultimately it’s her decision whether to make this work for her.”

“At first it [Madison] was big even though I’ve been to big cities and Pow Wows before. It helped to meet people, though” she said, mentioning her roommate Clintel Hasan from Milwaukee. “It felt like I was out in adult life.”

Trying new things
One of her favorite activities this summer was the crime scene investigation class where participants learned to think like investigators as they studied forensic science and microbiology. Her father, Jaime Guzman, is a police officer and she is considering going into the field herself someday.

Writing is her real passion however. Writing and the beauty of the Menominee land in northeastern Wisconsin that she calls home.

“I see different things than the kids in Madison. Not so many stores, but lots of trees and lakes. My favorite place is the Wolf River. It’s a beautiful place and I wouldn’t want to live anywhere else.”

2006 calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>June 11 - June 30</td>
<td>rising 7th and 8th graders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 11 - July 14</td>
<td>rising 9th graders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>June 18 - July 8</td>
<td>rising 10th and 11th graders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 18 - July 28</td>
<td>rising 12th graders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Building friendships and career paths

Ashley Brown  Senior, Memorial High School, Madison

Ashley Brown loves to eat oatmeal in the morning. Maybe that’s why she still remembers a breakfast in the summer of 1999 with the first group of middle school students to attend the PEOPLE program in Madison.

Clutching their backpacks, these pioneering sixth-graders tentatively approached the meal that would start their six-year journey together. “We were all in the same grade, but we were very different from each other,” recalls Ashley.

Aside from their age, they had something else in common, something you couldn’t see on the surface. A teacher or counselor had noticed their potential and recommended they participate in an innovative pre-college enrichment experience at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

One of Ashley’s sixth-grade teachers at Jefferson Middle School first recommended her to PEOPLE. “Living on the west side, I didn’t have a lot of black or Hispanic friends,” says Ashley. “The PEOPLE Program helped me increase my friends of color and, at the same time, learn from other cultures.”

Fitting in

Talking with this poised young woman makes it difficult to believe her when she says, “Coming out of fifth grade I was the geek girl. But when I came to the PEOPLE Program, it didn’t have that ‘Don’t hang out with her because she is a black girl’ feeling. I had people who were like me, people I will probably know forever.”

Participating in the summer enrichment classes and workshops helped form those bonds.

Emphasizing the lasting friendships made in the program, Ashley says she regularly keeps in touch with students from Milwaukee and her former mentor Kenyata Jones who now lives in Atlanta. “She is very down-to-earth. Everybody loved to go to her. I still talk to her and she is always excited to hear about the program. It helps to know that aside from your parents, PEOPLE is a place to go that feels like family.”

Catching the media bug

One of her favorite classes early on was Newspaper Publishing with Valerie Humphrey where students conduct interviews and interact with other PEOPLE students and teachers, write articles, take photographs and design their own newspaper. “The program introduced me to the newspaper and I have never let go. Every summer I’ve been involved in the media world,” says Ashley.

Most recently, Ashley saw a different side of that world — the side that helps make a television news station run. “I learned about what goes on in the background, like selling commercial time and organizing special events.” Her internship at Madison’s WB57 culminated in a public service announcement showcasing PEOPLE and getting plenty of airtime thanks to station account executive Kay-Tee Olds.

Summer television editing workshop instructor Patricia Hastings helped Ashley create the public service announcement, as well as make a video collage and get a scholarship. She recommends new PEOPLE students take full advantage of the UW campus connections. “You build so many partnerships where you have this unbreakable bond,” she says.

Sticking with it

Currently a senior at Memorial High School, Ashley is the editor-in-chief of the school newspaper, leads a drill dance team, tutors in Spanish and is active in youth ministry at her church. Where does she find the time for PEOPLE?

“During the school year it does get hard. But the way the program is set up it is really designed to help you succeed,” she says. “Now, it’s so automatic that I always put the PEOPLE program on the top shelf, because it has always been there for me.”

Ashley has some advice for her 12-year-old cousin Brianna and other young people interested in the program. “Every summer, every tutoring session, every cohort meeting and every performance counts. These opportunities don’t always come to students of color. If you get them, you have to take advantage of them.”

Jacqueline Dewalt, assistant director of PEOPLE, comments on her reaction to seeing a thought-provoking theatrical skit during a luncheon held in the Memorial Union’s Great Hall as part of the sixth annual Plan 2008 campus diversity forum. The skit, performed by professor Patrick Sims and students in the Theatre for Cultural and Social Awareness, portrayed a scenario involving a student in a class being singled out with an offensive comment made by a guest speaker.
Keeping up with

**Sergio Barbosa-Mireles**
Senior, Deforest High School

You'll need a stopwatch to keep up with Sergio Barbosa-Mireles. The State Wrestling Champion from Deforest High School is a straight-A student taking honors classes in Spanish and calculus at the UW-Madison.

Sergio's typical Tuesday starts with weightlifting at 6:30 a.m. at Deforest High, followed by Spanish 311 and Calculus 222 at the UW, then English and psychology back at Deforest. There is a short break at home to grab something to eat and start on homework. From 3:30 to 6:30 p.m., he can be found on the football practice field before heading to wrestling practice at 7:15 p.m. "After that it's down time. I need to get some sleep," he says.

**Setting the pace**

Packing a lot into the day is nothing new for Sergio. He has always been involved in athletics, the Wisconsin Youth Symphony and advanced academic work. "I think it's gotten me prepared for what I'm going to be doing in college," he says of the hectic pace.

He credits PEOPLE and a strong inner drive for putting him in a position to choose from some of the top colleges and universities in the country. "People are there for you, from networking with professors to Jackie Dewalt (Assistant Program Director) who was very supportive of all the different things I was juggling to Walter Lane who went out of his way to help me get into the right classes on campus."

**Making the most of PEOPLE**

Sergio learned early on what many leaders identify as a key factor to their success. "A lot of it has to do with who you know. That first impression is really important," he says.

Workshops in astronomy, biology and zoology piqued his interest as a middle school student. Later, it was the lasting friendships that kept him going with the program. "Everyone brings something to the table, and it gave me a chance to make friends with people I wouldn't normally interact with from Milwaukee. That's something everyone in the program takes away."

Sergio was a PEOPLE intern at Qualiterns employment agency this past summer where he worked with Spanish-speaking clients over the phone. "I realized how much a five-minute phone call can really help people out."

**Family support**

"The program has given him a good taste for college life," says Sergio's father Oscar Mireles. "The summers spent 24/7 on campus are invaluable in helping to make decisions about college. His internship at Qualiterns allowed him to use his Spanish and gave him a greater appreciation for what it's like in the real world."

Sergio's older brother Diego attends Madison Area Technical College. His younger sister Loren is also at Deforest High School and his younger brother Javier attends Black Hawk Middle School. Both Loren and Javier are in PEOPLE.

"I come from a family that emphasizes staying true to yourself. Do what you love and don't ever put yourself in a position where you're just doing something for someone else. All the pressure has come from me. Whatever I do, I know they're going to have my back and that's a really good feeling to have." With the pace he keeps, Sergio's back is probably a familiar sight.

---

Chancellor John Wiley and Paul LaSchiazza, President SBC Wisconsin, share thoughts on how to prepare today's students to meet tomorrow's needs. SBC was an early partner in the PEOPLE program and recently gave a $250,000 gift.

"It's through proven effective programs such as PEOPLE that students from all backgrounds are able to receive the tools and education they need to prepare them for lifelong success."

— Paul LaSchiazza, President, SBC Wisconsin
On the professor track

Bonnie Jean Williams

UW Senior, Journalism/African American Studies
Hometown: Milwaukee
Rufus King International Baccalaureate High School

When did you start with PEOPLE?
It was the summer after my freshman year in high school. My mom made me do it because she heard it was a new program that offered a scholarship for college.

What was it like?
Scary. I was with a lot of new kids from all over the city. Almost every inner city high school was represented there.

Do you remember a favorite activity?
We went to Great America, Noah’s Arc and a lot of other fun places. We took a lot of trips together and I think that is what made us all become close and build friendships.

It’s a demanding program and takes a big time commitment. What kept you going?
The people. That’s why I think the name for the program is so perfect. It’s the people I made friendships with that encouraged me to stay. It’s almost like we all had a commitment to each other that we would complete the program. And when I think about it, almost everyone I came in with graduated from the program that last summer. We were all close and I love every person and still keep in touch with most of the first group of students today.

What does being a PEOPLE college student mean to you?
It means taking advantage of opportunities. It means leading the way, being a trailblazer. It also means giving back and responsibility.

What activities/work are you involved in?
I teach a class of 13 undergraduate students every Wednesday through the Undergraduate Research Scholars Program; tutor for the PEOPLE program at Memorial High school; work as an office assistant in the Office of Admissions. I am also a writing fellow with the Writing Center along with being a member of Delta Sigma Theta sorority.

What are your plans for the future?
My future plans are to go to graduate school for an M.A. in African American Studies and then to go on to the Ph.D. program for English in composition and rhetoric; to one day teach and be a college professor at a prestigious college campus; and to be able to come back and give speeches at PEOPLE program functions and to watch the program grow!

Do you have any advice for new students?
Have fun. The work starts when you get here. Be prepared to work hard, but try to learn as much as you can and enjoy the PEOPLE.

Never far from the spotlight

Martinez White

Senior, Juneau Business High School, Milwaukee

If you attended the PEOPLE Third-Year Student Recognition banquet held July 29 in Madison’s Kohl Center, you probably remember Martinez White (pictured right with his mother and sister). This high honors student from Solomon Juneau Business High School in Milwaukee made a powerful speech to the approximately 300 parents, mentors, university officials, corporate supporters and students in attendance. A natural leader, Martinez is never far from the spotlight.

As student council and senior class president he recently led a group of students and parents wearing “Keep Juneau Alive” T-shirts in a march to the Milwaukee School Board Meeting in November. He asked supporters to stand and raise their fists as he spoke. Many stood throughout much of the meeting.

“You’re putting us in foster care, if Juneau is closed,” Martinez said, referring to the school’s teachers as parent figures and to the innovative and high-quality programs offered.

“We like this environment. We like what we’re learning here. We want the school to stay,” he said on the 10 o’clock WTMJ-4 News.

Despite a passionate plea from Martinez and about 50 others, the Milwaukee School Board voted 5-4 to close Juneau.

Martinez is an intern at Strive Media Institute, which provides hands-on training in print and broadcast journalism. He frequently airs his own segments on WTMJ-TV (Channel 4) for the Emmy-award winning program “Gumbo TV.” We believe him when he says “I always strive for flawless perfection.”

Performing from page 1

By August we were auditioning participants.

What do you hope to achieve?
The performing arts is not something you can just wake up and do. It takes training. It takes time and it takes discipline. There aren’t very many opportunities for the minority youth of Madison to get the training or exposure required to compete or excel in the performing arts. It’s about putting out the stories that youth in the PEOPLE program find important. While the Madison community would like to be multicultural and diverse, programs like this often are the only way to include these voices.

How can students participate?
No prior experience or talent are necessary. Rehearsals are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:30 to 7 p.m. and Saturdays from 11a.m. to 3 p.m. Contact: Ray Proctor, 279-2055, jproctor@wisc.edu
Pre-college pipeline fills elementary gaps

Educators know first grade is a critical year for literacy and fourth grade is critical for mathematics. Students who get lost at these levels, particularly those who come from economically disadvantaged families where parents are working long hours, may never catch up.

PEOPLE Prep is an expansion down the pipeline to reach children earlier with a focus on specific skills in reading, writing and math. “It’s our way of making sure no one falls through the cracks,” says Tiffany Davis-Baer, academic lead for the fledgling program serving second through fifth-grade students.

This fall, the program began with 32 students and eight tutors at Northport Apartments and 19 students and 12 tutors at Packers Townhouses community learning centers. Tutors are from the School of Education Department of Curriculum and Instruction under Mimi Bloch.

“These centers do an amazing job, but they are limited in terms of resources and number of staff. We’re supplementing what they’re doing,” Davis-Baer says. “It’s the schools, the sites, the families and the PEOPLE program all working together.”

About the sites

Northport Apartments and Packers Townhouses are within a block of each other on Northport Drive in an economically lagging Madison neighborhood. They offer day care and Head Start, adult job training and GED classes. Summer programs have included arts and video production classes and South American cultural festivals.

Center Director Carmen Porco has described his centers as having “a holistic program base — not only technical, but with a human services and partnership base.” This is a good fit with the mission of the PEOPLE Program to help students and their families successfully make each transition between elementary school, middle school, high school and college.

Of the 50 families interviewed, all the parents were excited about the homework help, according to Marla Delgado, a graduate student in counseling psychology and liaison for the program. “It’s not that they [parents] don’t understand the material, but the tutors understand the way teachers in the schools are presenting it. And they’re grateful for the one-on-one attention their children are getting while they are at work.”

Davis-Baer brings four years of experience teaching in the Madison school district at Midvale and Emerson elementary schools. She is working toward her second degree in education policy at the UW, while administering the curriculum she designed for PEOPLE Prep. And she is enthusiastic about opening doors for these families. “They want to get their children there, but don’t know how to get them on the college track. That piece was missing.”

Older students turn to help the young ones

The PEOPLE pipeline moves in both directions. The oldest group of PEOPLE students now attends the UW on merit scholarships. They started in high school when the program first began in 1999, completed the requirements and qualified for admission. Today, they serve as mentors to the youngest students, establishing relationships, becoming pen pals and planning campus visits for PEOPLE Prep children.

Partner Schools

Black Hawk Middle
Lakeview Elementary
Lindbergh Elementary
Mendota Elementary
Sherman Middle
Wright Middle