

# NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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## **NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER ANNOUNCES ADDITION OF A NEW SCENE TO *LIVING NEWS* THEATRICAL PRESENTATION FOR STUDENT GROUPS**

Philadelphia, PA (February 18, 2009) – The National Constitution Center announces the addition of a new scene to the *Living News* production, focusing on the constitutionality of gay marriage. The 20-minute interactive theatrical presentation, which takes place in the Bank of America Family Theater, engages student groups in grades 7 through 12 with current constitutional issues in the news that have a direct impact on their everyday lives and helps them understand that their voices matter. From March 9 through June 12, 2009, the show will run Monday through Friday at 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m., and 2:00 p.m. Tickets cost \$14 per person, which includes admission to the Center's main exhibition, *The Story of We the People*. Reservations are required and can be made by calling 215.409.6800.

The updated version of *Living News* will include a scene about two friends who are struggling to find common ground when they find themselves divided on the issue of gay marriage. This dramatic scene explores how students express their concerns about and support for a constitutional amendment on this hot topic.

*Living News* opens with a debate about whether the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance violate First Amendment rights. Additional scenes focus on other controversial topics, including questions of privacy, the debate over gun-control, civil liberties in the context of our post-Columbine and post-9/11 world, and the responsibilities of citizenship. Video, contemporary music, and current news broadcasts are incorporated throughout the production, which culminates in a "show of hands" vote with the audience on several important issues.

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During a 20-minute post-show discussion, the stage is transformed into a public forum for the exchange of ideas and reflections on the issues presented by the actors. Visitors are given the opportunity to ask questions, share personal experiences relating to the issues discussed, and become more informed and involved citizens.

Educators can prepare their students for *Living News* and have them share what they learned from the show with pre- and post-visit materials, which can be downloaded at [www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org).

The professional actors featured in the performance are **Kristyn Chouiniere** of Philadelphia, **Delante G. Keys** of Glenside, and Barrymore Award-winning actress, **Amanda Schoonover** of Philadelphia. The show was written by **Larry Loebell** and directed by **David Bradley**.

Kristyn Chouiniere is originally from East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. Her recent productions include *Mr. Marmalade* with Theatre Exile and *Extremities* with New City Stage Company. Kristyn is an active educator in the theatre community. She holds a Bachelor's Degree from Juniata College and a Masters Degree in theater from Villanova University.

Delante G. Keys is originally from Lusby, Maryland. He has appeared in *The Nutcracker* with Curio Theatre Company and *Black Gold* with InterAct Theatre Company. He received his Bachelor's Degree in fine arts from Arcadia University in 2007.

Amanda Schoonover, originally from East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, won the 2006 Barrymore Award for her portrayal of Dottie Smith in Theatre Exile's production of *Killer Joe*. She has worked at various theaters in the Philadelphia area including Bristol Riverside, People's Light & Theatre Company, The Lantern Theater, and Hedgerow Theater. She received her Bachelor's Degree in fine arts from University of the Arts.

Larry Loebell has produced full length plays, including *La Tempestad*, which had its world premiere in 2005 at the Ohio Theater; *The Ballad of John Wesley Reed*, which had

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its world premiere in 2005 at Philadelphia's Theater Catalyst; and *Pride of the Lion*, which premiered in Philadelphia in 2002. From 1998 to 2005, Loebell was the literary manager and dramaturge at InterAct Theatre Company in Philadelphia. He currently teaches playwriting and dramaturgy as part of the adjunct faculty at Arcadia University. David Bradley has been part of the production's development since its inception. He has been an active explorer of how art, community, and civic dialogue connect, and has created projects that have told the stories of Benjamin Franklin, The Philadelphia Naval Shipyard, the reinvestment Fund, and towns in rural Pennsylvania. He is a Yale University graduate and currently teaches at Arcadia University.

The National Constitution Center, located at 525 Arch St. on Philadelphia's Independence Mall, is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the ideas and values it represents. The Center serves as a museum, an education center, and a forum for debate on constitutional issues. The museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, "Freedom Rising". The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit [www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org).

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