

Palm Springs Young Playwrights Festival Announces 2025 Winners

The spirit of thoughtful, bold creativity comes to life as the Palm Springs Young Playwrights Festival (PSYPF) announces the two winning playwrights for 2025.

PALM SPRINGS, CA, UNITED STATES, May 5, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- "The Play's the Thing" Palm Springs Young Playwrights Festival Announces 2025 Winners

Winning Plays to Be Performed June 8 at Palm Springs Cultural Center

"Never be afraid to sit a while and think." The words of playwright Lorraine Hansberry remind us of the quiet power of reflection and storytelling. This spirit of thoughtful, bold creativity comes to life again as the Palm Springs Young Playwrights

Festival (PSYPF) announces the two winning playwrights for its 2025 season: Kayla McCarty of Ramona High School for her play *Seven*, and Peyton Taylor of Valley View High School for *The Kellogg Murders*.



Executive Director, David Youse

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David Youse, Executive Director

“*Seven*”, written by Kayla McCarty (18), Ramona High School, Riverside, explores the haunting stillness of purgatory, where seven souls must confront the weight of their sins. Only one can rise toward grace; the others descend into darkness.”

“I’m honored to be participating in the 2025 Palm Springs Playwright Festival,” said McCarty, an incoming Acting BFA

student at Carnegie Mellon University. “Being recognized for my work as a playwright, after years

in musical theatre, is incredibly meaningful. 'Seven' came from a place of deep reflection—and I'm grateful for the chance to share it."□□

"The Kellogg Murders", by Peyton Taylor (17), Valley View High School, Moreno Valley, is a dark comedy in which jealous cereal mascots Corn Flakes and Wheaties embark on a revenge-fueled spree against their sugary competitors—until a determined investigator begins connecting the crumbs. Packed with outrageous characters and whip-smart satire, the play skewers brand culture and nostalgia with tongue firmly in cheek.

"I've loved every minute of theatre during my high school years, and experimenting with playwriting has been one of the most exciting parts," said Taylor. "Even as I head to UCR to major in psychology, I never want to lose my connection to the stage. I'm so grateful to PSYPF for this opportunity."

Each winner receives a \$500 scholarship to support their artistic education, as well as professional mentorship from acclaimed writer and director Jack Kenny. Palm Springs resident and Hollywood veteran, Kenny brings a wealth of experience from Hollywood and Broadway to guide the young playwrights.□□

"These two young writers embody the fearless creativity and insight that define PSYPF," said David Youse, Founder and Executive Director of the Festival. "Both 'Seven' and 'The Kellogg Murders' are wildly different yet equally compelling. One offers profound



PSYPF



2025 Mentor, Jack Kenny

psychological and spiritual introspection. The other, a biting and hilarious satire. It's thrilling to provide Kayla and Peyton with a platform—and a community—that will nurture their artistic growth."

A seasoned actor and producer, Youse has rich background in television and theater. He has guest-starred in over 30 television series, including recurring roles on Chicago Hope, The Days of Our Lives, Beverly Hills 90210, The Adventures of Brisco County Jr., and The Young and the Restless. He is notably remembered for his appearance on Criminal Minds, one of the highest-rated episodes of the series. His other television credits include Southland, Torchwood, Without a Trace, and Star Trek: Enterprise. In film, he is best remembered for The Broken Hearts Club, directed by Greg Berlanti.

As a producer, Youse founded Four Things Productions, aiming to raise awareness and funds for various non-profit organizations through theater. His premiere production was a celebrity-driven staged reading of Larry Kramer's *The Normal Heart*, directed by Academy Award winner Joel Grey, which inspired the 2010 Broadway revival. Other notable productions include Charles Busch as Katharine Hepburn in Matthew Lombardo's *Tea at Five* and Robert Harling's *Steel Magnolias*, directed by Judith Ivey. These productions have raised significant funds for charities such as The Ali Forney Center, The Goodman Special Care Clinic, The Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, and The Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center.

Returning this year as a mentor is Jack Kenny, a name synonymous with storytelling across stage and screen. With a distinguished career that includes creating NBC's *The Book of Daniel* and FOX's *Titus*, running the hit Syfy series *Warehouse 13*, and writing for fan-favorites like Marvel's *Jessica Jones* and Zoey's *Extraordinary Playlist*, Kenny brings a wealth of experience from Hollywood's frontlines. Kenny's extensive Broadway and Off-Broadway acting experience, including performances in *Fiddler on the Roof* and *The Normal Heart*, combined with his Juilliard training and decades of television writing and directing, provides festival participants with mentorship that bridges every dimension of the theatrical arts.

"Theatre demands truth—immediate and unfiltered," said Kenny. "Mentoring these young playwrights isn't just about shaping their scripts; it's about helping them find and trust their voice."

The 2025 Palm Springs Young Playwrights Festival takes place Sunday, June 8, at 12:00 PM at the Palm Springs Cultural Center (2300 East Baristo Rd., Palm Springs, CA 92262). Tickets are \$10 for general admission. Students admitted free. Tickets available at:

<https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/6581051>

The festival will be co-hosted by three past winners: Abigail Alldredge, Anthony Banuelos, and Erik Evans, continuing the festival's tradition of fostering alumni engagement and mentorship.

The Palm Springs Young Playwrights Festival is dedicated to promoting creative writing in the

theatrical form among elementary, middle, and high school students in Riverside County, CA. By offering mentorship, scholarships, and the opportunity for public staged readings, PSYPF invests in the next generation of storytellers, ensuring that diverse and fresh perspectives continue to enrich the world of theatre. For more information, submissions, and tickets, visit:

www.psypf.org

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