

Art Spark Texas Theater Internship Opens Doors for Young Disabled Artists

In partnership with Ground Floor Theatre and supported by the Kennedy Center's Access/VSA Program

AUSTIN, TX, UNITED STATES, June 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Art Spark Texas is launching a new Summer Break Theater Internship Program, offering paid, hands-on technical theater experience to young adults with disabilities. In partnership with Ground Floor Theatre (GFT) and funded through a Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' Access/VSA 2025 Creative Careers contract, the program will provide five or more internship positions for individuals ages 18 to 30 who have a disability.

The Kennedy Center's Access/VSA International Network provides community, education, and resources to creatives, educators and arts leaders striving for accessibility for people with disabilities in arts and culture.

Each intern will work a total of 30 hours over the summer, supporting various aspects of production, design and stage management at Ground Floor Theatre in Austin. The internship culminates with the theater's Texas premiere of *Amy and the Orphans*, a bold and heartwarming play running



Art Spark Texas Logo



Ground Floor Theatre Logo

August 14-30, 2025.

The program reflects the shared mission of Art Spark Texas and Ground Floor Theatre to provide artistic opportunities for underserved and underrepresented communities. By investing in the talents and perspectives of young disabled artists, the internship aims to foster equity, skill development and visibility within the performing arts.

“This program offers more than experience—it offers belonging,” said Celia Hughes, executive director of Art Spark Texas. “Young artists with disabilities deserve space in every part of the creative process, from the rehearsal room to the spotlight. By partnering with Ground Floor Theatre, we’re creating pathways for these voices to be heard and valued.”

The Summer Break Internship brings that vision to life, combining inclusive mentorship with real-world experience in a professional theater setting. Together, the organizations are creating space for authentic storytelling and diverse talent to take center stage.

Interns will contribute to the development of *Amy and the Orphans*, a play by renowned playwright Lindsey Ferrentino that explores family dynamics, disability and authenticity. When two estranged siblings reunite after their father’s death, they must reconnect with their sister Amy—who has Down syndrome—and ultimately discover that she may be the strongest of them all. The production aligns with both organizations’ commitment to inclusive casting and disability representation on stage.

“This internship aligns perfectly with our mission to uplift underrepresented voices.” said Lisa Scheps, artistic director of Ground Floor Theatre. “Ground Floor Theatre has enjoyed a long-standing relationship with Art Spark, and we’re excited about the meaningful work ahead. Paired with our production of Lindsey Ferrentino’s *Amy and the Orphans*, this initiative has the power to touch many lives.”

To apply or learn more about the Summer Break Theater Internship Program, visit www.artsparktx.org.

AMY AND THE ORPHANS | August 14 – 30, 2025

TEXAS PREMIERE

By Lindsey Ferrentino | Directed by Maryanna Tollemache

Part of GFT’s Directors Rising Program, a mentoring project for new directors.

Amy and the Orphans centers around Amy, a woman with Down syndrome, and her siblings who reunite after the death of their father. As the siblings embark on a road trip to their father's funeral, they navigate complex family dynamics, long-held secrets, and differing expectations for Amy's future. The play offers a nuanced exploration of identity, family bonds, and the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities, all while balancing humor with poignant emotional moments. Amy’s character, in particular, shines as a testament to independence and self-

advocacy. www.groundfloortheatre.org/amy

ABOUT ART SPARK TEXAS

Art Spark Texas, founded in 1996, is dedicated to fostering an inclusive, arts-inspired community where individuals with and without disabilities can flourish. The organization's mission is to challenge perceptions of how people contribute to society by ensuring that arts experiences are accessible, welcoming, and respectful for all. Art Spark Texas believes that the inclusion of diverse voices enriches lives and actively creates opportunities for people with disabilities across all cultural and ethnic communities.

Through its dynamic programs, Art Spark Texas addresses the physical and attitudinal barriers that often limit participation for people with disabilities. Participants benefit from opportunities for social and professional networking in supportive environments. The organization also provides non-disabled individuals and caregivers with the chance to gain insight and empathy by experiencing life from another perspective.

Art Spark Texas offers services that support educational and career development, personal growth, public training, and creative expression. Its programs serve individuals who are often marginalized, including homebound individuals, isolated older adults, veterans, students with developmental disabilities, and others. To date, Art Spark Texas has served over 95,000 Texans through accessible, culturally diverse, community-based arts opportunities, classes, and workshops. The organization also promotes groundbreaking performances and artwork by artists with disabilities in dance, theater, media, and other creative fields.

ABOUT GROUND FLOOR THEATRE

Ground Floor Theatre (GFT) produces works focusing on historically underrepresented communities. It serves as an incubator to foster and grow new and groundbreaking works that shine a light on groups that are often overlooked. It is also a home for the Austin theatre community to come together and learn from one another in order to help Austin continue to excel as a leader in the national theatre community. For more information visit www.groundfloortheatre.org.

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