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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TEENS TAKE POWER AT BERKELEY REP'S FREE ARTS ADVOCACY DAY

Teen Council invites local youth to *Claim: Your Education. Your Voice. Your Arts.*

WHO: Bay Area teens who love the arts

WHAT: CLAIM: Your Education. Your Voice. Your Arts.

WHERE: Berkeley Rep School of Theatre / 2071 Addison St @ Shattuck / Downtown Berkeley

WHEN: Register by Friday, February 3 for event on **Sunday, February 12 @ 10:00 AM**

HOW MUCH: Free!

INFO: (510) 647-2984, berkeleyrep.org/claimyourarts, or teencouncil@berkeleyrep.org

JANUARY 31, 2012 – Berkeley Repertory Theatre urges local teens to *Claim: Your Education. Your Voice. Your Arts.* High-school students from throughout the Bay Area are invited to this free event organized by Berkeley Rep's Teen Council. Beginning at 10:00 AM, teens will participate in hands-on advocacy training, lively debates, and friendly competitions, all aimed at empowering youth to persuasively support arts education. The day ends with a contest to create an innovative advertising campaign for arts education, followed by a free performance of Berkeley Rep's world-premiere production of *Ghost Light*.

"Eighty-nine percent of public schools are not meeting state-mandated goals for arts instruction," says Rachel Fink, director of Berkeley Rep's School of Theatre. "When members of our Teen Council learned that, they were outraged and felt immediately called to action."

Claim is part of Berkeley Rep's ongoing effort to cultivate the next generation of arts leaders – and it kicks off a teen-driven awareness campaign to support arts programming in local schools. The day begins with a pep rally, followed by an interactive, Olympics-style competition, complete with favorite theatre games transmitting key facts about the current climate of arts education. Teens will debate these issues in an Arts Advocacy Showdown that afternoon, and then propose a multimedia campaign to educate the public using tactics and strategies they discovered during the day. The winning proposal will be produced by Berkeley Rep's staff and used to advertise future events.

"Teens are their own best advocates," Fink adds. "This event is not only about speaking up for resources, but also about helping youth build skills as trained leaders, advocates, and engaged citizens." Please register by Friday, February 3 to participate. **For more information**, call (510) 647-2984, visit berkeleyrep.org/claimyourarts, or e-mail teencouncil@berkeleyrep.org – and join the conversation at [facebook.com/claimyourarts](https://www.facebook.com/claimyourarts) or with the Twitter tag #claimyourARTS.

The **Berkeley Rep Teen Council** is a theatre youth group organized by teens for teens. Its goal is to foster the theatre audiences and theatre professionals of tomorrow by opening channels of communication between teens, theatre professionals, and the community at large while building a base for lifelong learning. Through a variety of interactive programs, the Teen Council provides an opportunity for youth to participate in all aspects of the dramatic process: on stage, backstage, and in front of the stage through its affiliation with the Tony Award-winning Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Currently, the Council has more than 200 members including youth from numerous local high schools.

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