

**** For Immediate Release ****

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Brilliant Young Minds Speak Up at the 19th Annual Brave New Voices International Youth Poetry Slam in Washington D.C.

*Tony Award Winner and Hamilton star Daveed Diggs to host grand slam finale
at the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts.*

Washington D.C. – July 11, 2015 – Youth Speaks, a global leader in youth development and spoken word performance, will host its [19th Annual Brave New Voices International Youth Poetry Slam Festival](#) from July 12-16th. The festival will play home to over 550 powerful young voices, representing 55 cities and organizations from around the world, while empowering the most outstanding youth poets to address the most pressing and current issues facing our country including social justice, the presidential election, immigration, education and gender equality through spoken word.

The subject of a hit HBO series, this year's world renowned competition will aim at redefining what it means to be an American in the 21st Century and will showcase 75 events and workshops spread throughout the nation's bustling capital. These individual events will highlight the creativity of these poets, shining a spotlight on young educators, artists, and emerging leaders from around the world as they lead up to the grand-slam finale performance at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, hosted by Tony Award Winner and *Hamilton* star Daveed Diggs.

Youth Speaks has long championed a national and increasingly global movement of young people and has continuously provided participants with access to the Brave New Voices alumni and special networks. In addition to the slam competition, festival participants will have the opportunity to engage in special poetry conversations with renowned poets, writers and thought leaders, that will allow them to address critically important issues such as juvenile justice, education and gender equality. The Festival schedule, subject to updates, is as follows:

Opening Ceremonies: July 12, 2016, 8 p.m.
Location: Concert Hall at the Kennedy Center

#iTooAmAmerica Live: July 12, 2016, 9 p.m.
Location: Various venues at the Kennedy Center

BNV National Youth Town Hall: July 13, 2016, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Location: The Marvin Center at The George Washington University

Writing Workshops: July 13, 2016, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Location: The Marvin Center at The George Washington University

BNV Poetry Slam Quarter Finals: July 13, 2016, 6 p.m.

Location: U Street Corridor –

- Ellington School for the Arts
- Hamiltonian Art Gallery
- Source DC
- Marvin Restaurant
- Thurgood Marshall Academy
- Busboys & Poets

Queeriosity: July 13, 2016, 9 p.m.

Location: The Marvin Center at The George Washington University

BNV Poetry Slam Semi Finals: July 15, 2016, 6 p.m.

Location: The Reagan Center and The Women’s Museum

Phife is Living: July 16, 2016, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Location: Marvin Gaye Park

BNV Grand Slam Finals: July 16, 2016, 6 p.m.

Location: Concert Hall at the Kennedy Center

Taking place in a different city each year, Washington D.C. is proud to host the groundbreaking festival for the second time since its inception. Artfully conceived by Youth Speaks after the inaugural Youth Poetry Slam in San Francisco, Brave New Voices is the first youth-centric poetry slam in the nation’s history and is now the largest and most diverse annual spoken word event in the world. Since 1997, the festival has grown as a cornerstone of Youth Speaks’ programming and represents youth from across the United States, Canada, Africa, the Polynesian Islands, and Europe.

About Youth Speaks:

Founded in 1996, Youth Speaks is a global organization that produces local and national youth poetry slams, festivals, and reading series, alongside a comprehensive slate of arts-in-education. The Youth Speaks organization has helped launch a national network of over 70 educational programs who believe in the power of young people. Through the intersection of the arts, youth development practices, civic engagement strategies and high quality artistic presentation, Youth Speaks creates safe spaces that challenge young people to find, develop and apply their voices as creators of societal change.

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