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## **Two Darien Teens Win Playwright Awards from Stamford's Palace Theatre**

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On May 1, two Darien teenagers will experience the joy of live theater in a whole new way — as playwrights — when professional actors perform stage readings of the original one-act plays the teens wrote in a competition for Stamford's Palace Theatre.

*Here's the [Palace Theatre](#) announcement of the awards:*

Darien residents Olivia Falkenrath and Quinn Murphy, along with Ryan Polistena from Bethel were named winners of The Palace Theatre's 2017 Ernie DiMattia Emerging Young Artist Scholarship Awards for their writing of an original one-act play.

All three will witness their voices and visions come to life with a staged reading by professional actors at The Palace in Stamford.

Olivia Falkenrath, a 10th grade student at Greenwich Academy, was awarded first place — a \$1,000

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scholarship — for her play, “New Beginnings.”

The Palace also recognized Brunswick School 10th grader Quinn Murphy with a second place scholarship of \$500 for “Siblings” and Ryan Polistena, a graduating senior at Bethel High School, with a third place \$250 scholarship for his work, “Dilemma of the Single Chair.”

The Palace has brought in Broadway veteran Luis Salgado to guest direct the staged reading, which will be attended by the playwrights’ parents, teachers and friends as well as Stamford Center for the Arts board members and Spotlight Soiree gala sponsors.

A well-known performer, director, choreographer and producer, Luis Salgado’s 20-year career spans Broadway, film, television, and stages around the world. Broadway credits include *In The Heights*, *Woman on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, *Rocky* and *On Your Feet*.

Most recently, Salgado served as the director and choreographer for a production of *In The Heights* at The Axelrod Theater in Asbury Park and an all Spanish production at The Gala Theater in Washington D.C.

“Congratulations to Olivia, Quinn and Ryan for their excellent work,” said The Palace’s Executive Director Michael Moran. “Arts education is extremely important to The Palace. We are thrilled to welcome Luis Salgado, an accomplished director and Broadway veteran, and are excited to see how he will bring the unique vision of each young playwright to life.”

The Emerging Young Artist Scholarship Award was established in 2010 and is open to all high school students from Fairfield and Westchester Counties. Winners have included instrumentalists, vocalists, composers, actors and playwrights. In 2015, the award was renamed for Ernie DiMattia, former president of The Ferguson Library in Stamford and a longtime Stamford Center for the Arts board member.

The Palace’s Arts in Education programs are held year round and strive to educate, challenge and inspire area youth by offering opportunities in performing, choreography, master classes and intensives in acting, voice and dance. Students learn skills that are important in academic and life success such as confidence, problem-solving, teamwork, perseverance and focus.

The Palace Theatre is located at 61 Atlantic St. in Stamford. It can be reached at [\(203\) 325-4466](tel:2033254466) or by visiting [the theater's website](#). For the latest news and updates, follow [@ThePalaceTheatreStamford](#) on Facebook and [@PalaceStamford](#) on Twitter.

### **About The Palace Theatre**

The 1,580-seat Palace Theatre is dedicated to performing arts of all genres – music, dance, theater and

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comedy. In addition to hosting world-renowned performers in each of those fields, the Palace partners with arts organizations like the Stamford Symphony and Connecticut Ballet for their performances.

The theater's three floors encompass a deeper-than-typical Broadway-size stage, a café, a Learning Center, a theater-long art gallery and a magnificent glass-walled promenade. The Palace is dedicated to providing exciting entertainment that enriches the cultural, educational, economic and social life of the community.