

The Unusual Suspects Tell Untold Stories of Girls & Gangs

Los Angeles, September 8, 2011- The award-winning Unusual Suspects Theatre Company announces a new Storytelling Program and partnership with Girls & Gangs, a support and advocacy organization devoted to young women in the juvenile justice system. Guided by Unusual Suspects teaching artists and volunteer mentors, young women, who are a part of Girls & Gangs, explore their life experiences through the art of theatrical storytelling while cultivating important life skills. Professional actors will perform a presentation of these untold stories on **Thursday, September 22nd** at 7:00pm at Casa 0101's Little Casa Theater in East L.A. Admission is free.

- Los Angeles County is the epicenter of gang activity nationwide, with more than 1,400 gangs and as many as 175,000 members.
- In 2006, girls accounted for 1 out of 4 juveniles arrested in Los Angeles County.
- The average math and reading level for girls at L.A. County Probation Camps Scott and Scudder is Fifth Grade.

The Unusual Suspects new Storytelling Program works in conjunction with Girls & Gangs' re-entry and mentoring services in order to help young women make a healthy transition from incarceration or probation to independent life. Through the process of writing a monologue, participants learn story structure, character development, and fundamental literary techniques allowing these young women to express themselves in a safe environment, reflect on their life experiences and acquire new life skills. The Unusual Suspects' programs have proven to increase youth's communication skills, literacy, self-esteem, and conflict resolution skills.

Since 1999, Girls & Gangs has been the only non-profit organization in Los Angeles County that is solely dedicated to providing support and advocacy for young women, ages 12-18 years old, involved with the juvenile justice system and in gangs. Girls & Gangs offers comprehensive pre- and post-release re-entry services, community workshops, advocacy, and training & technical assistance to over 300 girls annually in Los Angeles County and their families. To learn more about us, visit our website www.girlsandgangs.org.

Writer's Collective: An Evening of Untold Stories will be presented Thursday, September 22nd at 7:00pm at Casa 0101's Little Casa located at 2009 East 1st Street, Los Angeles, CA 90033. All stories were written by Girls & Gangs participants and will be performed by professional actors. Admission is free. Due to limited space, reservations are highly encouraged. For more information or to make a reservation please call 213-488-8488 x201 or email RSVP@theunusualsuspects.org

*Born out of the ashes of the 1992 L.A. Riots, **The Unusual Suspects Theatre Company** has grown into an award winning, model mentoring program using theatre arts to reach youth in underserved and at-risk environments, including kids in foster care, violence-plagued neighborhoods, gangs and juvenile corrections facilities. The Unusual Suspects offers two consecutive 10-week (60-80 hours) playwriting and performance workshops where youth develop self-esteem, tolerance, and the communication and coping skills needed to make positive life choices. For more information, visit The Unusual Suspects website at www.TheUnusualSuspects.org.*

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