

Long Wharf joins with nonprofit to aid homeless youths

By Pam Landry

Register Correspondent

NEW HAVEN — Long Wharf Theatre has partnered with Youth Continuum to help homeless youths.

Through April 18, on behalf of Youth Continuum, Long Wharf Theatre will collect donations of bus tokens and 10-ride ticket passes at each performance of "No Child... ."

Steven Scarpa, director of marketing and communications at the theater, said that choosing to support Youth Continuum "dovetails nicely" with the play.

"No Child... ." is a one-woman show about a school-teacher in inner-city New York and how teachers can affect the lives of students.

Scarpa said that when Long Wharf is planning community outreach programs, it looks "to make it relevant to what is on the stage."

Youth Continuum aims to protect and promote the well-being of at-risk youths and provide them with the skills needed to take advantage of opportunities for a healthy and productive future, according to its Web site.

For youths seeking jobs, housing and education each day, just getting around is a major obstacle. "Transportation is a big problem," said Michelle Doheny, director of fund development for Youth Continuum.

Doheny said that the number of homeless youths has taken a huge upturn over the past year and the agency is seeing kids from all over the state.

The nonprofit Youth Continuum was founded in 1966 and serves at-risk people ages 13 to 23. Clients are referred by the state Department of Children and Families or are identified as homeless through Continuum's street outreach program.

Youths don't usually want to admit they are homeless, "so they are headed down a rotten path," said Doheny. "If we don't acknowledge the problem now we will pay down the line."

"No other agency in the state approaches homeless youths at the level that Youth Continuum does, with wrap-around services that include teaching basic life skills, job skills, counseling, and providing food and shelter," said Doheny. "We are a nurturing agency."

Bus passes and tokens can be bought at ctransit.com, at participating Stop & Shop stores and at the Connecticut Transit Center downtown.

The donations are being accepted at Long Wharf Theatre's Stage II, 222 Sargent Drive.

For more information about "No Child... ." visit www.longwharf.org. For more information on Youth Continuum, visit www.youthcontinuum.org.

On behalf of Youth Continuum, Long Wharf Theatre will collect donations of bus tokens and 10-ride ticket passes at each performance of "No Child... ."