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Export date: Fri Oct 30 9:15:30 2026 / +0000 GMT

Streams Community Hub launches monologue competition for youth

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Local creative arts organization, Streams Community Hub is giving youth in the community an opportunity to express their voices, with the launch of their inaugural monologue competition, Word Of Mouth.

?The whole competition is really designed to get youth engaged, give them an opportunity to express their creative voice and develop some self-confidence and self-esteem,? said Juli-Anne James.

The Word Of Mouth competition officially opened its virtual doors for submissions in mid-March, and sees local youth learn and perform a variety monologues from Canadian playwrights with the chance of winning a grand prize of $1,000.

Juli-Anne and Andrew James, who are the co-founders of Streams Community Hub, spoke with the Free Press and said the organization created the competition as a way to continue their work with youth, as their in-person programing continues to be on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

?It's really forced us to get creative. We're an arts organization dealing with youth, it's very difficult to try to do that at a point in time where there's so many people doing online tutorials, how do we keep our community of youth engaged in creative arts,? explains Juli-Anne.

?We're concerned with what's happening to the communication skills of you people as they are going through this challenge, and so we wanted to just create some space for them,? she continued.

The competition has been divided into two age categories, 8-12 and 13-17, and requires participants to video their performance and submit it to be seen by a panel of judges. Judges for the competition include Theatre Orangeville's David Nairn, Kristen Gamache of LP Stage Productions, and playwright/actor Jermaine Ransom.

Streams Community Hub has curated a list of monologues, sourced from the work Refractions Solo, that address a variety of subjects specific to youth including mental health, immigration, LGBTQ+, ADHD, anxiety, and the environment.

?We wanted to make sure that we did reflect diversity, we did reflect the work of Canadians, and we did reflect issues that youth are facing,? said Juli-Anne.

Three finalists will be selected from the submissions and will do what Juli-Anne describes as an ?American Idol? style final performance, with first place awarded $1,000, and second $500. Community members will also have the chance to vote on fan favourites.

While the competition will be the first one of its kind for the local arts organizations, the duo says they are excited to bring it to the community, and hope to continue with it.

?It's really refreshing, in spite of everything, being able to utilize online platforms and using that tool for something positive and to engage the community, it really is pretty cool,? said Andrew.

Submissions for Word of Mouth will be open until June 15. Participants can find details on requirements, the monologues, and submit at www.streamshub.org.