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PRESS CONTACTS
Gus Schulenburg | gschulenburg@tcg.org | 212.609.5941

Theatre Communications Group to Launch Rising Leaders of Color Program *Nominations Now Being Accepted for 2016 DC-Based Cohort*

New York, NY—Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for theatre, is pleased to announce the launch of the **Rising Leaders of Color (RLC) Program**. RLC is an expansion and re-envisioning of TCG's Young Leaders of Color Program (YLC) which launched in 2008. Alongside TCG's SPARK Leadership Program, RLC will change the face of the theatre field by nurturing and supporting an intergenerational network of leaders of color at various stages in their careers. In 2016, RLC will form a cohort of ten early-career leaders of color from the DC, Baltimore, and Northern Virginia areas to attend TCG's National Conference in Washington, DC. This DC-area cohort will be featured in the Conference programming and participate in professional development meetings and events.

"Over the years, we've seen the National Conference transformed by the participation of past YLC and SPARK cohorts, and witnessed that transformation ripple out into the theatre field itself," said **Teresa Eyring**, executive director of TCG. "The RLC builds on that momentum, and we look forward to seeing what these next leaders will bring to the intergenerational movement changing the face of our field."

RLC will provide theatre professionals who self-identify as leaders of color with professional development and networking opportunities at TCG's National Conferences and beyond, including periodic webinars, group teleconferences, and introductions to recipients and alumni of TCG's grant programs. In addition, the program will offer participants opportunities to engage in dialogues about the next generation of theatre leadership and their role in the field. RLC is a part of TCG's multi-year, six-point Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Initiative (EDII) to transform the theatre field into a more equitable, inclusive, and diverse community. Learn more about the Rising Leaders of Color program [here](#), and the EDI Initiative [here](#).

"One systemic barrier to achieving a truly equitable field has been the lack of opportunities for leaders of color," said **Emilya Cachapero**, director of artistic & international programs, TCG. "Programs like RLC dismantle that barrier by raising the profile of rising leaders of color, providing opportunities for their professional development, and building a network of colleagues to serve as a support system."

"I am madly in love with my SPARK cohort. They inspire me, and confirm that the American theatre is on the precipice of revolution," said **Deena Selenow**, director, curator, and participant in the inaugural SPARK cohort. "Between my cohort, the TCG leaders, and the leadership training, I feel I am seeing my work and the theatre community at large with new eyes and a more detailed awareness. I am truly a different theatre practitioner than I was at this time last year."

RLC builds on the learnings and momentum of YLC and the SPARK Leadership Program. Since 2008, YLC has brought 79 leaders of color to TCG National Conferences. RLC expands and re-envisions that community as part of an ongoing intergenerational network of leaders of color. From 2014-15, the SPARK Leadership Program assembled a cohort of ten leaders of color for a focused, year-long professional development curriculum. Through RLC and SPARK, TCG will support a variety of professional development and networking programs to meet the diverse needs of theatre leaders of color. Learn more about SPARK [here](#) and YLC [here](#).

"Networking is one of the most powerful tools to accelerate and sustain success for any leader. Making connections and building enduring, mutually beneficial relationships enables leaders to identify and seize opportunities that might otherwise be unattainable," said **Michael Francis**, senior artistic programs associate. "RLC presents a unique opportunity for early-career leaders to be part of an intergenerational

network of leaders of color, who have a shared commitment to moving the needle on equity across the theatre field.”

“The SPARK Leadership Program has insisted, in its ambition and scope, that true leadership is a journey that is both inward and outward,” said **Victor Maog**, director, artistic director of Second Generation Productions, and participant in the inaugural SPARK cohort. “I am grateful for the opportunity to sharpen and expand my skills, all the while being placed side by side with industry game-changers. It’s an inspiration to be part of a program that so deeply believes in my capacity to play a significant role in future of the American theatre.”

For over 50 years, **Theatre Communications Group** (TCG), the national organization for theatre, has existed to strengthen, nurture and promote the professional not-for-profit theatre. TCG’s constituency has grown from a handful of groundbreaking theatres to nearly 700 member theatres and affiliate organizations and more than 12,000 individuals nationwide. TCG offers its members networking and knowledge-building opportunities through conferences, events, research and communications; awards grants, approximately \$2 million per year, to theatre companies and individual artists; advocates on the federal level; and serves as the U.S. Center of the International Theatre Institute, connecting its constituents to the global theatre community. TCG is North America’s largest independent publisher of dramatic literature, with 14 Pulitzer Prizes for Best Play on the TCG booklist. It also publishes the award-winning *American Theatre* magazine and ARTSEARCH®, the essential source for a career in the arts. In all of its endeavors, TCG seeks to increase the organizational efficiency of its member theatres, cultivate and celebrate the artistic talent and achievements of the field and promote a larger public understanding of, and appreciation for, the theatre. www.tcg.org

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