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## Youth Onstage! embarks on three school road trip

BY JESSICA LYONS

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Youth Onstage! will be bringing its production of "Our City" to three local Queens schools in October, November and December.

Part of the All Stars Project, Inc., Youth Onstage! gives actors between the ages of 14 and 21 a chance to show their talents while growing as performers. They also receive free training through the Community Performance School.

The group's current production, "Our City," is based on the Thornton Wilder play "Our Town." It is set in modern-day New York City and "weaves together the diverse communities and complex problems facing ordinary people in the city." Artistic Director Dan Friedman said that they first adapted the play in 2005. The performers were given assignments of observing interesting people and then using them to create characters, who were then put into scenes.

"I thought it was really intriguing," South Ozone Park resident and John Adams High School graduate Alisandra Karimullah said of first reading the play. She continued, "the main message in the play just describes the different diversity that New York City has to offer... and it talks about what brings us all together, which would be liberty in a sense."

"Our City," which began rehearsals in July, will first be performed on Thursday, October 25 at the Renaissance Charter School in Jackson Heights. Youth Onstage!



Photo by Elizabeth Hetzer

**Cast and crew of "Our City" in front of their touring van: (left to right) co-director Brian Mullin, Genesis West, Alisandra Karimullah, Cynthia Cyprien, Emmanuel Kalaitjakis, Brandi Webb and Demar Grandison and (front row) Francisco Espinoza, and artistic director Dan Friedman.**

will also be in Jamaica at Hillcrest High School on Thursday, November 11 and in Flushing at John Bowne High School on Tuesday, December 11.

This marks the first time that Youth Onstage! will be bringing its show on the road and to Queens. Due to renovations being made on their West 42nd Street complex, they are taking the show to other locations.

Being that John Bowne senior Reynaldo Piniella wants to be a professional actor, he got involved with Youth Onstage! for the first time this year. He said it will be fun

to perform "Our City" in his school, especially since the school is doing a production of the original "Our Town." Through his involvement with the group, Corona resident Piniella said that his acting has definitely improved and that he feels more comfortable being in front of others.

Performer Adeola Salau, a junior at Queens Gateway who lives in Rosedale, said that she thinks the play opens the mind up to different people and different things that happen in the city. She said that she is looking forward to seeing how different people and the different

boroughs react to "Our City." She also said that the message she hopes audience members take away from the show is that regardless of what borough people may be from, everyone is united through the city and everyone makes up the city.

Following the shows, the performers will take part in a discussion with the students.

For more information on All Stars Project, Inc. and Youth Onstage!, visit [www.allstars.org](http://www.allstars.org) or call Youth Onstage! Program Manager Brian Mullin at 212-356-8452.