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**Jefferson Center presents Sisters of the Circle**

*After-school performing arts program features Roanoke teens  
from Liberia, Somalia, Haiti and the United States*

Jefferson Center is proud to announce its annual performance by Sisters of the Circle Sunday, May 18 at 3:00 p.m. Sisters of the Circle is Jefferson Center's after-school performing arts program for immigrant, refugee and American teenage girls. This year, fourteen young women from Liberia, Somalia, Haiti and the United States have collaborated with professional artists in music, dance and spoken word poetry to create an original stage production based upon their own experiences.

This year's free performance, entitled "My Journey, Yours" is a presentation of movement and stories of the many journeys the Sisters of the Circle have already taken in their young lives—across national borders, continents, oceans, cultures, languages and identities.

Jefferson Center's Sisters of the Circle program began in the spring of 2007. In its two years of existence, this "Sisterhood" has included almost 30 girls from nine different countries and cultures. In 2007, the group performed to a standing-room-only audience at Jefferson Center as well as at Local Colors, an annual festival of Roanoke's cultural diversity, and at Legacy International's Global Youth Village, a summer program that brings youth from around the world to Bedford, Virginia for training in leadership and conflict resolution.

Led by Virginia Tech Theatre Arts professor Ann Kilkelly and a team of expert facilitators, the Sisters have explored theatre, storytelling and interview techniques; hip-hop, tap and West African dance; spoken-word poetry, song and Middle Eastern drumming. They have worked with guest artists of national renown including Toni Blackman (MC and Cultural Ambassador), Savion Glover (Tony-award winning tap dancer and choreographer), the Kusun Ensemble (dance and music performance from Ghana, West Africa) and Nicole LeCorgne (Middle Eastern percussionist). They were even visited by Angélique Kidjo, international pop star from Benin, West Africa.

Sisters of the Circle is produced by Jefferson Center in partnership with Roanoke City Public Schools, Roanoke Refugee and Immigration Services, and Virginia Tech Department of Theatre Arts. The program has been made possible in the spring of 2008 through funding from the Verizon Foundation and the Bank of America Foundation.

Jefferson Center is a non-profit performing arts center that enriches and educates Western Virginia by producing high quality performing and visual arts programs including concerts, dance parties, exhibitions, lectures and artist residencies.

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