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By: Brandi Tape



On June 3, 2010, Ntozake Shange, author of the famed theater production, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*, was named as a visiting artist serving New York City's Community Access. The service-based art program is designed to assist individuals living with psychiatric disabilities. Community Access prepares high-need New Yorkers with mental illnesses to live independently by providing support and a therapeutic environment. The program offers career development, and housing opportunities.

“The diversity of learning that Community Access offers is a true reflection of the diversity of our community. Fostering creativity, providing real-world experiences, and offering people a home of their own are central to helping people be a part of our community,” says Chief Executive Officer, Steve Coe. Shange’s new role will include assisting participants in expressing themselves through creating art work surrounding the writing, designing, and physical constructing of their own books.

“The chance to involve a legend like Ntozake Shange in our art program is life-changing for our participants. Ntozake is introducing a whole new rainbow of perspective to our program. She is helping our artists learn what it takes to share their own stories and become their dreams” muses Suzanne Coley, Director and Artist-in-Residence.

Community Access will be hosting a benefit on June 24, 2010 raising awareness and community support at the Riverside Church Theatre in New York City. The event will commence at 6 p.m. and include readings by Shange and her sister and fellow playwright and poet, Ifa Bayeza. A VIP reception after the event will lead to an intimate reading of pieces based on the subject of healing. For those unable to attend the event you can witness Shange’s work coming alive when her legendary play returns to Broadway this time with an updated spin and again as a film directed by Tyler Perry due in theaters early next year.