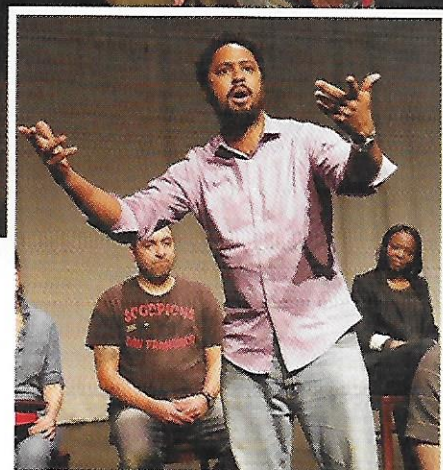


NSN's Brimstone Award for Applied Storytelling



Top: Irondale performance finale. Photos by Amanda Hinkle.
Right: Jason Warwin presents a personal narrative as his own story.



The Brimstone Award for Applied Storytelling aims to increase understanding of the ways storytelling can promote change in individuals and communities with a \$5,000 grant. Please help us congratulate this year's worthy recipient:

To Protect, Serve, and Understand *Irondale Productions, Inc.* **Project Director: Terry Greiss**

To Protect, Serve, and Understand is a partnership with the New York City Police Department developed to build empathy and communication between officers and the community.

This program addresses one of the timeliest issues in our society today: the relationship between police officers and the individuals they protect and serve. We believe that fear and misconceptions about the "other" stands in the way of achieving understanding between people who need to trust and respect each other in order for society to function safely and equitably. Unless an officer on a beat and an average citizen can learn to communicate and thereby establish trust, the gap that exists now will grow wider.

Through a series of workshops, Irondale's teaching artists use improvisation and storytelling techniques to help participants take on the roles of individuals who are unfamiliar to them. Participants are asked to interview people in their communities and to use their personal stories. By speaking, moving, and thinking as another person, and ultimately making someone else's story their own, they develop true understanding that leads to a heightened level of trust and cooperation. Participants are given the tools to appreciate and honor the other person's experience.

This program brings together people who are not only unlike each other but are often in contention with each other, and helps them to develop compassion. All workshops culminate in a free public performance to share stories with the community. Although the performance is a necessary component to this program, the primary focus is on collecting stories and training participants to step into each other's shoes.