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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Teens Attack Bullying with Spoken Word: Art is Our Weapon Youth Poetry Festival**

**Norfolk, VA** – Local non-profit TWP – The Youth Movement, also known as Teens With a Purpose, has launched an attack against bullying using art as the weapon. Teens With a Purpose has partnered with Virginia Beach Parks and Recreation, the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts, and Virginia Beach City Schools to rally the community to attack bullying with spoken word. On May 25<sup>th</sup>, Hampton Roads Youth Poets will host the “Art is Our Weapon” Youth Poetry Festival. Hampton Roads Youth Poets (HRYP) is the spoken word division of Teens With a Purpose composed of young writers, spoken word educators, and youth activists who use their voices, energy and ideas to address real issues that teens face today, to be a change in their community and develop the tools for personal growth.

During the **Art is Our Weapon** Youth Poetry Festival, Hampton Roads Youth Poets and other Teens from the community, will make a strong statement of non-tolerance towards bullying, while providing the audience the opportunity to explore the issues and the importance of their own role in combating bullying. This free community event will be held at the Miller Studio Theatre at the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts on Friday May 25<sup>th</sup>, from 6pm to 9pm.

According to StopBullying.gov, a federal website managed by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services “Bullying can be prevented, especially when the power of a community is brought together. Community-wide strategies can help identify and support children who are bullied, redirect the behavior of children who bully, and change the attitudes of adults and youth who tolerate bullying behaviors in peer groups, schools, and communities”. Bullying needs to stop, is Teens With a Purpose stance. They have been battling bullying for years through their Choose Respect program that addresses relationship bullying and dating violence. The program also incorporates the —Crossing The Line initiative, a program developed to help adults recognize and address statutory rape and other cohesive, abusive relationships teens may encounter. Choose Respects goals and objectives are for Youth to establish healthy relationship behaviors to prevent, report, or stop dating and bullying when suspected, reported or observed.

**Art Is Our Weapon** Youth Poetry Slam Festival, is being offered, free of charge. TWP encourages Youth, 13 to 18, to share their anti-bullying and other original, uplifting poetry. Youth can sign-up to speak out against bullying, by May 23<sup>rd</sup> by calling (757) 747-2679 or by visiting the Teens With a Purpose Facebook page: TWPTTheMovement. This free community event is being brought to you in partnership with Virginia Beach Parks and Recreation, the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts, and Virginia Beach Public Schools. Art is Our Weapon Youth Poetry Festival features music by Testimony and an anti-bullying skit by Teens With a Purpose (TWP) – The Youth Movement.

### **Art is Our Weapon Youth Poetry Festival**

DATE: May 25th, 2012

TIME: 6pm to 9pm

LOCATION: Miller Studio Theatre  
at The Sandler Center for Performing Arts  
201 Market Street,  
Virginia Beach, VA 23464

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TWP – The Movement’s mission is “**To create a platform to empower young people to use their voices, energy, abilities and talents to demonstrate their power to effect personal change and positively impact the lives of others through the arts and peer-led programs and events. We create a safe non-judgmental environment for self-expression for all young people as we continue to promote healthy life choices.**” Throughout the year, TWP hosts numerous events and seminars to provide HIV and STD prevention information and focus on prevention of gang violence, dating abuse, teen pregnancy, distracted teen driving and other life-changing issues facing today’s teens. Through open mic’s and edutainment workshops, local youth serve as facilitators, presenters, and peer mentors. For more information, please contact Michelle Sims 757.747.2679 or [TWPMichelle@gmail.com](mailto:TWPMichelle@gmail.com). Visit [www.TWPTTheMovement.org](http://www.TWPTTheMovement.org) for additional information, events and original music.