

THE OFF SHOOT RENOVATION PROJECT

THE NEED

Rude Mechs is seeking to raise \$75,000 to renovate recently acquired raw warehouse space into a functioning classroom and rehearsal studio dedicated to Grrl Action, our outreach program for teenaged girls. We invite you to be a part of the creation of this unique space, The Off Shoot.

Rude Mechs recently received a \$104,000 grant award from local foundation Impact Austin to support its expansion of Grrl Action from a summer performance camp into a year-round mentoring program giving teenaged girls the tools and community support to change their own life stories. What the girls need now is a room of their own. To date they have had to share space with all of the theatre, dance and music groups that perform in our theater, The Off Center. This kind of impermanence and uncertainty is hard on the girls and on the program. Grrl Action deserves and requires a dedicated space to give the girls the ownership needed to take their work and the program to the next level. The women of Impact Austin have dedicated \$10,000 of their Grrl Action grant award toward the creation of The Off Shoot.

ABOUT THE OFF SHOOT (Grrl Action Lab)

Local architect Nicole Blair, of Studio 512, is providing her services pro bono to realize the planning and construction of the facility. She has enlisted local contractor Ramirez Homes, Inc to oversee the project.

When a Grrl Action participant enters the renovated space she will first see a custom-designed door and logo designed and built pro-bono by Hinge Design, a local metal sign shop. The new sliding door will utilize corrugated metal roofing material removed from the existing roof in the design. As she enters the Off Shoot, a wall of lockers store her personal belongings, work and writing. Along the wall is a small restroom connected to a small dressing room for her use when she is showing her work to her classmates and instructors. Next she will find a large storage closet for costumes and props for use in performances. Next she will find a lockable cabinet for video and sound equipment she might use for her project. When she is ready to do research, write her piece or create materials promoting the project, she will have use of a shared writing desk/work area that several girls may use at once — the resource lab will also include a library of donated books and magazines, videotapes and supplies on shelves above her desk. A platform above the closets and toilet room provide a place for larger props and equipment storage. When she is ready to create and rehearse her piece, she will have access to real theatrical lighting from a grid 20 feet above the performance area, a PA and mixer for her sound elements and a video camera and projector for any video elements in her project. Rice University has donated seating with attached writing desks so the program participants can observe each other's work, take notes and do group writing exercises.

ABOUT RUDE MECHS

Rude Mechanicals is an ensemble-based theater company founded in 1995 by a group of artists who had been working in Austin for over ten years. The quality and innovation of the company's theatrical productions have firmly established Rude Mechs as one of Austin's most highly valued cultural assets. We are deeply proud to represent Texas as a home for cutting-edge theatrical practice. Rude Mechs uses performance to explore collectivity, collaboration, and community. Located in East Austin, the company is committed to creating a community space for artists of all ages and disciplines, promoting collaboration within the artistic community and producing socially conscious work. This includes ensuring a safe environment for young girls to develop artistic talent and individual strengths.

ABOUT GRRL ACTION

Because adolescent girls face a wide range of social pressures, their self-esteem and development of individual potential often suffers. Several studies by the American Association of University Women point to ongoing risks of depression, poor body image, and crises of confidence that impact academic performance, social interaction, and later, professional success. Psychologists, sociologists and educators call for a safe place where girls can resist stereotypes, fight social pressures, explore their own identities and build confidence in their own strengths and leadership skills. Grrl Action proactively addresses these issues.

The Grrl Action program began in 1999 as a summer workshop in creative writing and performance designed to empower girls between the ages of 13 and 16 to find their public voices and build confidence while collaborating with young women from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. In fall 2007, after eight years of success, Grrl Action expanded its mission, and added a year-round performance-based artistic education program. Grrl Action now enables young women from 13 to 18 to plan and execute individual, long-term artistic projects, working across the disciplines, alongside professional female artists as their mentors. Grrl Action participants now can expand their practice beyond the theatre space and into their everyday lives and communities, making them not only better writers and performers, but better citizens, activists, and role models. Engaging them through collectivity and community involvement, Grrl Action inspires young women to widen and transcend the definition of what it means to be an artist.