

East Hampton — 01/27/2011

## Teens explore September 11

BY MELANIE SAVAGE Staff Writer

The Epoch Arts facility on Skinner Street has a funky , shabbychic vibe . It is an expansive space , yetstill surprisingly cozy . There are couches to crash on . Salvaged treasures , photographs , and teen-created art adorn the walls . In the theater space , elegant repurposed light fixtures share space with industrial fluorescent strips . It is an inviting hodgepodge , giving the impression that anything , no matter the make-up , no matter the background , could find a place here .



Click the thumbnails above to see the full size pictures.

On a recent Wednesday evening , the theater space was taken over by Breaking Silences , a group of youngwomen aged sixth grade and up . The group has been working since early fall on a production entitled " A Time to Remember , " based on the events of Sept . 11 , 2001 . " Normally the plays are based on their own experiences , things the girls are going through in their own lives , " said Elizabeth Namen , Epoch Arts founder and currently the group's theater artistic director . Namen has experience working with kids of all ages , but has a soft spot in her heart for teens . " This yearwe wanted to get them focused on someone other than

themselves . It's not about us . That's why we're doing the play . "

Originally , the group was going to produce a show written by a group of students from Stuyvesant High School , kids who witnessed the destruction of the World Trade Center and wrote about their experiences . " I came across this book , ' With Their Eyes , ' at Barnes and Noble , " said Namen . " I thought we'd just produce the play as written . " But the girls had their own ideas . " Everyone wanted to do their own characters , " said Namen . The girls went home , did research , and came back to the theater . The result is an interesting hodgepodge that works , much like the Epoch facility itself .

" We have people from every perspective , " said Namen . " Some were on the planes , some at the school , some were spouses that were left behind . Even the hijackers themselves are represented . " Some of the girls opted to go with characters directly from the Stuyvesant production . Others went off in a different direction .

Amber Congdon was five yearsold on Sept . 11 , 2001 . She was in daycare when the Trade Center fell . Her mom worked over two hours away . " My older sister and I were the last ones there , " said Congdon , " and we were very worried about our mom . " Congdon , who has appeared in two previous Breaking Silences productions , decided to play a character called Hope . She has collected a number of poems to use during her performance .

This is the second Breaking Silences show for Aly Krauth . Krauth was also very younain 2001 . " I remember

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being afraid for two years that someone was going to bomb my school," she said. Krauth was originally leaning toward the part of a little girl from the "With Their Eyes" production. "Of course the first time I read that one I was sobbing," she said. She eventually decided upon the part of a fictional passenger from real-life Flight 93, the one that crashed in a field in Pennsylvania. "I liked the idea that they sacrificed themselves to save others," said Krauth.

Transition scenes for "Time to Remember" will feature a soundtrack of songs interspersed with dialogue from the actual event, as well as still images projected on a screen. "I think it will be really wonderful," said Namen. "I'm so proud of these girls. This is a real departure for them. I wanted to get them looking outside of themselves. I think they are doing just great."

"Time to Remember" will run Jan. 28 and 29 at 7 p.m. at Epoch Arts at 27

### **Skin-Brianna Stewart, Olivia Scovill and Annelise Bouchard rehearse parts.**

ner St., East Hampton. Tickets are \$ 5 for students and seniors, \$ 7 for adults.

With a mission statement "To enrich lives in East Hampton and its neighboring communities with experiences in the arts," Epoch Arts, a youth arts organization, sponsors "events, programs, and educational services which stimulate learning, self-expression and teamwork." In addition to theater, the group offers experiences focused on music, visual arts, filmmaking and other creative arts. For more information go to [www.epocharts.org](http://www.epocharts.org).