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Nevada Humanities Launches Its 20th Anniversary Young Chautauqua Season

The 20th anniversary season of Nevada Humanities' Great Basin Young Chautauqua program begins January 19, with an information session and introduction to the program for parents and young people interested in participating in the workshops. The program will be held in the UNR Extended Studies Building, Room 107, 1041 N. Virginia Street, Reno, from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Young Chautauqua workshops begin February 9 in Reno, meet approximately every other week, and run through June. Registration in the Young Chautauqua workshops is ongoing until February 9. For more information contact Nevada Humanities at 775-784-6587 or visit nevadahumanities.org.

Great Basin Young Chautauqua, which was founded by Nevada Humanities in 1993, is the youth adjunct to the weeklong Nevada Humanities Chautauqua festival held each June in Reno. Great Basin Young Chautauqua is an intense program of scholarship, research, rehearsing, and performing. Young Chautauquans select a historical character to portray and spend six months reading biographies, learning stories, and rehearsing their characters at workshops twice a month.

Nevada Humanities is also pleased to announce the arrival of Anita Watson, the new coordinator of the Young Chautauqua program. Watson is a seasoned scholar and Chautauquan, having performed at the Nevada Humanities Chautauqua festival and for the Humanities on the Road program, adopting the characters of Emma Nevada, Mary McNair Mathews, and Mary Oxborrow. Watson earned her Ph.D. in history at the University of Nevada, Reno, where she also taught. She has worked in the museum education field in Nevada and Minnesota, and published on the topics of Nevada women, Nevada medicine, and Nevada history for middle school students.

Watson says, "I've been involved with Chautauqua in Nevada for nearly 15 years and I'm excited to work with Young Chautauquans. Young Chautauquans bring something special to the Chautauqua experience. Their enthusiasm, their openness, their willingness to go out on a limb, to question, and then search for the answers, all of this is a critical part of the essence of Chautauqua, and the essence of a lively and dynamic education experience."

2012 also marks the 20th year of Young Chautauqua. Created and founded by Nevada Humanities, Young Chautauqua has grown into a nationally recognized and award-winning youth program. In 2002, Nevada Humanities received a Coming Up Taller Award from the President's Commission on the Arts and Humanities for creating and developing Young Chautauqua. Young Chautauqua has spread to other Nevada communities and has been adopted by other states for use in classrooms and communities around the nation.

Nevada Humanities Executive Director Christina Barr says, “For the past 20 years, Nevada Humanities has provided quality Young Chautauqua educational opportunities statewide. Young people who have graduated from the program have become engaged in a variety of meaningful and creative pursuits, including becoming attorneys, journalists, and teachers. Many former Young Chautauquans credit Great Basin Young Chautauqua with helping them gain self-confidence, courage, research and speaking skills, and a deep appreciation for history and scholarship that has stuck with them through all of their interests and adventures. We are proud to be part of these young peoples’ lives.”

Nevada Humanities will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of Great Basin Young Chautauqua throughout the year, culminating with a special event held during Nevada Humanities Chautauqua week in June. The 21st annual Nevada Humanities Chautauqua festival will take place June 25 – 28, 2012, at Bartley Ranch Regional Park, Reno.

Nevada Humanities is Nevada’s independent, nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. With offices in Reno and Las Vegas, Nevada Humanities creates public programs and supports public projects statewide that define the Nevada experience, feature local culture and heritage, and facilitate the exploration of issues that matter to Nevadans and their communities. For more information visit nevadahumanities.org and onlinenevada.org.

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