

No. R-359. House concurrent resolution honoring Stephen Stearns for his artistic and community contributions at the New England Youth Theatre.

(H.C.R.274)

Offered by: Representatives Burke of Brattleboro, Deen of Westminster, Hebert of Vernon, Long of Newfane, Mrowicki of Putney, Olsen of Londonderry, Partridge of Windham, Sabilia of Dover, Stuart of Brattleboro, Toleno of Brattleboro, and Trieber of Rockingham

Offered by: Senators Balint and White

Whereas, as a youth, Stephen Stearns had dyslexia and became a champion for all who struggle to fit into society, and

Whereas, in 1975, he moved from New York City to a Vermont farm and envisioned establishing a children's theater, and

Whereas, not until 1998 did the dream of Stephen Stearns become a reality, when he established the New England Youth Theatre (NEYT) in Brattleboro, and

Whereas, NEYT's mission is to educate "the hearts, minds, bodies and voices of youth of all abilities through the dramatic arts," and its complementary motto is "of children, for children and by children," and

Whereas, on March 12, 1999, NEYT raised the curtain on its inaugural performance, a presentation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, staged in the basement of Brattleboro's Centre Congregational Church, and

Whereas, in 2006, the NEYT acquired a former Brattleboro brake shoe factory, and, after a major renovation and environmental remediation, built a modern theater and education complex, and

Whereas, as of 2016, 1,621 children have participated in NEYT's education programs that teach children all aspects of the theatrical arts, and

Whereas, annually, NEYT stages more than 20 student-staffed productions, with youngsters assuming on- and off-stage roles and associated duties, and

Whereas, NEYT is an important economic resource in Brattleboro, featuring an almost \$1,000,000 annual budget, employing 46 full- or part-time staff, and hosting a beautiful theater facility that community groups book for film and stage events 36 weekends each year, and

Whereas, Stephen Stearns has worked with the nonprofit Maria's Children arts and rehabilitation organization in Russia, and

Whereas, on March 12, 2016, the NEYT will celebrate the career of Stephen Stearns, as he assumes the new role of NEYT's founder and trustee emeritus, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors Stephen Stearns for his artistic and community contributions at the New England Youth Theatre, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Stephen Stearns.