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Contact: Theresa Kennedy 716-803-4281

tkennedy@sheas.org



Shea's Buffalo Theatre Welcomes Visit from Mount St. Mary Academy Students

Shea's Performing Arts Center welcomed students from Mount St. Mary Academy to Shea's Buffalo Theatre on Tuesday, March 26, 2024. The students participated in a program

focused on “The Immigrant and Refugee Experience in Western New York” during a school-wide “Service & Justice Days” initiative.

The Immigrant & Refugee workshop, led by Tim O’Shei, Academy Scholars entrepreneurship educator at Mount St. Mary Academy, is designed to raise awareness of the contributions made by immigrants, past and present, to the Western New York community, as well as the ongoing challenges refugees face. Students participating in the program also visited VIVE Shelter and the West Side Bazaar and met with refugees as well as former U.S. Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Gil Kerlikowske.

The students were welcomed by Shea’s Performing Arts Center President & CEO Brian Higgins and Victoria Pérez-Maggiolo, VP of Shea’s Arts Engagement & Education department. Leaders shared the story of Michael Shea, born to Irish immigrants Mary (Griffin) and Daniel Shea, who came to Ontario, Canada before moving to Buffalo, New York to raise their family. Michael Shea grew to be one of the great American showmen of his time, building and operating over two dozen theatres in the Buffalo-Toronto region, with Shea’s Buffalo Theatre, also known as “The Wonder Theatre,” being his crowning piece.

“Shea’s Buffalo Theatre is a standing representation of the lasting contributions immigrants have made in Buffalo,” said Higgins. “We are pleased to welcome Mount St. Mary Academy students to share the origins of Shea’s nearly 100-year history and celebrate the ongoing contributions immigrants have on art, culture, and society.”

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Photo Attached: Brian Higgins & Victoria Pérez-Maggiolo with Mount St. Mary Academy Students at Shea's Buffalo Theatre