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Coya Paz named recipient of the 2023 Innovations in Institutional Leadership Award

CHICAGO (August 10, 2023) – The Theatre School’s [Coya Paz](#) is the recipient of the **2023 Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) Award for Innovations in Institutional Leadership**. On Friday, August 4, 2023, Coya was recognized for her leadership in community-based theatre and civic engagement at the group’s national conference, [“Building from the Rubble: Centering Care,”](#) in Austin, Texas.

The ATHE comments, “Coya positions the work of community-making, resiliency building, and mentorship as art forms themselves that are inseparable from the public-facing performance work. Coya has spent her life centering other people’s work and voices. With this award, ATHE has the exquisite opportunity to center hers.”

Coya is a writer, director, scholar, and arts administrator with a deep commitment to racial and economic equity in the arts. She currently serves as an Associate Professor at The Theatre School at DePaul University, where she is the Dean for Curriculum and Instruction. She is also the Director of Strategy for [Free Street Theater](#), a nonprofit focused on creating affordable, inclusive, and innovative theatre in communities across Chicago.

ATHE’s Award for **Leadership in Community-Based Theatre and Civic Engagement** honors an individual or theatre company that has demonstrated sustained commitment and a significant impact in the field for a minimum of ten years. Other 2023 honorees include Washington University’s **Ron Himes**, the founder and producing director of [The St. Louis Black Rep](#); and the nonprofit [Donkey Saddle Projects](#).

About the ATHE: Founded in 1986, the ATHE is a nonprofit advocate for the field of theater and performance in higher education. Serving the interests of its diverse individual and organizational members, the group is an intellectual and artistic center for producing new knowledge about theater and performance-related disciplines. For more information, visit athe.org.

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The Theatre School was founded as the Goodman School of Drama in 1925 and trains students to the highest level of professional skill and artistry in an inclusive and diverse conservatory setting.