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## **TAPROOT+ APPROVES RESEARCH PROJECT FOR JEFF AWARDS**

**June 12, 2017, Chicago, IL** – The Joseph Jefferson Awards has been approved for pro bono work from Taproot+ to conduct opinion research with Chicago area theatres this summer. Results will be shared with the Jeff Awards in the aggregate to insure confidentiality of individuals and theatre companies interviewed.

Taproot+ volunteers will conduct the multi-phase research project. Taproot+ is a free program for any registered nonprofit in the United States, which focuses on short-term projects. It is a program of the Taproot Foundation, which connects nonprofits and social change organizations with skilled volunteers who share their expertise pro bono. Through its programs, business professionals deliver marketing, strategy, HR and IT solutions that organizations need to achieve their missions.

Planning is underway for two phases of research. The first phase is qualitative research where a cross-section of Chicago-area Managing Directors and Artistic Directors will be asked to participate in one-on-one, confidential phone interviews with volunteers. These calls are expected to take place in late June and early July. The purpose of the phone interviews is to identify where the Jeff Awards can improve in addition to current perceptions of the organization.

Information gathered from the phone interviews will be used to develop an online survey for the second phase of the project that is quantitative research. It will be distributed to all theatre companies in the Chicago area to Managing Directors and Artistic Directors later in July.

Analysis from both phases will be submitted to the Jeff Awards by Xiaoyue (Sherry) Pang, who is Project Lead for Taproot+. She lives in Austin, TX and is a graduate from the University of Texas with a Master of Science degree in Information Studies. Her Bachelor of Science degree is in Psychology and Behavioral Studies from Zhejiang University in China.

The Jeff Awards has been honoring outstanding theatre artists annually since it was established in 1968 as a 501c3 organization. The 55-member, nonprofit organization is committed to celebrating the vitality of Chicago area theatre by recognizing excellence through its recommendations, awards and honors. Two awards ceremonies are held annually for the Equity and Non-Equity Wings.

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