We are here to serve the community - its adults and children - and we exist to provide hope for the rebirth of our city, while providing a voice and a stage for those who live, work and dream here.”

South Camden Theatre website

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The Welsbach & General Gas Mantle Contamination site is a multi-property site located in an industrial/residential area in Camden and Gloucester City, New Jersey. Between the 1890s and 1940s, the Welsbach Company (Welsbach) and the General Gas Mantle Company (GGM) were involved in the production of gas mantles. Welsbach extracted the radioactive element thorium from monazite ore to use in the gas mantle manufacturing process. As electric lighting replaced gas lighting, the two companies went out of business. In May 1981, EPA conducted an aerial radiological survey of the Camden and Gloucester City area to investigate for radioactive contaminants. By the 1990s, detailed investigations identified radiological contamination at the two former gas mantle facilities and on about 100 properties in the areas around the facilities. In 1996, EPA placed the Welsbach/GGM site on its National Priorities List (Superfund Site List). Cleanup efforts began in 2000, and included excavation and removal of soil and waste materials with radiological contamination from the site and surrounding areas and disposal of the radiologically contaminated materials at a licensed, off-site facility. Cleanup is ongoing and efforts have been accelerated with the help of $28 million in 2009 Recovery Act funds for site-wide remediation.

As portions of the site meet their cleanup goals, community groups wasted no time in finding new productive uses for the land. The South Camden Theatre Company, a not-for-profit theater located in Camden, New Jersey and the Heart of Camden, a not-for-profit redevelopment organization, saw the opportunity for one newly cleaned plot of land – a community theater. With financial support from several local organizations, in April 2008, the two groups announced the groundbreaking of the 96-seat Waterfront South Theatre. The facility will be used not only by the theater company but also by local high school and elementary school programs and creates a space for theater, music, and art in the center of the Waterfront South redevelopment. South Camden Theatre Company opened their first season in the new building in September 2010.