Fort Wayne to Latre Youtheatre Following Follows Buildy



in collaboration with



2023-24 SEASON



As the fifth oldest active children's theatre in the nation, Youtheatre is dedicated to its mission to "educate, engage and entertain" through quality theatrical experiences. In 1934, Dr. Clive McAllister, president of the Old Fort Players (now the Civic Theatre), appointed a committee to create a junior or children's theater branch of the organization. The committee established the philosophy that the new "Children's Theatre" would develop poise, better diction, and self-esteem for children through dramatic instruction. They would give at least one play a year, and awaken enthusiasm in children for beauty in art and integrity in dramatic literature.

The first class began with an enrollment of a whopping 40 students, each of which paid just \$1.00 for 8 classes! The first production, "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," was performed at the Majestic Theatre in Fort Wayne and had a cast of 75 young people. Tickets were only 10 cents for children and 25 cents for adults.

In 1954, the Majestic Theatre was deemed unsafe for children by the fire department and so the Children's Theatre spent the next 10 years at various locations in the city. By the time it rejoined the Civic Theatre at the Old Palace Theatre, it had a new name, the "Fort Wayne Youtheatre." In 1973, both organizations moved to their current home in the Arts United Center on E. Main Street in downtown Fort Wayne. The Youtheatre became autonomous in 1984.

In 1978, Broadway star Harvey Cocks became the Executive Director of Youtheatre. Even after retiring from that position, Harvey remained as our Artist in Residence; inspiring young artists for over forty years until his death in 2022. In 2010, Leslie Hormann took the reigns, serving as Executive/Artistic Director until 2018.

Youtheatre is currently managed by Executive/Artistic Director Todd Espeland, who came to us in 2018 after serving as Artistic Director of the Kalamazoo Civic Theatre. He is joined by Associate Director/Director of Outreach Christopher J. Murphy, Administrative Assistant/Marketing Director Morgan Montgomery, Administrative Assistant Kimee Gearhart and a staff of outstanding local artists who serve as teachers, guest directors, choreographers, music directors and designers.

For over three quarters of a century, Youtheatre has produced classes, camps and theatrical productions for the artists and audiences of northeast Indiana. Our touring "Youtheatre-On-The-Go" troupe takes literature-based shows into the community, performing in hospitals, libraries, community centers and more. In 2018, our Linda L. Ruffolo "Young Heroes of Conscience" Series, which has spotlighted the likes of Anne Frank, Ryan White, Harriet Tubman and Ruby Bridges, won the "Mayor's Arts Award."



ELEMENTS OF A PRODUCTION

SETS

The scenery pieces that form the area in which the performers act out the play. Sometimes scenery is very realistic, making the audience think they are inside a real house, for example. Other times the scenery is quite fanciful or limited. What different sets can you name in the show? What time and place does it look like?

LIGHTS

The lighting instruments that help to create the right atmosphere on the stage. Lights direct the attention of the audience to specific areas of the stage or to a specific performer. The lights may be different colors to add special effects such as nighttime or a storm. How do the lights in this production show changes in the time and place?

PROPS

The objects performers carry to help them act out the story. Look for important props that help define character or place. Can you name a few?

MAKE-UP

The cosmetic bases, blushes, lipsticks, mascara and eye liners which helps the performer physically become the character he/she is playing. Make-up is also used so that the performers facial features can be seen clearly under the bright stage lights from a distance. Do you notice any special make-up in the show?

COSTUMES

The clothing the performers wear. Depending on the story being acted out, this clothing may be what a character of the time would have actually worn. It may also be very exaggerated or fantastic in the case of a dream or a fairy-tale. Costumes help the audience know what a character is like or where and when he/she lived. Are the costumes drab or colorful? Do they look realistic? What do they tell you about the time and place?







COLLABORATION:

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Theatre is a collaborative art that brings people together. THE PROM is a coproduction between Youtheatre and our friends at First Presbytearian Theater.





First Pres Theater, established in 1968, creates entertaining, educational, and inclusive theatre productions to inspire and motivate audiences. The theatre produces comedies, musicals, and dramas that "teach us about ourselves and the world we live in."

FPT's engaging productions have something for everyone, including pertinent messages like love, compassion, and bravery, while focusing on the human condition, which can be funny and traumatizing.



The theatre is located in the lower level of First Presbyterian Church in downtown Fort Wayne, IN, and shares lobby space with the Firs Presbyterian Art Gallery, where audiences can enjoy rotating art shows on their way into the theatre. FPT is currently guided by the Director of Fine and Performing Arts Ministry, Todd Sandman-Cruz, and Technical Director Rae Surface.

For more information about FPT, visit firstpresfortwayne.org/theater/

We are also pleased to have our friends at the Positive Resource Connection as a Community Partner.

In the early winter of 1985, Bea Harris brought her brother Steve to Fort Wayne to live with her and her three teenage children after he became quite sick from AIDS in Chicago. She knew nothing about AIDS, how to care for him, or how his illness would affect her family. Bea and her brother needed help.

After a few phone calls, a group of 15 volunteers met in Jack Ryan's office to discuss how to help Bea, and what Fort Wayne needed to do to prepare for more AIDS cases. By the end of 1985, the group attracted 35 to 50 people, held monthly meetings, held an educational conference and began providing care so loved ones could rest.

In 1995, what had by then become the AIDS Task Force expanded to serve 10 additional counties in northeast Indiana, becoming not only the oldest but also the largest AIDS service organization in the state.

Today, the Positive Resource Connection serves 400 people living with HIV, educates 8,000 people a year, and tests more than 1,500 for HIV.



For more information about the Positive Resource Connection, visit positiveresourceconnection.org

CAST CHARACTERS

EMMA - shy and warmhearted high school senior simply wishing to dance with her girlfriend at the prom. She struggles to follow her heart against community pressures.





DEE DEE - TONY® winning actress desperately trying to increase her celebrity and publicity by tackling Emma's cause. Dee Dee discovers that true charity can outshine celebrity.

BARRY - self-involved Broadway actor eager for celebrity activism to promote his career. Barry finds a kindred spirit in Emma and guides her to be true and proud of herself.





ALYSSA GREENE - Emma's love interest who's caught between her feelings for her girlfriend and the pressures of letting her mom know the truth of who she really is.



MR. HAWKINS concerned principal of the
school and star-struck
Broadway fan trying
to create a prom for
everyone while educating
Dee Dee in self-sacrifice.



ANGIE - Experienced and knowledgeable Broadway musical veteran who champions Emma's cause and teaches Er ow to live life with Zazz!

TRENT - "Julliard Trained," yet struggling, actor who utilizes his small TV celebrity to teach the students larger lessons about tolerance.



SHELDON - Broadway publicist working his skills and connections to build his clients' celebrity status and create an audience for Emma's message.









TEENS - Indiana high schoolers who struggle together to create a place for everyone at the dance.

PARENTS - concerned parents swayed by Mrs. Greene's traditional arguments yet ready to follow their children's guidance.



DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- 1. Overall, did the Broadway group do more harm or good for Emma's cause? Might Emma & Principal Hawkins have had more success working outside the spotlight?
- 2. Can you think of real world examples where people (not necessarily celebrities) have taken up a cause more for their own gain than for the cause's?
- 3. In your opinion, are Mrs. Greene, Kayley, Shelby, Kevin & Nick villains in the story?



Understanding: LGBTQIA+

It's important we all work to understand and increase our awareness of each other, even if we have different experiences.

<u>Understanding the Terminology</u>

L- Lesbian: A person who is female-identified and who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to some other females.

G- Gay: A person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to some members of the same gender. "Gay" often refers to a male-identified person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to some other males.

B- Bisexual: A person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to two genders. For example, a person attracted to some male-identified people and some female-identified people.

T- Transgender: A person whose gender identity and/or expression are not aligned with the gender they were assigned at birth. "Transgender" is often used as an umbrella term encompassing a large number of identities related to gender nonconformity.

Q- Queer: An umbrella term used to describe a sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression that does not conform to dominant societal norms.

Questioning: A person who is in the process of understanding and exploring what their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and gender expression might be.

I- Intersex: A person with one or more innate sex characteristics, including genitals, internal reproductive organs, and chromosomes, that fall outside of traditional conceptions of male or female bodies.

A- Asexual: A person who does not experience sexual attraction. Sometimes shortened to "ace," it is an umbrella term for anyone who feels any type of lack of sexual or romantic attraction, even if it varies.

Creating a Safe Zone

- -Be conscious of the ways in which you address classmates. Be aware of the pronoun you utilize to be sensitive to students who do not define themselves by their gender identity. Don't make assumptions about students' elationships or those of their parents/guardians.
- -Be sensitive to students who are expressing gender or have gender characteristics or gender identity that does not conform to the expectations of society and culture.
- -Find someone in your school community who is knowledgable and comfortable with discussing LGBTQ+ issues if you are not and be open to learning! Find a resource for help and guidance.

Based on a True Story: CONSTANCE MCMILLEN

Though the show takes some liberties (the real girl didn't get a dance-based pep talk from a Bob Fosse-obsessed chorus girl), it is actually based on the true story of Constance McMillen in Mississippi.



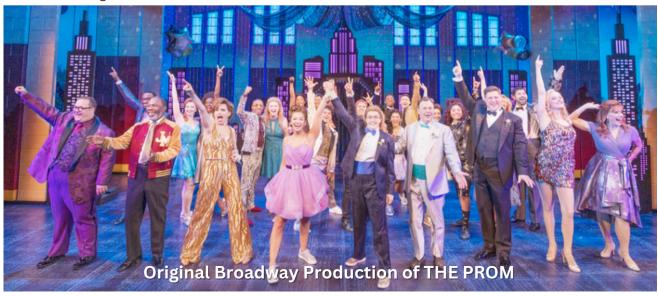
Her Story

In 2010, McMillen was not allowed to bring her girlfriend to the Itawamba County Agricultural High School prom in a case that ignited media attention across the world. A lot of the details of the plot of THE PROM are taken straight from McMillen's real life, though the musical moved the location to Indiana in a move the playwright said was inspired by Mike Pence. The parents of her school, for example, really did organize a second secret prom which everyone but her was invited to.

"I'm not going to say that it's easy, because it was not easy to stand up for myself with all that pressure," McMillen said in an interview with Seattle Gay News, "but you've got to do it. I think you should come out. You have to learn how to read people, because when you live in a small town, flaunting that you've come out can be dangerous to your life. When you are faced with discrimination, stand up for yourself."

Her story of discrimination also had a happy ending, but a different one from in THE PROM. While the show sees the Broadway actors set up their own inclusive prom, the real McMillen got something much more important, but less suitable for the ending of a glitzy musical—legal justice and compensation. After a federal court found in McMillen's favor after her case was taken on by the ACLU, she was awarded a payment of \$35,000 from the school district, which also agreed to a non-discrimination policy. However, the ending of the case was not wholly happy for her, with McMillen moving schools due to harassment from her school peers.

Those four Broadway actors are of course fictional. In reality, McMillen's case was brought to international media attention by a series of LGBTQ+ celebrities. Dan Savage, for example, asked his followers to contact the school, and McMillen appeared on Ellen DeGeneres and Wanda Sykes' shows. Perez Hilton, meanwhile, organized a party for McMillen and her friends. McMillen went on to Northwestern to study psychology but has since retreated back into private life after being forced into activism.





LGBTQIA+ history dates back to the first recorded instances of same-sex love and sexuality of ancient civilizations, involving the history of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) peoples and cultures around the world.

Early Gay Rights Movements

In 1924, Henry Gerber, a German immigrant, founded in Chicago the Society for Human Rights, the first documented gay rights organization in the United States. During his U.S. Army service in World War I, Gerber was inspired to create his organization by the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee, a "homosexual emancipation" group in Germany. Gerber's small group published a few issues of its newsletter "Friendship and Freedom," the country's first gay-interest newsletter. Police raids caused the group to disband in 1925—but 90 years later, the U.S. government designated Gerber's Chicago house a National Historic Landmark.

Gay Rights in the 1960's

The gay rights movement saw some early progress In the 1960s. In 1961, Illinois became the first state to do away with its anti-sodomy laws, effectively decriminalizing homosexuality, and a local TV station in California aired the first documentary about homosexuality, called The Rejected. In 1965, Dr. John Oliven, in his book Sexual Hygiene and Pathology, coined the term "transgender" to describe someone who was born in the body of the incorrect sex. But more than 10 years earlier, transgender individuals entered the American consciousness when Christine Jorgensen came out as a trans woman, following gender confirmation surgery. Despite this progress, LGBTQ individuals lived in a kind of urban subculture and were routinely subjected to harassment and persecution, such as in bars and restaurants. In fact, gay men and women in New York City could not be served alcohol in public due to liquor laws that considered the gathering of homosexuals to be "disorderly." In fear of being shut down by authorities, bartenders would deny drinks to patrons suspected of being gay or kick them out altogether; others would serve them drinks but force them to sit facing away from other customers to prevent them from socializing.

Gay Marriage Legalized

Gay marriage was finally ruled legal by the Supreme Court in June 2015. In Obergefell v. Hodges, the plaintiffs—led by Jim Obergefell, who sued because he was unable to put his name on his late husband's death certificate—argued that the laws violated the Equal Protection Clause and Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Conservative Justice Anthony Kennedy sided with Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan in favor of same-sex marriage rights, ultimately making gay marriage legal across the nation on June 2015.



PROMPOSAL...

The following are excerpts from an interview conducted by OG Broadway cast member Josh Lamon with the creative team of Bob Martin, Chad Beguilin and Matthew Sklar during a launch event for THE PROM in NYC.

JOSH LAMON: From your perspective as lyricist, as co-book writer, what has the show been like going through the changes from day one around the table, to the labs and Atlanta, to now?

CHAD BEGUELIN: "It's changed so much. I think the biggest change, I mean, we're constantly tweaking it and working on it, but the world sort of changed. We were thinking that the world has gotten so much more accepting and wondering if this was as relevant, and then the election happened, and it suddenly became so important and so relevant. All of these things we thought we were past- suddenly the show took on this new level of immediacy. I couldn't predict that would happen. It's been a great journey and having this great cast has been so much fun for all of us to write for. It's been great.

We were really concentrating on this last pass of the script and the score to make sure that we didn't show the other side to be completely characterchures. We wanted to make sure that everyone was dealt with

fairly— these people just had different beliefs and they had to work through them throughout the show."

JOSH LAMON: One of my favorite things about THE PROM is that it is hilarious but also serious. We are talking about an actual story that happened.

BOB MARTIN: "Several actually. It's based on several incidents that happened and continue to happen across this wonderful country."

JOSH LAMON: What was it like tacking the comedy versus the serious material?

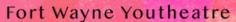
BOB MARTIN: "I like the combination of making potentially unpalatable truths easier to take when they're surrounded by people like you. You're the sugar that makes the medicine go down easily. I think what's really interesting about this show is that people cry, but it's an extremely funny show. As you can see there's a mixture of very broad comedy and the very grounded, serious story at the heart of it all. It was remarkable to have people

come up to us after the show and be so moved. I had this woman come with her head down and confess that she was the mother depicted in the story with tears in her eyes making this confession to us. I think it is a very moving show for that very reason."

JOSH LAMON: What was unique about this process for you?

MATT SKLAR: "Well, it's one of the first times I've ever really written something completely original from the ground up. Anything else I've ever written has had some kind of source material. So this was a great opportunity and I just love working with these guys [Chad Beguelin and Bob Martin] and with Casey [Nicholaw]. I think we all bring out the best in each other. The story is just so moving. Once we started outlining the story, seeing where it was going and figuring out where the songs would go, it felt like both sides complimented each other- the comedy and the dramatic aspect of it. It's been a joy to work on."





AC, DEMY

of Performing Arts

Where Creativity Plays







CLASSES FOR AGES 3-18

ACTING | MUSICAL THEATRE | DANCE
VOICE | TECH THEATRE

FALL SEMESTER: SEPT. 9 - NOV. 11, 2023
SPRING SEMESTER: FEB. 24 - MAY 4, 2024
PRIVATE VOICE & ACTING LESSONS
SUMMER CAMPS

For more information, visit our website:



ACTIVITY #1: RIGHT OR LEFT HANDED?

This activity is a great way of actively engaging with students and get them pondering about bigger ideas in a way that's easy to understand and relate to.



- Ask your students to stand on either side of the room depending on whether they are right or left handed. Students are asked to move to the middle of the room when they use their nondominant hand for something.
- Describe behaviors that are done with one or both hands (use a range of activities that involve one or both hands: writing, buttoning a shirt, playing an instrument, etc.).
- Since we all use both hands for activities, most students should end up in the middle of the room. Make the point that we are more comfortable with things in binary boxes (either this OR that/right OR left) even though there exists a middle ground.
- Ask students whether or not they "chose" to be right or left handed

DISCUSSION TOPIC:

This show deals with a lot of serious, real issues.
What are the messages you'll take away from THE PROM?

ACTIVITY #2: STUDENTS TAKING ACTION

In this activity, best suited for 6th to 12th graders, students will research and ponder a historical event from their own through descriptive imagery and specific word choice



Youtheatre's production of *The Prom* provides a fictional take on real life issues. This is not only a remarkable story, but even more incredible when you realize Emma is only a high schooler when she faces news-making troubles.

In this activity, you will be researching a historical movement and explaining how student involvement prompted or propelled the action. You can choose from one of the provided events, or an event that interests you!

- Fisk University Protests (1925)
- The White Rose (1942)
- Greensboro Sit-Ins (1960)
- The Soweto Uprising (1976)
- The Velvet Revolution (1989)

- Tianamen Square (1989)
- Iran (1999)
- March for Our Lives (2018)
- Global Climate Strikes (2019)
- Youth Protests in Thailand (2020)

Research one of these events for about **10-15 minutes**, then write about **1-2 pages** (provided on the next page). Consider how the students' brave decision to tell their story or take action may have sparked dialogue in their communities and the country, and how they demonstrated the power students have to create change.

Once you are finished writing, share your story with a classmate and consider the similarities and differences between your chosen events!

DISCUSSION TOPIC:

The Broadway stars who go to "help" Emma do so at first for publicity and their own selfish reasons. What examples in the news can you think of where a topic was politicized for personal gain?



Want to get involved?	
23-24 SEASON AUDITI	ON DATES:
THE HOUSE	
A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS	Oct 9 & 10
THE PROM	Dec 10
RUBY BRIDGES	Feb 26 & 27
GO, DOG! GO!	Feb 26 & 27
Sign up at fortwayneyoutheatre.org/auditions	

Suggested Reading...

Elementary: My Moms Love Me by Anna Membrino, Forever Home by Henry Cole, and Jude Saves the World by Ronnie Riley

Middle School: The Witch Boy by Molly Knox Ostertag, One True Way by Shannon Hitchcock, and The Language of Seabirds by Will Taylor

High School: *Destination Unknown* by Bill Konigsberg, *Gay Club!* by Simon James Green, and *Openly Straight* by Bill Konigsberg



POPOUZ: TEST YOUR MEMORY

See how much you remember from the performance of THE PROM with this brief quiz on the play, the plot, and characters.



- 1. What role does Dee Dee play on Broadway?
 - a. Fleanor Roosevelt
 - b. Martha Washington
 - c. Eliza Hamilton
 - d. Angelica Hamilton
- 2. Why does the Broadway contingent go to Indiana?
 - a. They're all going on tour together
 - b. To take a roadtrip
 - c. To prove they're not narcissists
 - d. To visit Fort Wayne
- 3. What TV show do people recognize Trent from?
 - a. Two of a Kind
 - b. Love Island
 - c. Friends
 - d. Talk to the Hand
- 4. Where does the Broadway contingent perform The Acceptance Song?
 - a. A rodeo
 - b. A monster truck rally
 - c. On national television
 - d. At a PTA meeting
- 5. Barry has won a Tony.
 - a. True
 - b. False

- 6. Where does Hawkins take Dee Dee to eat?
 - a. McDonald's
 - **b.** Applebee's
 - c. Texas Roadhouse
 - d. Burger King
- 7. How did the students and PTA trick Fmma?
 - a. They stole her prom dress
 - b. They told her the wrong time
 - c. They dumped pig's blood on her
 - d. They set up a fake prom for her
- 8. What does Angie teach Emma about?
 - a. lazz
 - b. Razzle
 - c. 7a77
 - d. Dazzle
- 9. Emma breaks up with Alyssa
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 10. Who gets Prom Queen?
 - a. Barry
 - b. Emma
 - c. Alyssa
 - d. Dee Dee

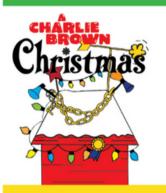


2023-24 SEASON SCHOOL SHOWS

Did that door just creeeeek open on its own? Where did those eerie footsteps come from? Do ghosts roam the halls or is the house itself evil? A trio of students enter a haunted house determined to answer this question. Using spine-tingling tales from authors like Edgar Allen Poe, Youtheatre and Theatrefolk Publishing collaborate on this world premiere about the stories that lie within the walls of these haunted habitats. Only the spirits know....and they're watching you....

Performance: Monday, October 2, 2023 | 10:00 AM | First Presbyterian Theater

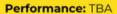


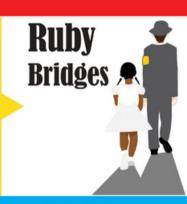


Everyone's favorite holiday classic returns to Youtheatre in an all new production. Charles M. Schulz's Emmy Award-winning *A Charlie Brown Christmas* has been warming hearts since it debuted on television over 50 years ago. Now the whole family can join Snoopy, Lucy, Linus, good ol' Charlie Brown and the whole Peanuts gang as they sing, dance, and learn the true meaning of Christmas LIVE ON-STAGE!

Performance: Monday, December 11, 2023 | 10:00 AM | First Presbyterian Theater

Since 2014, Youtheatre has shone a light on young people making a difference with our *Young Heroes of Conscience Series*. To celebrate the series 10th Anniversary, we revisit a past hero whose story seems all too relevant today. Ruby Bridges was born in 1954, the same year Brown v. Board of Education ordered schools to integrate with "all deliberate speed." Six years later, as immortalized by the famous Norman Rockwell painting, Ruby became the face of integration when she enrolled in the all-white William Frantz Elementary School. Her story shows one little girl's unbeatable courage in the face of adversity, helping lead the Civil Rights movement up the front steps and into America's classrooms.







Youtheatre and the Allen County Public Library team up for the first in our Stories from the Stacks: Theatre for Young Readers Series. Aimed at Pre-K through 3rd Graders (but with plenty to enjoy for all ages), P.D. Eastman's classic children's book **Go, Dog. Go!** comes to life on stage in an exploration of movement, music, color and space. The dogs delve into life with gusto, creating a visual spectacle for the audience to feast upon. They snorkel. They howl at the moon. They ride a ferris wheel. They sing and dance and climb trees. This is a rollicking free-for-all of chicanine-ery. A big and little musical world of doggy fun. Like a pop-up book that comes to life – and never stops.

Performance: Monday, April 29, 2024 | 10:00 AM | Downtown ACPL Theatre

For more information and resources for your classroom, visit our website at fortwayneyoutheatre.org/school-shows-resources

LANGUAGE ARTS

STANDARDS

Most Youtheatre productions are literature-based and on the recommended reading list of the Library of Congress.

Language Arts Standard: Perceive, identify, describe and analyze the distinguishing characteristics of form, structure and style of story.

- Retell story identifying plot, theme, characters, and setting.
- Recall story plot utilizing chronological order.

Language Arts Standard: Evaluate Theatre/Literary work based on critical perception and analysis.

- Share perception of theatre experience in the area of voice, movement, mood and motivation.
- · Make suggestions for alternative endings.
- Analyze and critique story and performance through creative writing.
- Create a similar story through creative writing.

Language Arts Standard: Use Theatre /Literary work to develop affective areas of self-concept, problem solving and interpersonal skills.

- React to feelings of self and others within a production.
- Identify conflict within story as it relates to self and others.
- Compare and contrast problems and resolutions found in different stories and real life situations.
- Express personal attitudes, values, and belief systems as it relates to theatre piece.
- Interact freely in conversations, class discussions and dramatic activities.
- Contribute to the solving of problems through dramatization/improvisation.

Language Arts Standard: Examine Theatre /Literary work in a historical and multicultural context.

- Identify similarities and differences between characters from diverse cultures depicted.
- Identify historical differences/figures in different time frames depicted in story.
- Identify significance of historical aspects in story.

Exploring Aesthetics: A Philosophical Basis for Life!

- Attending live theatre helps children value its importance to the community and helps develop a lifelong commitment and love of Theatre and Literature. Students experience aesthetic growth through appreciation of Theatre.
- Students discover through experience that making art is an essential human activity. It requires collaboration, and enhances creative thinking.