

Fort Wayne youth theatre

*Education
Guide*



2024-25 SEASON

2024-2025 Arts Education Sponsors



*Vanderly Family
Foundation*



Fort Wayne youtheatre

About Us...

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, followed by Todd Espeland (2018-2024).

Today, Youtheatre is led by Executive Director Heather Closson, Artistic Director Christopher J. Murphy, Marketing Director Kimee Gearhart, and a staff of outstanding local artists who serve as teaching artists, directors, choreographers, music directors, designers, and more.

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?

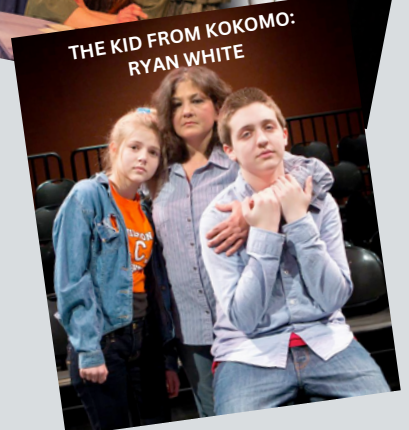


YOUNG HEROES *of* CONSCIENCE

SOMETHING HAPPENED IN OUR TOWN is the 11th in Youtheatre's Linda L. Ruffolo Young Heroes of Conscience Series. Named for community leader and Youtheatre board president Linda L. Ruffolo, the series was created by former Executive Director Leslie Hormann and playwright Gregory Stieber to inspire and empower young people to take action in the world around them. Previous plays have highlighted the young lives of such notable figures as Helen Keller, Ryan White, Ruby Bridges, Anne Frank and more.

2025's SOMETHING HAPPENED IN OUR TOWN marks a new chapter in the series. Based on an award-winning children's book, it highlights an all-too-relevant story of social justice. The characters may be fictional, but the circumstances are all too real.

We hope that this play will inspire young people and families to continue this important conversation in the car, at home, and at school. If there's one thing we know at Youtheatre, it's that young people have the power to change the world.



HISTORY: *Civil Rights*

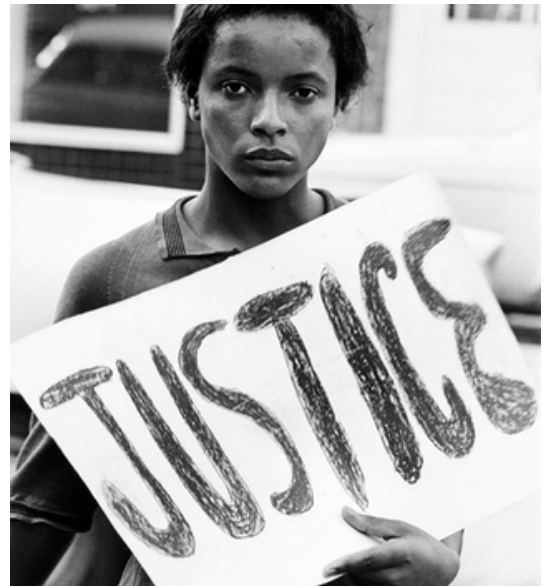
Slavery, stereotyping, discrimination, and many other patterns of our history, show us that these communities have always experienced unfairness, and it is up to everyone to fight to change it.



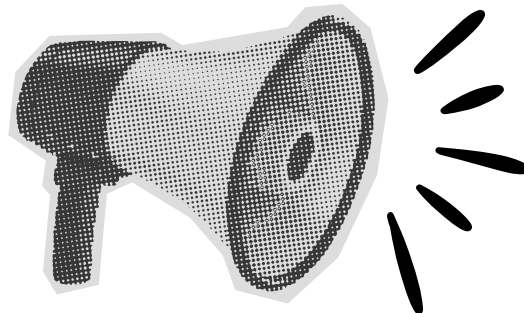
After the Civil War, the 13th Amendment was passed, and all the enslaved people were freed, but that didn't stop discrimination against people because of their skin color.

Segregation is the act of keeping people separated. Many white or caucasian people believed that african americans were "dirty" or "less than" because of their skin color. Black people had to use different water fountains, benches, bus seats, restrooms, even doors than white people! The children went to different schools than white children, and were taught racist ideals and stereotypes in school.

In the 1950's and 1960's the Civil Rights Movement brought an end to many forms of unfair treatment and segregation. Civil Rights activists like Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. fought for equality. They led protests and taught everyone that unfair treatment was wrong, and a part of our history pattern we should not repeat.



The Black Lives Matter movement, or BLM, has been around for many years. Their beliefs are that people of color (a person that is not white, or caucasian) experience unfair treatment, due to their skin color. They fight for equality, justice, and kindness. Some people agree with them, and some do not. Everyone's lives matter equally, and everyone deserves to be treated with respect. But, Marginalized people (people who experience prejudice due to circumstances out of their control) have experienced patterns of unfair treatment, and have been historically prioritized less.



HISTORY:

Patterns of Oppression

To many, it may seem like police brutality (the use of excessive force during a confrontation between a police officer and a civilian) is a new issue. In fact, instances of police brutality have occurred for a long time.

1991

Rodney King is arrested and beaten by police officers in Los Angeles. Thankfully, he survives the incident, but riots and protests follow when officers are acquitted on almost all charges surrounding the incident.



2012

17-year-old Trayvon Martin is shot and killed during a conflict with a police officer. The police officer says that Trayvon was violent and was shot in the chest in self defense. Again, protests break out all over the country when police officer George Zimmerman was found not guilty in the shooting death.



2020

George Floyd is arrested in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and subsequently killed as a result of unlawful force used by the white arresting officer. Again, protests ignite around the country. Eventually, the involved officers are found guilty of charges ranging from violating Floyd's constitutional rights to murder.



nisl
nec eam con
non neque commodo
auctor non turpis at, auctor hend

Vivamus pellentesque vel ex eu gravida
turpis. Quisque hendrerit ante et mi fermentum, nec con
metus
tempus. Cras gravida metus risus, id interdum mi condimentum
consectetur. Donec diam velit, viverra et arcu blandit, tempus

quisque nec neque vel est posuere aliquam quis ac tellus. Ut euismod
quam malesuada metus iaculis vestibulum. Sed congue interdum nunc.

STORY: *Something Happened In Our Town*

It is important to remember that you have the power to change the pattern. You are smart enough and strong enough to stand up against all kinds of oppression. Everyone deserves equal rights, and justice.



"Something Happened in Our Town" teaches us that everyone needs to fight to bring equality for everyone. In the story, a black man is fatally shot by police during a conflict. The families have different opinions about why it happened, and it causes many people to feel upset, or confused.

Everyone's feelings are different, just like in real life, and everyone's feelings are valid. Putting yourself in someone else's shoes may sound silly, but it gives us a good lesson. Imagine if you were treated unfairly because of something you had no control over.

Omar, a new kid at the school, who is from a country very far away, is not allowed to play soccer with the rest of the class, just because he can't speak english very well. Many kids thought he would be bad at soccer, judging him because they thought he was different. Emma and Josh break the pattern of unfair judgment, and find out that Omar is actually just like them! If they hadn't broken the pattern, they would have missed out on a great new friend to play soccer with. Omar's new friends stick up for him, and teach the other kids that judging someone because of something they can't control, like their hair texture, skin color, height, or name is wrong.



BIOGRAPHY: *Authors and Illustrators*

Get to know the story by learning about its authors and illustrator!

Q: What does an author do?

A: An author uses their knowledge to write stories to help our imagination take flight! They may write books, poems, or essays to help us understand complex feelings, or tell a silly story to make you laugh!

Dr. Marianne Celano (PHD ABPD), Dr. Marietta Collins (PHD), and Dr. Ann Hazzard (PHD ABPD) are psychologists who specialize in child psychology. Together, they work as an author trio in writing children's books that deal with tough subjects such as gun violence ("Something Happened In Our Park"), and racial injustice ("Something Happened In Our Town").

Q: What does an Illustrator do?

A: An illustrator uses their artistic talent to help authors tell stories by drawing pictures to help explain what's happening in the story!

Jennifer Zivion, a graduate of Indiana University, has always had a passion for illustration and storytelling. She has illustrated over 40 children's books, including "Something Happened In Our Town", "All My Stripes", and "Pooka and Bunni".



Marianne Celano



Marietta Collins



Ann Hazzard



Jennifer Zivion

BIOGRAPHY:

Notable names and figures

"The time is always right to do what is right."

- Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., activist



WHO? Nelson Mandela

WHEN? July 18, 1918 - December 5, 2013

WHY?

Nelson Mandela was a South African leader and civil rights activist. He served as South Africa's first president from 1994-1999, and fought for peace and equality for everyone.

ON



WHO? Harriet Tubman

WHEN? March 1822 - March 10, 1913

WHY?

Harriet Tubman was an American abolitionist and civil rights activist. After escaping slavery, she helped many others escape slavery via the underground railway. She fought for freedom and equality for everyone.



WHO? Martin Luther King Jr.

WHEN? January 15, 1929 - April 4, 1968

WHY?

Martin Luther King Jr. was an American civil rights activist and minister. He was a leader for the civil rights movement, and fought for equality and justice for all. His speech, "I Have A Dream" acted as an anthem for the civil rights movement.

BIOGRAPHY:

Notable names and figures

"Never be limited by other people's limited imaginations."

- Dr. Mae Jemison, first African American female astronaut

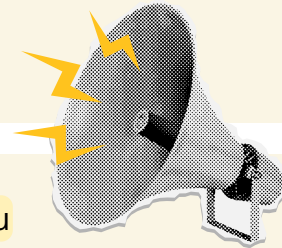


WHO? Malcolm X

WHEN? May 19, 1925 - February 21, 1965

WHY?

Malcolm X was an American human rights activist and minister. He fought for African-American people to have freedom, and individuality by any means necessary



WHO? Maya Angelou

WHEN? April 4, 1928 - May 28, 2014

WHY?

Maya Angelou was an American writer and civil rights activist. She wrote memoirs, poems, and autobiographies about her life, and the challenges she faced. She fought for peace and equal rights

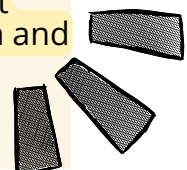


WHO? Ruby Bridges

WHEN? September 28, 1954 -

WHY?

Ruby Bridges was the first African-American child to attend a formally white-only school. She is a prominent civil rights activist, fights for inclusion and equality for all.





IMPACT:

Community Partners

Telling these important stories is hard without help from our community. Thankfully, we have organizations like the ones below to give us a helping hand.



During the racial and social unrest throughout our country in the summer of 2020, Fort Wayne Fire Chief Eric Lahey organized a call with Josh Raines of STAR 88.3 Christian Radio station, Iric Headley of Fort Wayne UNITED, and Dr. Pascal Losambe of Synergy Consulting Company, as a meet and greet. The purpose was to explore ways to improve the diversity hiring outreach of the Fort Wayne Fire Department. During that call, a dream was born. The original concept was destined to be expanded beyond its initial scope of enhancing the outreach of the fire department into a citywide initiative built by a group of Fort Wayne organizational leaders. Hope, passion, and a desire to see their own community improve in the areas of racial diversity and inclusion drove these leaders to create United Front; an initiative that provides a safe environment for participants to learn a shared humanity, a common language, and philosophy that is changing the trajectory of the community for generations to come.



**Fort Wayne
Urban League**

For nearly 100 years, the Fort Wayne Urban League has provided a wide variety of services to help thousands of diverse constituents reach their potential and achieve self-sufficiency individually and as a collective family, while serving as a catalyst for a better quality of life for African Americans and others in the region. FWUL has also served as a significant recruitment resource for employers seeking to develop an inclusive workforce. FWUL continues to build upon program delivery that address contemporary socio-economic needs, and we remain committed to our vision of being the premier catalyst for positive change in the quality of life for African Americans and others in the greater Fort Wayne, northeast Indiana region. The mission of the Fort Wayne Urban League is to enable African Americans and others to secure economic self-reliance, parity, power, and civil rights. The Fort Wayne Urban League will become the premiere institution that secures socioeconomic access and opportunities for all citizens. The Fort Wayne Urban League promotes economic empowerment and self-reliance with a focus on four key areas: Education, Economic Development/Social Advocacy; Employment/Entrepreneurship; and Wealth Management.

ACTIVITY #1: PROTEST SIGNS

This activity is best suited for middle school grades and up, and can be a great ice-breaker to open conversations about using our voices to advocate for what they believe in.



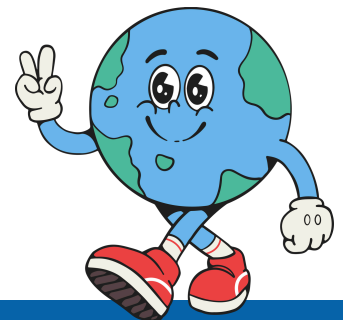
Materials needed:

- Heavy paper or cardboard
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Tape
- Popsicle sticks



Instructions

- Create a colorful design advocating for a cause you believe in! Animals, environmental, social justice, or even extra recess!
- Secure your sign to a popsicle stick with tape
- Hold it high for all to see!



DISCUSSION TOPIC:

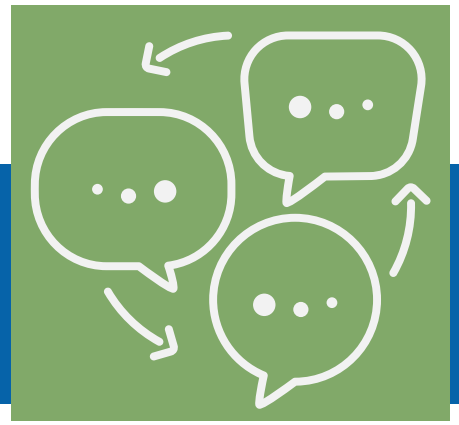
In "Something Happened in Our Town," Malcolm chooses to use his voice to advocate for what he believes in by going to a protest. He uses the resources available to him to fight for what he believes in, racial justice. What does your sign advocate for?
Why do you feel that your cause needs to be fought for?

ACTIVITY #2:

SKITTLES GAME

Use the guide below to play the Skittles game!

Instructions: Dump a package of Skittles candy into a bowl. Take turns picking a candy and responding to the corresponding prompt!



S

Emma and Josh love jumping on the trampoline together! What is something you love doing with your friends?

S

Have you ever felt judged or singled out because of something out of your control?

S

Emma and Josh help Olya feel included in their game. How could you make someone feel included?

S

When Josh feels scared, he cuddles up in his big brother's bed. What do you do when you feel scared or nervous?

S

Have you ever been "the new kid" like Olya? How did it make you feel?

What do you do?

You can...

- say something
- tell someone
- take safe action



If I see...	I will...

What do you do?

You can...

- say something
- tell someone
- take safe action



If I see...	I will...
Someone who feels left out	
Someone who is being treated differently because of their race	
A person who makes racist comments about other students.	
My friend saying something racist about another student.	

If I see racism, I will...

If I see racism, I will...

Want to get involved?...

24-25 SEASON AUDITION DATES:

SHUDDERSOME TALES OF POE..... Sept. 9 & 10, 2024

ANASTASIA..... Sept. 30 & Oct 1, 2024

SOMETHING HAPPENED IN OUR TOWN..... Jan. 6 & 7, 2025

DRAGONS LOVE TACOS..... March 3 & 4, 2025

Sign up at fortwayneyouththeatre.org/auditions

Suggested Reading...

Elementary: *Change Sings* by Amanda Gorman, *A Kids Book About Racism* by Jelani Memory, *The Youngest Marcher* by Cynthia Levison

Middle School: *Ghost Boys* by Jewell Parker Rhodes, *A Good Kind of Trouble* by Lisa Moore Ramée, *Harbor Me* by Jacqueline Woodson

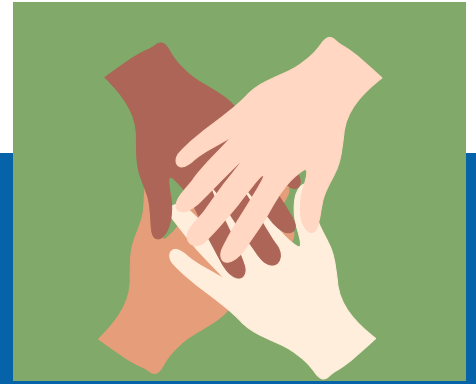
High School: *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas, *All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely, *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee



POP QUIZ:

Test Your Memory

See how much you remember from the performance of **SOMETHING HAPPENED IN OUR TOWN** with this brief quiz on the play, the plot, and characters.



1. What event triggers the main story?
 - a. A school field trip
 - b. A police shooting
 - c. A big storm
 - d. A birthday party
2. How many families are featured in the story?
 - a. 1
 - b. 3
 - c. 4
 - d. 2
3. What does Emma's Uncle Manny do for a job?
 - a. Garbage collector
 - b. Chef
 - c. Police Officer
 - d. Teacher
4. What is Josh worried about after the shooting?
 - a. His safety
 - b. Losing his toys
 - c. Getting in trouble at school
 - d. Missing his favorite TV show
5. What do Emma and Josh enjoy doing together?
 - a. Going to the park
 - b. Riding bicycles
 - c. Jumping on the trampoline
 - d. Having picnics
6. What is the main issue in the story?
 - a. Police brutality and racial injustice
 - b. Climate change
 - c. Bullying
 - d. Moving to a new city
7. How do the characters react to the shooting?
 - a. Josh and Emma are confused
 - b. Josh and Emma are happy
 - c. Josh and Emma are sad
 - d. Both B and C
8. How did Josh's big brother Malcom react?
 - a. He went to a protest
 - b. He stopped eating dessert
 - c. He posted on social media
 - d. Both A and C
9. How does the show end?
 - a. Emma's family moves away
 - b. Emma and Josh decide to fight for equality
 - c. Josh and Emma stop being friends
 - d. The town is attacked by a giant dragon
10. What did the children learn by the end of the play?
 - a. To ignore racism
 - b. To keep quiet about injustice
 - c. To fight against racial injustice and inequality
 - d. To only drink soda on the weekends

Answer Key

Q1: b: A police shooting Q2: d: 2 families Q3: c: A police officer Q4: a: His safety Q5: c: Jumping on the trampoline Q6: a: Police brutality and racial injustice Q7: d: Both B and C Q8: d: Both A and C Q9: b: Emma and Josh decide to fight for equality Q10: c: To fight against racial injustice and inequality

2024-25 SEASON SCHOOL SHOWS

Just in time for Halloween season, Youtheatre is digging up the original master of horror himself. For nearly 100 years, Edgar Allen Poe's tales of murder, madness and the supernatural have delighted readers of all ages. Now, *The Tell-Tale Heart*, *The Masque of the Red Death*, *The Raven* and more of his spine-tingling stories come to life in this vivid theatrical adaptation from the author of last season's *The House*. Audiences will be on the edge of their seats as Poe's words rise like corpses from the grave. So get your tickets and miss the spooky fun...**NEVERMORE**.

Performance: October 21, 2024 | 10:00 AM | First Presbyterian Theater

Shuddersome Tales of Poe



"Once upon a December..." and just in time for the holidays comes this thrilling musical for the whole family. Her past is a mystery. Her future is an adventure. Inspired by the beloved film, *Anastasia* transports us from the wintry twilight of the Russian Empire to the euphoria of Paris in the 1920s as a brave young woman sets out to discover if she's the legendary Russian Princess. Pursued by a ruthless Soviet officer determined to silence her, Anya enlists the aid of a dashing conman and a lovable ex-aristocrat. Together, they embark on an epic adventure to find home, love, and family. Featuring favorites from the hit animated film, "Journey to the Past" and "Once Upon a December," *Anastasia* is a spectacular musical about discovering who you are and defining who you're meant to be.

Performance: December 21, 2024 | 10:00 AM | First Presbyterian Theater

Friendships challenged, a world changed, and two young people trying to make sense of it together. Neighbors Josh and Emma are best friends. But something has happened in their town. When a black man is killed by a police officer, Emma and Josh have questions—real questions that deserve real answers. With so much going on, the two don't know how to keep their friendship from being pulled apart. Layered with compassion and humor, this play invites you into the living rooms of these two families (one black and one white) as they wrestle with how to help their children make sense of what happened. Playwright Cheryl D. West invites you to walk alongside Josh and Emma as they confront uncertainty within their own town and seek to plant the seeds of change in their community.

Performance: March 3, 2025 | 10:00 AM | Embassy Theatre



Youtheatre and the Allen County Public Library team up again for more Stories from the Stacks: Theatre for Young Readers. Aimed at Pre-K through 3rd Graders (but with plenty to enjoy for all ages), this year's selection is Adam Rubin's best-seller, *Dragons Love Tacos*. You know what Dragons REALLY love? Tacos of course! A boy and his dog are watching a TV show about dragons when they unexpectedly get caught up in the 'Dos and Don'ts' of what to serve dragons to eat. Dragons love tacos, but if they accidentally eat spicy salsa...watch out! This show is a playfully funny treat for the whole family.

Performance: April 28, 2025 | 10:00 AM | Downtown ACPL Theater

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

4 shows
to
choose
from

**Theatre is a
great gateway
to reading.**

American academic
Madeleine Grumet,
in writing about the
importance of
integrating arts
into the literature
curriculum, says:

**"When children
understand literature
as something
meaningful
and complex, they
sense its capacity to
inform their lives.
This is the kind of
literacy that influences
reading scores..."**

Fort Wayne
youththeatre

invites you to attend

**LIVE THEATRE
FOR KIDS BY KIDS**

only
5
dollars
per
ticket

**Study guides and fun
curricular activities**
will be emailed
to you prior to the
performance, making
it easy to incorporate
shows and themes
into your curriculum!

Can't make it to one of our shows?

Ask us about how we can bring Youtheatre
to your school with our **On-the-Go performances**
and **Virtual Tours!**

**To learn more,
Contact us at info@fortwayneyouththeatre.org**



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.

