

Theatre In Our Schools

A Perspective From a 2020 New Jersey Junior State Thespian Officer

“Theatre is a continuous aspect of my life. My friends and I do the school musicals together every year. I also participate in shows outside of school. Some of my favorite memories are from shows that I have been in. My school’s theatre program has helped me to connect with my fellow students. I love being a part of something bigger than just myself. Whenever I am in a show, the cast simply becomes a giant family, if only for about two months. At rehearsals, I make new friends and grow closer to old ones. Pre-show rituals help me to reflect on all of the hard work everyone has put in together to create something cohesive. Sharing the thrill of performing with my friends is the best feeling. The theatre program has changed me. It has helped me become more confident in my abilities. It has taught me to support and accept others. These are life skills that I will remember for the rest of my life.

If my school did not have a functioning Performing Arts program, my life would be very different. I would not be able to spend as much time bonding with my peers over common interests. My day would be bland if I did not have chorus class or theatre rehearsal to look forward to. Theatre and other arts provide a creative way for students to take a break from their daily life. Performing arts also teach valuable life skills like collaboration and empathy. I feel lucky to have this wonderful opportunity and I believe every student should have the option to do the same.

As I mentioned before, my theatre experiences have taught me important life skills. I believe that some of the most valuable ones are how to improvise, how to speak confidently in front of large groups, and to effectively work with other people. **As we become more experienced in theatre, we learn to expect the unexpected and to think on our feet.** We grow to be highly adaptable. Public speaking is not a skill that comes easily to most people. However, kids that perform onstage learn to speak confidently, to project, and to connect with an audience. All of these skills can help us later in life. Lastly, a show requires a team effort in order to go smoothly. Everyone needs to know exactly what they are supposed to be doing at all times. They also learn the responsibilities of others. Working together with their fellow cast members, crew, and directors teaches students to respond well to instruction and how to collaborate with others. As normal rehearsals turn into tech rehearsals, everyone has become extremely familiar with the responsibilities of others. Nonverbal communication is key, especially backstage. All of these important skills are learned through theatre.”

Araiya Casriel