

Theatre In Our Schools

A Perspective From a 2020 New Jersey Junior State Thespian Officer

“Theatre is a very important thing that some people can take for granted. Drama classes or an after-school program is a very easy way for students to be less stressed and have fun during the school day. Having a drama class at my school was a fun way for my friends and I to hang out and have fun together. It also helped me develop a love for theatre in all aspects, from the techs backstage to the actors in the spotlight. Theatre has also helped me come out of my shell. Going to after-school practices was one of the easiest ways to make friends who can have similar interests. It also taught me a lot of responsibility. You need to memorize your lines, your cues, what you’re doing onstage, and what you need every practice. I believe more people should be exposed to drama and theatre as a whole in their education because it really can teach them life skills, have a fun hobby, and make new friends.

If my school didn’t have a theatre program, it would feel really different. Being in the after-school play is one of my favorite parts of the school year. It’s just so satisfying to see so much hard work pay off and form an amazing production. It would feel like some part of me was missing if I didn’t have practices or tech week to worry about being off-book. Without theatre, I wouldn’t be able to have as many friends as I do or be able to express myself as much. I know that for some kids theatre is the best part of their day, and I couldn’t imagine taking that away from them. The hallways would be quieter as well. A lot of people quote musicals and plays all the time, a lot of them from our past shows. It would just be weird to not walk down the hallway in those crazy minutes before homeroom and not hear a theatre reference. A lot of kids only know musicals and plays because they joined the drama program and met people with those interests who exposed them to theatre. I believe a lot of people have theatre in their lives just because of their school program, and taking away that opportunity would just be taking an experience away from their life.

One of the most important things theatre has taught me is being part of a team. Putting on a production isn’t a one-man show. There is a lot of thought that goes into it. The director, the stage manager, the cast, the crew, and even the audience have a hand in making a good show. A receptive audience encourages actors to give it their best and put on a stunning performance. The cast and crew have to work together for things like cues, blackouts, mic changes, even quick changes. Even though they operate backstage, they are an extremely important asset. You want to make sure everyone gets along and works together so there is less of a chance things go wrong. Even if things do go wrong, you can trust the people around you to do their jobs and fix it while you do yours to make it better. This is such an important skill for kids to learn. Teamwork will always be a part of your everyday life. Being exposed to it early can really help them develop it, and theatre is a great way to do it. It is a lot of hard work, but it shows kids that if you put your heart into it a lot of great things will happen. **Theatre is such an important part of my life, and I’m so happy I can share it with the people I love and expose people to an amazing community.”**

Grace Hager



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