

MASON YOUTH THEATER HANDBOOK

HOW IT ALL BEGAN . . .

The Mason Youth Theater was founded in 2001 by Director Shelly Smith with the mission of helping children excel in the performing arts and succeed in the theater arena. The theater began as a small endeavor to impact the lives of children, and now has grown into something so much larger. The world of theater is an accepting, safe, and disciplined venue where one may explore and create. For some, theater is a last saving grace. For others, it is a playground of imagination and fun. The world of theater has the unique ability to meet and challenge each and every child.

DETAILS . . .

The Mason Youth Theater offers theater classes for children ages 5-18 years old and offers many sessions to meet the needs of busy families and their schedules. Classes are available on Tuesday of each week and run for 12 week semesters. Fall and winter classes are available, as well as summer camps. Students are trained in the art of improvisation, movement, and method acting, with emphasis given to imagination play and learning through play. A simple “M&M Philosophy” of making “meaning & memories” is woven into the fabric of the classes. All classes are taught by Shelly Smith, a certified teacher with the State of Michigan. Shelly earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theater/Speech/Communications from Siena Heights University.

THEATER BY CHILDREN FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES . . .

The Mason Youth Theater performs several times throughout the year, offering students the opportunity to experience theater in all its different genres. Main stage productions take place with the help of each student. Full productions offer acting roles and a variety of backstage and support roles. Each student who desires to be on stage is encouraged to perform and take on a theatrical role. The students themselves assist in all aspects of the productions.

Students are presented with a unique summer camp opportunity each year and have traditionally written, produced, and performed an original play. The summer camp experience is perfect for children who would like to try out their writing and acting skills in a short term setting. In addition, Mason Youth Theater offers many one day workshops focusing on such aspects as characterization and improvisation as well as an advanced directing class for senior students.

The fall and winter semesters are given over to learning technique, building self esteem and confidence, and all that goes with producing a full length play. The Mason Youth Theater has had the privilege of performing plays that have run on New York’s Broadway as well as performing several original plays written specifically for our theater.

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EFFECTIVE JANUARY 2007

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Theater is a team effort. When a part of the team is absent, the theatrical process cannot run smoothly for the students who are present. Regular attendance to class is expected. The opportunity for a “make up” class is not available; therefore it is important that students attend each class. If a student is unable to attend a class for any reason, contact the director as soon as possible. Students missing two or more classes will be considered dropped. No student will be excused from a class during the final two weeks before a production!

PRODUCTION POLICY

Because each student is vital to the over-all success of a production, please do not enroll in a class if the production dates represent a scheduling conflict. No student will be excused from a production date.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Students are expected to maintain a positive, supportive attitude during rehearsals. Cooperation with the director is imperative to the success of a play. Foul language or very poor attitude will not be tolerated. Students are expected to encourage each other. Teasing or degrading of fellow students or the use of foul language or very poor attitude will result in the immediate dismissal of that student from rehearsal on the very first offense. Repeat offenses will be handled privately between the director, the student, and the student’s parents.

SCRIPT POLICY

Scripts are to be treated with the utmost care and brought to every class. It is the student’s responsibility to maintain their script. In the event that the Mason Youth Theater must replace a script, the charge is \$5.

CELL PHONE POLICY

Student cell phones must be turned off during class. Cell phone use is limited to emergencies and only with approval from the director. The director’s cell phone is available for use in the event of an emergency for any student.

COSTUME AND PROP POLICY

Costumes and props must be treated carefully and with respect. Eating and drinking anything other than water is not permitted while in costume. Costumes are to be hung and stored in designated areas only. Costumes may not leave the production area at any time for any reason without the approval of the director or costume manager. Props may not leave the props table at any time for any reason without the approval of the director or the props manager. Students are not permitted to handle props, even those they are using, except while on stage. Students are expected to check both their own props and costumes before every class or production date and to notify the director or appropriate manager immediately for any repairs or replacements. Unless otherwise noted, all costumes and props are the property of Mason Youth Theater.

BACKSTAGE ETIQUETTE

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful, silent manner while backstage. Excessive talking, horseplay, or other disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. During productions the stage manager will maintain complete authority over the backstage area and shall be treated with respect and immediate cooperation, without discussion. Parents will need prior approval from the director to enter the backstage area at any time.

CLASS ETIQUETTE

Students are expected to arrive on time, prepared, and ready to work! Water bottles are permitted. Please leave all food, other beverages, and electronic devices at home. Our time together is short and power packed! Prior approval from the director is required for any visitors other than family members. Parents are always welcome to stay for class. At the request of the director, please refrain from distracting conversations or behaviors, or addressing students who are working. The Mason Youth Theater reserves the right to put any parents to work in a variety of roles in any class! 😊

REFUND AND PAYMENT POLICY

Refunds will be given until the start of the first class. No refunds will be issued once the session has begun. Payment is expected in full at time of registration.

MASON YOUTH THEATER

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The Mason Youth Theater is developing the following volunteer and volunteer leadership positions. Every parent is encouraged to consider these opportunities. The positions will be developed with the help of the volunteer(s), and the students will be involved as much as possible. The theater plans to use these opportunities to add significant value to the student experience while maintaining no additional cost for the classes. All of these positions are fun and very gratifying. The rewards will be obvious when you see the smiles on your young actors as they watch their parents get involved and make a difference. This is right in line with the theater's "M&M Philosophy"—Making **M**eaning and **M**emories!

COSTUME MANAGERS – Help obtain, alter, and clean the costumes. Manage and organize the costume inventory for one or both plays.

PROPERTIES (PROPS) MANAGERS – Help obtain or create the props. Manage and organize the props inventory for one or both plays.

MAKE-UP ARTISTS – Help create the right look and apply make-up to the actors. Manage the make-up inventory for one or both plays.

SET CONSTRUCTION MANAGER AND CREW – Lead or assist in the construction of the set for one or both plays. Manage the wise use of the set materials and transport them as needed.

SET STRIKE MANAGER AND CREW – Lead or assist in the destruction of the set for one or both plays. Manage the recovery of any useful supplies and transport them to a designated storage facility.

PHOTOGRAPHY TECHNICIAN – Bring your high quality camera and your eye for great shots to the dress rehearsals. Take both candid and posed shots. Upload the photos to the website and save them to standard media for use on the DVD of the plays, and to fill media requests. Several people can do this!

REHEARSAL ASSISTANTS – Several people will handle large and small details during the dress rehearsals to ensure quality productions. Work directly with the Director and Stage Manager.

HOUSE MANAGERS – Greet guests before the plays, collect money and tickets, hand out programs, provide crowd control, give directions to guests, bring the house lights up/down, and smile lots!

RECEPTION COORDINATORS – Plan and implement a lovely reception for guests after the plays so the audience can meet the actors. Clean-up as needed and coordinate with the custodial staff.

CAST PARTY COORDINATORS – Plan and implement the traditional cast party for both plays together. This one will be scheduled non-traditionally...before the production dates!

Let Shelly know at the start or end of class what you are interested in. Contact Shelly for details by phone or e-mail (no calls after 8 p.m., please).

MASON YOUTH THEATER REGISTRATION & RELEASE FORM

Student's First Name _____ Middle Initial ____ Last Name _____

Parent's First Name _____ Middle Initial ____ Last Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Home Phone # (____) _____ Parent's Cell # (____) _____

Parent's Work # (____) _____

E-Mail Address _____

Referred by _____

Special Remarks or Concerns

(including any medications, medical conditions, or food allergies):

IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY WHEN A PARENT CANNOT BE REACHED PLEASE NOTIFY:

Name _____ Phone # (____) _____

I have completed this Registration & Release form and submitted it for my child. I am this child's legal parent/guardian. In signing this form, my child and I hereby agree to be bound by and comply with all rules and regulations of the Mason Youth Theater and the laws and regulations of the State of Michigan. I expressly assume all risks associated with this class and hereby release the Mason Youth Theater, including staff and volunteers, as well as Mason Community Church from any and all liability, including claims of injury and/or damages incurred in connection with this class. Further, I release any photographs or video footage taken during this activity for journalistic purposes.

Legal Guardian's Signature _____ Date _____

MASON YOUTH THEATER ACCEPTANCE OF HANDBOOK

Please read the entire handbook and return this form by the first class.

We have read and agree with all of the policies, procedures, and expectations set forth by the Mason Youth Theater. We understand that failure to comply may result in the student's dismissal from this session, without refund, and affect our ability to enroll in future sessions.

Student's Signature _____ Date _____

Parent's Signature _____ Date _____