As we enter the second half of the 2014/15 Season, I have been in conversations with many community members, educators, and organizations about what we do in Rep Education. After describing the wealth of programming we implement, people are always shocked by how much we do and jokingly ask about the size of my army. These dialogues have taught me that we have to do better at talking about our education programs at The Rep. This newsletter is intended to describe the scope of our work in the Milwaukee community this season. Milwaukee Repertory Theater is known for its high quality artistic work on stage. We also serve over 20,000 students at approximately 240 schools each year. We strive to bring the professional artistic quality of our productions to the work we do in our community and in our classrooms. Our priority for in-school offerings is to make a stronger impact on student achievement through long-term curriculum-based programming versus short visits to schools. The average contact hours for our in-school programs is 12.6 hours per student. The curriculum is created in house and we train our professional teaching artists to implement the lessons in the classrooms. Many of our programs also include visits from professional actors to the schools, giving students an exclusive opportunity to interact with artists. In addition to teaching literacy and theater, programs engage students in topics pertinent to their lives and the Milwaukee Community.

We also keep abreast of national trends to inform our work through the understanding of best practices. This season I started moderating the Education Director Teleconferences for Theatre Communications Group, and I have been active in national conferences - even hosting an Education Director Retreat in Milwaukee in Spring 2014.

We will begin publishing newsletters with greater frequency to celebrate the accomplishments of our students and to share the work we do in the community. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us!

Cheers,

Jenny Toutant, Education Director
In response to the low literacy rates in Milwaukee's schools, we created an arts integration program that teaches reading comprehension skills through theater at the middle school level. In its fifth year, we are working with 540 students in eighteen classrooms in this well-loved twenty-week residency. Nine classrooms are currently in their last few weeks studying *The Color Purple*, and we just started in nine classrooms with *Peter and the Starcatcher*. Each year the program has consistently yielded positive results in summarization, prediction, questioning, and inference skills. After gathering feedback from key stakeholders, we are in the process of working with Milwaukee Public Schools alongside an assessment specialist to develop tools to measure the impact of the program on text evidence and students' enjoyment of reading. These were two indicators that were of utmost priority amongst educators and funders. We are excited to test out the new measurements with our *Peter and the Starcatcher* classrooms.

“Students became more interested in reading plays and taking on the roles. Students have a great opportunity for practicing fluency in an engaging and fun way. This takes pressure off the students who are apprehensive about reading aloud and in front of their peers”

- Teacher, Trowbridge School, 2013/14 Season
Scriptworks

Scriptworks was conceived in the 2006/07 Season as a response to the desire to have a flexible in-school program tied directly to the work on our stages. It is an eight-week curriculum built around a production that intensely engages high school students in a theater project based on the script of the production. This season, six classrooms explored character development around The Color Purple through acting, costume design, playwriting, song interpretation, and directing. Four Peter and the Starcatcher classrooms will study directing and acting, focusing on storytelling through minimalistic production design. One school is investigating how they influence the telling of their own stories and cultural perceptions through the world of Good People.

“I enjoyed learning things about plays and how to make point of view an important thing. Also how you show your expressions that’ll affect how others see the emotion. Thanks for coming. I enjoyed it.”

–Student, Riverside High School

SCRIPTWORKS SCHOOL PARTNERS: AUDUBON HIGH SCHOOL, BAY VIEW HIGH SCHOOL, GOLDA MEIR HIGH SCHOOL, HMONG AMERICAN PEACE ACADEMY, MACDOWELL MONTESSORI, MILWAUKEE HIGH SCHOOL OF THE ARTS, RIVERSIDE UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL

School Subscription

One of our longstanding programs, the School Subscription Program provides one classroom at each participating school the opportunity to experience four productions, developing a deeper love and appreciation of theater. This program affords students the chance to view a variety of plays across different theater spaces to connect to the art form. For every show, students participate in a pre- and post-show workshop led by an Education staff member and an actor from the show. Throughout the season, students also learn to view theater critically and write a review for two of the four productions they experience.

“I like being able to get an inside view of the making of the play, and comparing my points with the views of the actors.”

–Student, Veritas High School

A former student participant from nine years ago recently approached us to describe how influential this program was in her life. She has become a regular theater-goer and currently works in a youth-serving social service agency. Her organization is seeking funding to partner with us to provide the same opportunities she had with The Rep to her own students now.

SCHOOL SUBSCRIPTION PARTNERS: COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL, NOVA HIGH SCHOOL, RONALD REAGAN HIGH SCHOOL, TENOR HIGH SCHOOL, VERITAS HIGH SCHOOL, WAUWATOSA EAST HIGH SCHOOL

REP IMMERSION DAY FOR THE COLOR PURPLE

“My favorite part was listening to how the plays originated, and listening to the plot and waiting to the next day anxiously to see the play”

–Student, Community High School, 2013/14 Season

STUDENTS VISIT THE SOLDIERS HOME DURING 2014 AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

ACTOR JOSH LANDAY LEADS A POST-SHOW WORKSHOP
Teen Council

2014/2015 Teen Council Officers:

- Abigail Thompson, Milwaukee High School of the Arts, President
- Claire Bilicki, Milwaukee High School of the Arts, Vice President
- Josie Trettin, Whitefish Bay High School, Secretary
- Tory Trettin, Whitefish Bay High School, Public Relations Coordinator
- Caroline Fossum, Grafton High School, Friends of The Rep Ambassador

"Teen Council has given me the opportunity to meet other teens who share my love of theater, and to experience plays through unique Council events. It is really something special."

-Anna Dannecker, age 16, Ronald Reagan IB High School

The Milwaukee Repertory Theater’s Teen Council is an organization for teens, by teens. The Council promotes a love and appreciation of theater for a younger generation, bringing together diverse teens from all over Southeastern Wisconsin. Students fully plan, organize, and participate in events, which encompass theater, education, and community outreach. Members also enjoy learning about the administrative side of theater, including marketing and public relations, fundraising, and budgeting. Teen Council has two levels of membership in which students can participate: General and Leadership. Both levels of membership are completely free and allow students to help plan and attend events at The Rep and in the community.

The Council has taken huge strides in the 2014/15 Season with recruitment, and has a greater presence at Milwaukee Repertory Theater. They will have accomplished eight events this season in addition to having become more involved with the Friends of The Rep, volunteering at Rep events, and joining city-wide conversations about the importance of arts education in Milwaukee. Out of over 80 members, we have 43 new participants this season.

SUMMER PLAY FESTIVAL

The Rep’s Teen Council hosts a teen-produced short play festival for two weeks in the summer. Students choose several ten-minute plays to perform, and devise a new play based on a relevant social issue. Each play is student directed, performed, and designed. We work with the Milwaukee Public Schools Arts Internship program to hire two teenagers to serve as stage managers and administrators for the Summer Play Festival. Last summer, we also had a former Teen Council member who had participated in our Summer Play Festival come back as an intern.

Rep Education Staff assigns the participants to different roles as directors, actors, designers, assistant directors, marketers, and stage managers. Students learn all aspects of producing a play including play selection, designing marketing materials, teching the show, and performing it for an audience.

Many of our participants come from our Teen Council, and new participants often become active Teen Council members the following season. Summer Play Festival 2015 is scheduled for July 13 - 25. Performances will take place on July 24th at 7:30pm and July 25th at 4:00pm in the Stiemke Studio. Registration is now open for Summer Play Festival! Go to www.milwaukeerep.com/Education/Summer-Theater-Conservatory/ for more information!
Following our Big Read around *To Kill a Mockingbird*, we sought ways to continue engaging students and the Milwaukee community on a deeper level in an after-school setting. For *Clybourne Park* and *A Raisin in the Sun*, we worked with fifteen middle and high school sites to learn about the gentrification of their Milwaukee neighborhoods. Last year, for *The Whipping Man*, eight middle and high schools studied the concept of freedom in Milwaukee today versus the time of the Civil War. This season, students at eleven sites are exploring identity in terms of self and of place through art inspired by *Good People*. Students are learning about theater, spoken word poetry, and photography from professional artists. They are doing skills assessments to better understand their own strengths and which skills might need further development in order to achieve their goals. Student field trips include attending *Good People* at The Rep, going on a career-focused backstage tour, performing a showcase presentation of their work in the Stackner Cabaret, and taking a campus tour of UW-Milwaukee to conclude the program.

Each matinee, aside from *A Christmas Carol*, also includes a talkback with actors. For four of our matinees, we include a full-day experience called Rep Immersion Day. At 8:30am, students experience a series of demonstrations led by our production staff illustrating how we bring a script to life on stage. They have an opportunity to learn from professional theater artists in all areas of theater and ask questions about their careers, the choices made for a production, and how to create the magic of live theater. Following the Immersion portion of the day, the students are brought to various areas in the theater for lunch before being brought back into the house for the matinee performance. A brief talkback is held after the performance with the actors as well.

It is fascinating to witness the difference in the energy in the room between a public performance, a regular student matinee, and a Rep Immersion Day. A funder who attended one of our Immersion Days heard a story of a student that was asking how he might become more involved with the arts. She said, “You know, you are changing lives right before your very eyes.” Rep Immersion Day is integrated into our residency programs, and schools can also book it on their own as an addition to matinee tickets.
A Partnership with First Stage

Rep Education has designed a new three-pronged program to teach reading through theater to third-graders and build necessary skills for high school students to prepare them for college. The program will include in-school residencies for third-graders and high school students, an after-school program where students can develop new performances to be shared in a showcase event, and the opportunity to see professional theater. This approach responds to the research that third grade is the turning point from learning to read to reading to learn, and the desire for high school students to develop mentorship skills through modeling behavior for the elementary level.

The three components that have been selected have been identified as crucial learning approaches from Milwaukee Public Schools and Milwaukee Succeeds: in-school experiential learning, mentorship, and parental engagement. What resulted during the development phase was a great conversation with First Stage to launch a pilot of this program in partnership with each other. A teaching artist from both of our companies will co-teach the curriculum at all levels. This opportunity to combine our programmatic strengths will ideally improve the program outcomes. The pilot will be conducted with Auer Avenue and NOVA schools.

In-School Third Grade Reading

The in-school component will focus on text comprehension skills such as text evidence, decoding, summarizing, and visualizing. This part of the program is planned during the school day, as it is important for the students to have a consistent structure in which to practice these skills. Professional teaching artists will demonstrate practical applications of reading skills by engaging the students in theatrical activities. The curriculum will be developed by First Stage.

In-School High School Component

Simultaneous with the third grade program, high school students will engage in a curriculum that reinforces key reading skills, teaches them how to devise new works of theater, and guides students in the process of mentoring and leading younger students. This curriculum will be designed by Milwaukee Rep.

After-School Program

Upon completion of the in-school programs, students will see Luchadora at First Stage, and start a two-week intensive after-school program that will be led by the high school students to create relevant short performance pieces with the third-graders to be shared at a final event. The final event will also include dinner for students and families, and a trip to The Rep to see Peter and the Starcatcher.

ADULT CLASSES

We offer a Basic Acting Course Series for adults throughout the year. Those who participate in all three classes earn a certificate of completion. Additional classes include Acting for the Camera, Directing, Playwriting, and Voice for the Actor. Saturday Intensives led by professional artists working on our productions are also offered periodically throughout the year. Topics have included auditioning, musical theater, dialects, stage combat, and more.

BACKSTAGE TOURS

At any time during the year, student and community groups of any size can book a Backstage Tour to receive an inside look behind the scenes to learn how we produce the work we do on our stages. The hour-long tour takes groups through all of the production shops, our three stages, and administrative areas. It gives tour groups a glimpse into the magic of theater as well as access to one of Milwaukee’s historic buildings.

TINY TIM PROGRAM

Generously funded by Patty and Jay Baker, 1,250 Milwaukee residents and students have the opportunity to experience A Christmas Carol each year through our Tiny Tim program. Over the last five years, The Rep has partnered with over 80 organizations to offer free tickets to their constituents who would not be able to afford to see the production otherwise.
Corporate Training

We have been exploring the idea of Corporate Training programming for quite a few years. Arts-based training has proven effective in the business setting to develop presentation, teamwork, and leadership skills. This fall we partnered with Mount Mary University’s Women’s Leadership Institute to pilot a leadership training workshop titled “The Art of the Creative Leader.” The pilot was met with wonderful reviews as well as some clarity on how to continue developing this work in the future. We will be doing another run of the pilot in the spring and making a decision on how to move forward with offering this program to a wider audience.

Meanwhile, Rep Education is also piloting a presentation skills workshop for the Medical College of Wisconsin during the spring semester. These pilots have been very informative in developing effective curriculum that can be then executed as a part of a formal program. The goal is to begin offering Corporate Training programs focusing on both presentation skills and leadership skills that will be offered to Milwaukee area businesses during the 2015/16 Season.

“Every activity resonated due to the variety and constant change within our business.”
- Participant from The Art of the Creative Leader

Title One Programs

Each summer we partner with Nonpublic Educational Services, Inc (NESI) to offer an arts-integrated approach to reading and math during summer school. Most of the programs are designed as a week-long curriculum incorporating creative drama and reader’s theater techniques to bring stories to life for students grades K-12. Last summer, we worked closely with Milwaukee Public Libraries to identify age-appropriate texts that would be available for students to check out as a follow up to our summer teachings.

We typically work with ten to twelve sites each summer throughout June and July.

Teacher Advisory Board

Two seasons ago, we invited teachers that we work with in different capacities to serve as advisors for Rep Education. They have been an incredible resource to align the work we develop to the needs of the schools and the community. They provide input on our Play Guides and Teacher Guides to ensure that they are useful classroom resources. Meeting four times a year, they have been instrumental in our strategic planning process as well as serving as key advocates for Rep Education.

This season, the Teacher Advisory Board is hosting its first Teacher Event to give educators the opportunity to experience Peter and the Starcatcher, learn about next season’s matinee offerings, and have the opportunity to discuss Rep Education program offerings with Rep Staff and current school partners. The event will be on Thursday, April 23rd.

PLAY GUIDES AND TEACHER GUIDES

For all twelve plays on four stages, we research and write a ten to sixteen page resource guide for our full audiences. An outline of each guide is vetted by our Artistic Department to ensure the publication is in line with the approach we are taking to the story of each play. The guides have become an extraordinary resource for all audience members that wish to dive deeper into the world and background of the play. They are written by the Education Department, edited by the Artistic Department, and designed by the Marketing Department. For all plays that have student audiences attending, we create a supplemental Teacher Guide which complements the Play Guide with guiding questions and activities for use in the classroom. Play Guides are available on our website and in the lobbies for each production, and Teacher Guides are available online.
REP EDUCATION MISSION STATEMENT
To enrich lives through vital theater experiences that offer lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Visit our website at www.milwaukeeerep.com/education/outreach.htm

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Meet our Teaching Artists:

Kelly Cline
Hayley Cotton
Marcella Kearns
Samantha Martinson
Angel Mullen
Fly Steffens

Assessing our Programs...

We received a grant from The Faye McBeath Foundation to examine and redesign our assessment and evaluation practices to effectively measure the impact of our programs. In partnership with Urban Networks Associates, we have created new logic models, held focus groups to determine priorities that are relevant to schools and community initiatives, and aligned measurement tools around these five outcomes:

1) Increase students’ enjoyment and appreciation of theater
2) Increase students’ social awareness skills
3) Increase students’ relationship skills
4) Increase students’ ability to use text evidence
5) Increase students’ enjoyment of reading

These outcomes were chosen based on input from stakeholders, the work of Milwaukee Succeeds, and the focus of Milwaukee Public Schools. Each of our education programs is designed to meet one or more of these outcomes. With the new measurement tools in place, we will have a clearer understanding of the impact of Rep Education programs. We look forward to sharing our final report on this process in July 2015.