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CITY YEAR NEW YORK

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March 12, 2012

Dear Big Apple Playback Theatre,

On behalf of our team and our students, we would like to extend our sincerest gratitude for coming to our school on February 29, 2012 and helping our students to promote non-violence. Our students were very engaged and excited, and truly enjoyed the interactive performance. When asked "Did you learn something about anti-bullying?" a fifth grader responded with, "Yes, I learned that even if you aren't tough enough to stop a bully, people around you will be there to help you." Another question asked was, "What was your favorite part of the show?" a third grader responded, "Seeing my bully experience acted out."

As part of the service-learning component of our City Year after-school program over the past few weeks, students have been engaged in lessons around the theme, "Peace in the Community". In covering this topic, students have learned about resolving conflict, different types of conflict--like discrimination--and peace ambassadors through out history. The Big Apple Playback performance allowed the students to physically interact with the content that they are learning about to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to promote peace in their community. City Year has taken pleasure in informing the rest of the school and community of the performance through our bulletin board and news letters.

After the performance students were inspired to create their own pledges to help actively achieve peace in their community.

These pledge cards will be incorporated into anti-bullying artwork to be displayed within the school. It is a terrific opportunity for this year's students to leave a positive mark on their school.

Thank you,

Esteban Wong
PS/MS 57 Corps Member
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November 22, 2011



Dear Erica,

You and the entire Big Apple Playback Theater troupe provided our fifth graders with three amazing presentations, based on the concepts in the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program.

You addressed the main ideas of bullying, bystanding/witnessing, and being a victim. You provided visual vignettes drawn from your own stories and the students' own stories. In addition, you provided a model for our teachers as they continue to hold Olweus class meetings, conduct lessons, highlight various themes and skills. You provided a very strong reference for the rest of the year.

As Magnet Facilitator in an arts and humanities magnet school, I appreciate your use of theater as an entry point for the themes of bullying. It is a powerful vehicle to engage our students. I recognize the skills (empathy, compassion, experience) with which you approach mature themes, providing clarity and closure in every case.

The teachers and parents in the presentations gave very positive feedback. I am disappointed that neither our principal nor our assistant principal was able to attend; perhaps that will happen when we schedule sessions for our fourth graders later in the year.

Thank you for scheduling with our school as part of your grant. We appreciate the generosity of this gift.

Sincerely,
Pat Ketcham
Magnet Facilitator

Daniel Webster Magnet School
WE EDUCATE THE WHOLE CHILD



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May 27, 2011

To whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of City Year New York, part of the AmeriCorps network. City Year, now in its 8th year of service to the New York Metropolitan Area, is a non-profit organization that unites a diverse group of 17-24 year olds, or Corps Members, for a powerful year of community service and leadership development. Corps Members make a positive difference in the lives of young people throughout New York City by providing one-on-one and small group tutoring, literacy programs, after-school support and mentorship to youth. Corps Members also lead transformative service projects in the community in which they serve.

At P.S. 154 in the South Bronx, our after school program is called Starfish. The program is based on City Years' belief that you are never too young to serve, and the path to becoming a citizen leader should begin at a young age. Students meet every Monday and Wednesday; they explore issues in their community and plan ways that they can help stop or change these issues. So far this year, we have taught our students about self-awareness, the environment, healthy choices, and peace in the community. For the Peace in the Community Unit, our after school has been focusing on bullying and conflict resolution because unfortunately bullying is something the students experience often throughout the school day and during after school.

For one of our lessons we were fortunate to get the Big Apple Playback Theater to come and perform their anti-bullying skits. Their improvisation was incredible; they took the student's real life bullying experiences and re-enacted them. Also, during the course of two 45-minute performances the Big Apple Playback Theater allowed the students to act along side of them in the skits. Through the skits the students saw that bullying is hurtful, they also learned strategies that will help them stop bullies in the future.

Milton Andino, a 3rd grader from our after school group continues to use these strategies in school during the day and during after school he reminds the other after school participants of these strategies daily. Just minutes before the Big Apple Playback Theater's performance, there was an incident with a group of 3rd grade boys. Two of the 3rd grade boys were teasing another student, who is always getting in trouble for picking on others. After the anti-bullying skits, they both decided to apologize to the student.

The performances were remarkable and exceeded every expectation. Not only did the students enjoy the lessons, but they also learned valuable lessons about bullying that will remain with them throughout life. Thank you so much Big Apple Playback Theater for coming to P.S. 154X and making a difference in the lives of our students.

Sincerely,

Tereva Bundy
Corps Member, City Year New York at P.S.154X



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