

History: Learning Stages has been existence for 23 years providing quality theater educational opportunities for young people ages 5-24. Founded as the Gloucester County Summer Drama Workshop and beginning its season in 1991 by producing only one mainstage musical or drama per summer, Learning Stages has expanded its programming to five educational programs (CLASS ACT, Play in a Day Festival, Shining Stars, DayDreamers and Page to Stage) each year as well as providing after school theater program in several Gloucester County School Districts (Glassboro, Pitman, Wenonah, Clayton). Our staff has grown from an all volunteer staff to 20 paid teaching artists and administrators, the majority of whom are working and residing in NJ, Gloucester County.

Artistic Focus: Learning Stages' artistic focus is to educate young people about the entire theater process and through this workshop setting allow the students to acquire knowledge, reach attainable goals and advance to the next level of learning acquiring the appropriate skills. Our current programming educates young people ages 5-24. Our programs include:

Daydreamers: This workshop is offered to 30-35, 7-15 year old students participating in a 5-week summer (June & July) and performing a full-length play or musical at the end of the summer. The executive director/head teacher creates the curriculum, writes the lesson plans, as well as directs the productions. She is a full-time Communications Professor at Cumberland County College and an adjunct professor in Rowan University Graduate school. She has a vast theater education background as producer, director and manager of Learning Stages for the past 12 years.

Class Act: This program, based on community collaborations, makes the theater arts accessible to children enrolled in regional youth organizations such as the Paulsboro Boys and Girls Club, the LEAP Academy of Camden, and after-school programs such as Glassboro Child Development Centers and Wenonah School. Under the guidance of a theater educator, youth create original theater pieces based on life experiences. Skill-building in public speaking, reading, writing, teamwork, and leadership are emphasized. Culminating performances are presented for family, friends, classmates, and other invited guests. Students have created original works such as "CinderWho?", "Going, Going Green," and The Real Don Quixote. **In 2007, Learning Stages was presented the "New Jersey After 3" Promising Practices Award for its Class Act collaboration with Glassboro Child Development Centers.** The Executive Director solicits the collaborations and meets the clients' needs by hiring and training the teaching artists for each community project. She also acts a producer for the presented work and provides marketing and fundraising support.

Play-in-a-Day: A unique evening of one-act plays provides acting and directing opportunities for young adults ages 16 and older. In the space of one mid-winter day, this program provides a 'laboratory' in which participants experiment with theater, playwriting, and directing thus allowing students to create new works. The program culminates in an evening of thought-provoking theater in a smaller, more personal setting with opportunities for the audience to participate in a 'talk-back' session to discuss the works with creators, performers, directors, and other audience members.