

August 15, 1997

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter in support of Magical Rain Theaterworks as they seek work opportunities with young adolescents in the realm of conflict resolution. I worked closely with Irene Vasquez and Dan Runyan last year in building a peer mediation program at the Kazoo School. They provided excellent experiential learning opportunities for my students which allowed them to approach the material at a surprisingly meaningful level. Irene's and Dan's knowledge of adolescent needs gives them a solid foundation as they approach teaching and learning through theater.

We first worked together on conflict resolution in 1995 on a community based outreach project which served the larger Kalamazoo community. In this project, lawyers were trained as facilitators and they led workshops on conflict management. Magical Rain Theaterworks provided an effective opening and closing to the program which allowed the larger group to process the significant concepts. Their contribution to the success of this program was critical.

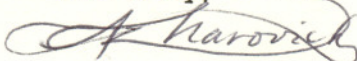
Ike and Dan attended a Children's Creative Response to Conflict skills training session which I facilitated in the following winter. It was clear then that their philosophy and practice in theater would blend smoothly with the concepts explored in this sixteen hour workshop.

Last Fall as I planned a variety of activities for my mediation program, I realized that Magical Rain Theaterworks could lend an experiential angle that would let the youngsters examine the concepts at a deeper level. I was also interested in having the peer mediators share information with the rest of the students in the school through an assembly where theater arts would work particularly well. We contracted to work together through the year.

Irene and Dan attended a number of the initial mediation training sessions to gain a common base with the students. When it came time to produce the assembly, Magical Rain Theaterworks provided a rich climate for the peer mediators to create effective ways to inform the student body of how mediation works. The strength of this event was evident as we listened to the questions from the audience! The performance was so impressive that we wanted to share it further. We had our chance in early May when a conference on emotional intelligence was planned here in Kalamazoo. Our peer mediators were invited to present with Magical Rain Theaterworks to highlight one way that emotional intelligence is at work in the schools. They went on stage after Gary Chernis gave his keynote address and were received enthusiastically.

The level of collaboration that Irene and Dan bring to a project assures success. They listen carefully to the needs and ideas of those they are working with and seek a level of consensus when appropriate. Their expertise is evident and they are directive as the need arises. The commitment and imagination that they bring to their undertakings inspires the participants in both production and process. I have been consistently impressed with what they are capable of drawing from the groups they work with. I strongly recommend their services in working with youth on conflict management through theater arts. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you might have.

Sincerely,



Anna Marovich