



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF BENTON HARBOR, MICHIGAN

December 5, 2002

Magical Rain Theaterworks
27 Ravinia
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I submit this letter of support to the Magical Rain Theaterworks Program. I have had the distinct pleasure of collaborating with Dan and Ike for the past four years. When I first met Ike we began talking about the promise and potential of children especially those often forgotten by our society because of their circumstances. We discussed, at length, how we set children up for failure and speak of them as if they created their problems in isolation of their environments. I was so struck by Ike's vivid storytelling of her theaterworks projects that I immediately submitted a grant to the Chicago Department of Health to bring their program to Chicago. Although that required a two-hour commute Dan, Ike and their impressive son, Benito, made the trek and worked passionately with a group of teenagers struggling with decisions related to human growth and development and violence prevention. It was indeed a difficult time for our teens that had recently lost a friend, a victim of a drive-by shooting. Ike and Dan worked to give the teens a voice and sensitively created an environment that allowed them to share their experiences of pain, fear and self-doubt in a creative and empowering production. In the end the youngsters certainly felt a greater sense of hope about themselves and their futures.

There are endless reasons to support the magical work that Dan and Ike provide.

- They are committed artists with a strong and positive vision regarding the abilities of children and youth.
- They work with young people in a collaborative manner focusing on the unique needs of children in the context of families, communities and cultures.
- They are open and honest visionaries with amazing storytelling abilities and talents.
- They have the ability to create fascinating sets and designs including black light productions that create mystery and magic.
- They have tremendous respect for differences and highly value partnerships.
- They are completely comfortable with children suffering from issues of neglect, isolation and despair.

Now that I work and reside in Michigan, we have successfully collaborated on two additional theater projects and have received funding from both the Michigan Association of Fairs and Exhibitions and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs. I look forward to the mutually rewarding and long-term relationship that we have established and wish them continued success and happiness.

Sincerely,


Judith Stanton
Executive Director