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Community-Based Education Program



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Promotional Copy

#4137 Evaluation of Professional vs. Community Theatre in Mid-Sized Ontario Communities

Organization Information

The host organization is a professional not-for-profit theatre company that is based in Peterborough, and operates under the jurisdiction of Canadian Actors' Equity Association. It is a professional theatre company and produces works with professional actors, Directors and designers, etc. on various stages in Peterborough, usually at Showplace Performance Centre or the Market Hall for the Performing Arts. The mandate is to strive to consistently provide an exceptional theatre experience for their audience, connecting them to illuminating and entertaining works that can challenge one's beliefs and perceptions. The organization also endeavours to provide development opportunities to emerging artists.

Project Information

The purpose of the project is to examine the role of professional theatre versus community theatre in other communities in Ontario that are similar in size and demographic to Peterborough. Through specific case studies, they hope to determine how professional and community theatre manage to thrive (or not) working side by side in other communities and use this information to improve our status in Peterborough.

In the past, the majority of its work has been produced at Showplace Performance Centre. With the advent of the renovation of the Market Hall for the Performing Arts, Peterborough will have a performance space that is more ideally suited to our work and the way in which we would like to present it to the public. This new space provides a 'new beginning' for the organization in some ways, and the knowledge acquired from the research involved in this project will allow them to build on this new beginning from a stronger position.

Students would conduct research and provide a written report on their findings.

Questions could include:

- How have other professional theatre companies in comparable regional centres across Ontario survived and/or thrived when the 'marketplace' is crowded with non-professional theatre?
(Professional theatre is much more expensive to produce than non-professional theatre because the creative staff are paid at non-negotiable minimum rates.)
- What are some success stories of cities where there is thriving professional theatre AND thriving non-professional (community) theatre?
- What findings can be applied for New Stages in Peterborough?

NOTE: Exact questions would be subject to change after consultations between student(s) and organization contact person(s) should our application be successful.

Benefit to the Host Organization and the Community

The hoped for result of this project would be for the host to acquire information that would allow them to more capably determine how we can achieve its full potential in their role in the community as Peterborough's professional theatre company. This, in turn would benefit the community as they discover new ways to serve the Peterborough community more fully, enriching further the fabric of the Peterborough arts community. The project will hopefully also enlighten them about new ways in which we might form or pursue partnerships in the community that will be of benefit to all.

What Students Might Learn

The student(s) will learn firsthand about the operation(s) of a small not-for-profit professional theatre company and all that is involved in producing work for the stage from programming decisions to the curtain opening and closing and aspects of the journey in between.

Student(s) will learn in depth about the arts landscape in other communities in Ontario, their similarities and their differences.

Students will gain experience in comparative studies in graphing the differing communities and doing comparison charting between other communities and Peterborough.

Screening or Training Requirements

- There are no specific screening or training requirements.

Skills or Experience Needed

- A genuine interest in the arts;
- An ability to work independently with limited supervision;
- Previous knowledge or awareness of arts organizations within Ontario;
- Previous experience working with the public and the customer service etiquette that entails; and
- A sense of humour.

Resources Required for Project that will be Provided by Host

- Photocopying
- Office supplies
- Phone expenses for any long distance calls
- Travel expenses if necessary
- Office for meetings with contact person.