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# Loft Stage Workshops Teach Students Through Interaction

The Loft Stage hosted its second summer workshop series with a focus on learning and improving theater skills.

By Meghan Hatalla (Patch Poster) - (<https://patch.com/users/meghan-hatalla>) Updated September 2, 2011 6:49 pm ET

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Even though the official first day of school isn't until tomorrow, some Woodbury-area students opted to start a little earlier.

The Loft Stage hosted a free theater summer workshop Aug. 18-19. Ninety students in grades six and up spent two days learning about everything from musical movement to comedic timing to the technical aspects of running a theatre.

"We're working on building the program, but not exclusively for ," said coordinator Amanda Hestwood, who also serves as theater coordinator, musical director, and Drama Club adviser. "Part of The Loft pact mission is education with community outreach, so it was open to kids from all districts that will never go through our program."

Attendance tripled from last year, which was the first time the summer workshops had been held.

Due to the larger numbers, some accommodations had to be made, like breaking students up into groups and holding more sessions. However, the sessions are structured so participants can also learn from each other with older kids taking mentoring roles to younger kids.

“It’s a wonderful experience for middle-schoolers to get involved in theater at a young age, to get them excited about the different aspects of theater,” Hestwood said.

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The feeling of excitement is mutual from those who led the workshops as well, according to Loft Stage Technical Director Jimmy Stocco III. Stocco led a workshop titled “Techie Heaven,” which introduced students to the backstage elements of a successful performance.

“I was excited to return this year because I love introducing students to our space and excitement they get at seeing what we can do,” Stocco said. “I was answering questions left and right, and they were soaking it up.”

Stocco noted that students seemed most excited to see the parts of the theater that an audience misses, like the catwalk system and the orchestra pit.

“I hope some of them developed an interest in being a techie,” Stocco said. “I’m always losing my most talented techies to graduation, so I’m always on the lookout for those that show an interest!”


In addition to the practical learning objectives of each workshop, Hestwood believes that the exchange of ideas between students is just as valuable.

Hestwood says she absolutely plans on returning next year, proving that even in this age of government shutdowns, budget cuts, and general economic disarray, the Loft Stage at East Ridge High School has only one response: on with the show.


What did you think?

*Originally published August 25, 2011. This post is contributed by a community member. The views expressed in this post are the author's. Registered users are welcome to post on Patch (https://my.patch.com).*


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