



**“One of the most important
artist-in-residence
programs in schools today.”**

**Bob Lister, former Superintendent of Schools and
current Assistant Mayor, Portsmouth, NH**

As experienced educators, it is our belief that empathy and respect are among the most important elements of human development. We also recognize that due to our already overloaded curriculum standards, dealing with serious behavioral and social issues such as bullying and victimization can be daunting. That’s where we can help. STICKS AND STONES takes a creative, performance-based approach to addressing this important issue. By engaging participants in fun, meaningful, and self-reflective activities, STICKS AND STONES aims to outfit our young people with tools and strategies to productively interact with individuals who demonstrate bullying behaviors while offering bullies compelling reasons to change their own behavior. Moreover, STICKS AND STONES makes a strong case for the idea that KINDNESS and ACCEPTANCE are immensely more powerful and rewarding than the status or satisfaction one can acquire from intentionally intimidating, hurting or isolating others. No longer can we accept bullying or unkindness as a rite of passage or subscribe to the notion that no matter what we do, “kids will be kids”. Unkindness must stop.

Bullying is not just a social problem. It can also be an academic problem for victims. One of the monumental barriers to student learning is distraction, and a big distraction for many young people is not feeling safe at school. In fact, 90% of victims admit that they suffer negative side effects. Thus, STICKS AND STONES is as much about learning as it is about social efficacy.



**With over 40 years combined experience
teaching grades K - 8 Jeff Erwin and
Skip Brunette are masters of the craft**

All workshops and activities are chosen and then modified based on age-appropriateness and may include song writing, singing, drumming, painting, writing, role-playing, silhouette illusions, movement and dance. Audio & visual technologies are used to assist in the learning process and to enhance the culminating presentation. Through thoughtful facilitation by the artists, participants will better understand the *significance* of KINDNESS—not just as an admirable trait but also as a force to be reckoned with—and begin to integrate it more and more into their daily lives. Participants will engage in activities that offer strategies for diffusing a bully and learn techniques for avoiding a bully all together. Students will also learn how to go about getting help. Some workshops will take place in the classroom while others will take place in a designated area where the instruments and A/V equipment are set up for the duration of the residency. Ideally, this designated area will be the same location as where the final performance takes place and will accommodate all students, parents and any community members who wish to attend. Multiple performances may be necessary in some larger school communities. And what a performance it will be! TLP has a reputation for producing youth performances that exceed expectations!



**The highest education is that
which does not merely give us
information but makes our life in
harmony with all existence.
- Rabindranath Tagore**



The Cold Hard...



- This year, over 13 million American kids will be bullied at school, online, on the bus, at home, through their cell phones and on the streets of their towns, making it the most common form of violence experienced by young people in this country;
- According to current statistics, one out of every four teenagers across America is bullied in their neighborhoods and schools;
- As much as 95 percent of all bullying is perpetrated by those looking to protect or increase their social status within a group;
- The average bullying episode lasts only 37 seconds, and school personnel are reported to notice or intervene in only 1 in 25 incidents;
- 57 percent of the time when a peer intervenes in a bullying situation, the bullying stops within 10 seconds;
- Many young people substitute the word 'bullying' with words like meanness, drama, teasing or just kidding;
- 90% of victims admit that they suffer negative side effects from being bullied. Among them are: Significant drop in grades, increase in anxiety, loss of friends and loss of social life;
- Around 160,000 children miss their classes every day because of different kinds of bullying;
- 43% of teens are victims of cyber bullying while 53% admit to saying something mean about another student online;
- More times than not, those kids who bully others are, or have been, bullied themselves;
- Many victims of bullying do not seek help from an adult for fear that it will be handled in a way that will only make matters worse for them the next time they encounter the bully;
- Bullying will only end when parents, teachers, administrators, school councilors and other adults in a child's life recognize that discipline, and not punishment, is the answer to holding a bully accountable. A child is going to learn from his or her mistakes and begin to accept diversity among peers only when they begin to **truly** take responsibility for their own behavior. A quick Band-Aid 'I'm sorry' from a bully or taking something away from them (such as their recess or TV at home) isn't going to achieve that goal. Often it will make things worse by causing resentment that will only lead to more bullying episodes;
- All misbehavior can be traced back to a deficiency in belonging or significance (at home or school);
- Only by addressing the underlying cause can we expect to correct the misbehavior permanently.

Program



The Artists aim to:

1. Create a community of empathy and respect;
2. Educate the school community about the various types of bullying and the players involved in a bullying episode;
3. Empower victims by giving them tools and strategies with which to avoid and/or defuse a bully;
4. Distinguish the difference between conflict and bullying and to teach conflict resolution skills;
5. Challenge bystanders to become UPSTANDERS by recognizing the effectiveness of POWER IN NUMBERS and by standing up for a victim, thereby shifting the power away from the bully and to the majority;
6. Empower young people to take a stand for what is right;
7. Encourage and model random acts of kindness;
8. Put to rest the notion that 'kids will be kids'; and that 'sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me'; that is a myth—just like physical harm, words hurt;
9. Address how to guide bullies through a process of self-reflection as a means to avoid future bullying episodes;
10. Persuade both offenders and non-offenders alike that KINDNESS and ACCEPTANCE are much more satisfying and lucrative initiatives in the long run than being mean and void of empathy;
11. Utilize the arts and the stage as a means of expressing what students have learned.





Administrators

"The principles of the Sticks And Stones program and the caliber of its facilitators create an ideal match that supports the team approach to teaching behavioral expectations throughout the school."

*Barbara Knapp, former Barnard School Principal
South Hampton, NH*

Teachers

"For children to progress academically they need to feel safe and confident. Sticks And Stones is a program designed to reset our culture and create an environment that will give young people the confidence and self-esteem they need to experience life to the fullest!"

*John Reynolds, 7th grade science teacher
Rupert A. Nock Middle School Newburyport, MA*



Parents

"This is an amazing program. Our schools and communities need people like you to help with this HUGE and growing problem in our society. Thank you!"

Sandy Edwards



One of the things that makes STICKS AND STONES unique among other artist-in-residence programs is our knowledge of child development, appropriate use of language and flawless classroom management skills. We are educators first and artists second. TLP has worked in hundreds of schools throughout New England and we often hear from educators in those schools that many of the artists who enter their school system are masters of their craft but don't necessarily know how to manage or engage kids effectively. To the contrary, we 'get' kids and know how to move them to action. We wholeheartedly believe that we can make a difference in your school community.

We are here to help!

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to hearing from you!

www.TrashcanLidProductions.com

Kindly yours,

Jeff & Skip



Pricing

One-week residency: \$3,900

Each additional day: \$500

One full additional week (5 days): \$2,100

Includes:

- Facilitation by two teaching artists (thus doubling the amount of workshop time) with impeccable classroom management skills and over 40 years combined experience working with grades K - 8 in a variety of settings;
- Extraordinary hand-made instruments and sound effect devices constructed from found objects;
- Professional promotional materials to help promote the final performance;
- A state-of-the-art audio/visual system custom designed especially for STICKS AND STONES;
- A screening of the critically-acclaimed documentary, *BULLY* (when appropriate PG-13), on the evening of the first day of the residency for the entire community...Jeff and Skip will lead a discussion at the end of the film;
- An amazing final performance;
- And much more!

Philosophy of Arts in Education

Self-Discovery

We believe there are kernels of creativity within everyone and that our responsibility as artists is to expose youth to experiences that may help them recognize those kernels and nurture them to grow. One of the saddest things in life is for one's artistry, one's talent as it were, to remain silent. Years ago, a second-grade student, Elise, said in her thank you letter to me: "It was very fun when we went on stage. It told me that I had a gift. It opened my heart. It felt like I discovered a gift of my own." This is not a likely sentiment to come from the pen of a seven-year-old girl, but come it did. And it confirms the notion that our job as artists is to draw out of young people what they may not have known existed within themselves in the first place. Maybe one of those kernels will grow into a desire to perform again in some capacity before an audience, or to record music, or write poetry, or originate new forms of experimental theater. And maybe, just maybe, one will burst from its shell with such vivacity that to contain it would be unthinkable.

Discover vs. Skill

Further, we think that helping youth recognize their artistic interests and talents is more important, at least initially, than artistic skill development. It is, in our view, a greater success for, let's say, a potter to stimulate a child's interest in working with his or her hands than it is for the child to create the perfect pot without generalizing beyond this one creation. We think one way to help kids see and understand what the experience means to them is to "process the process" with them. In other words, we as artists can talk to kids about the process they went through to create their art and through this discussion help them generalize the experience and make connections to other parts of their creative lives. For some, it may take time for the processing to make sense or for them to follow through with any conclusions they might have drawn. But the odds of them doing so are greater if they are given a chance to talk about their artistic experiences.

Artistic Consumption

We believe there are different levels of artistic consumption too. At the end of a TLP residency, some youth may have simply come to appreciate our particular art forms more. Maybe they will be more likely to attend the theater in months or years to come. Others may be stimulated by the historical context of the art. Still others may want to master it. Each of these cases, in our view, is a success, for it is unrealistic to believe that every student will consume the art form entirely.

Levels of Group Achievement

TLP workshops are largely performance art based, so it follows that we hope for participants to take away a new appreciation for this discipline. One of our strengths as artists and educators is that we are able to create an atmosphere where kids feel safe and free to take the kinds of risks necessary to learn new things about themselves. When kids feel safe it is possible to call them, as an individual or as a group, to a higher standard of achievement as long as they are given the tools, leadership, inspiration and time to excel. It IS the process that is most important; however, if the quality of the product matches the depth of process, the outcome becomes all the more meaningful for everyone involved, including the audience.

Our Two Convictions

In conclusion, we will say that there are two axioms that we rely upon as an artist when working with youth: (1) that kids are capable of accomplishing a lot more artistically than many adults give them credit for; and (2) that when kids learn to appreciate and do art, this leads to a better understanding and appreciation of their world and the life they lead in it.

Bill Ivey, former chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, reminds us, *“I think the very best thing we can do for young people is to engage them in art in school at an early age. The doing of art produces not only great players and painters, it produces great listeners and lookers.”* (National Public Radio, 1998)

We aim to do just that.

Jeff & Skip

