



Re- Evaluation for Investing in Children membership:

Willington Youth Theatre

Willington Youth Theatre is based in Sunnybrow Community Chapel in Willington County Durham, catering for young people aged 7 years and over, I visited the project In December 06.

I met with some of the young people who attend the project to hear their views and opinions on the running of the theatre.

The young people explained that they have a successful youth committee which was a result of some young people showing an interest in representing their views at the senior management committee.

Christina Jackson (member of staff) stated that children under the age of 8 years have shown a great interest in the project, the youth theatre doesn't want to exclude individuals that are interested within the project, Christina stated that she will be taking this issue to the youth committee to hear what the young people think, gathering their views on how to go about this.

Dialogue and Change.

Through my conversations and observations with the young people it is clear that they have good friendly relationships with staff, opportunities to express their views and opinions, for example one young person told me she was a junior technician for productions –

“ I do hair and make-up, I can chose colours and styles which I think look really good, it's good making my own decisions!”

The young people went on to talk about flexibility within their scripts –

“ We can change the lines if we aren't happy or we can't pronounce the words, Christiana will let us swap characters if we need to”

The young people talked very highly of the staff running the project, stating –

“ All the staff are very friendly, we have fun! Christina let's us do our homework which is really good, we can ask her for help!”

“ Our youth committee is really good as we talk about things that we would like to see happen, we get money to go on trips, seeing other productions.”

The young people explained about the equipment such as lighting and sound stating they enjoy being able to make decisions for themselves, such as choosing various positions of lighting to suit their individual needs.

There are many opportunities for young people to get involved in all aspects of the project, such as developing their dancing, acting, and singing skills with full support from the staff within the project.

Recommendations from the young people.

The young people explained that they would like to have more boys within the project as they only have one male at the moment I asked them how they would like to do this, they came up with the idea of designing a poster to display around schools within their local area, this may attract more young people, not only more males but more females as well.

“ We would like more dancing performances”

“ I think we should have more of us on the committee!”

The young people explained towards the end of the sessions they are put into groups – A, B and C, these particular groups are given specific tasks to do such as tidying up a certain area, the young people are split up from their friends in order to “ get things done”. The young people expressed –

“ I would like to be with my friends”

“ We aren’t allowed to be with our friends, but I suppose if we were we wouldn’t get anything done!”

I feel staff need to take on board these recommendations given by the young people and act upon them to the best of their ability.

Willington Youth Theatre clearly enters into dialogue and promotes change to suit individual needs and preferences, therefore I would recommend that Willington Youth Theatre are awarded Investing in Children Membership.

This report has been agreed by the young people within Willington Youth Theatre.

**Michelle Fenwick
Investing in Children
March 2007**