



Program Services

Thank you for your interest in The City University of New York's **CREATIVE ARTS TEAM (CAT)**. Founded in 1974, **CAT** has established itself as a pioneer and leader in the field of educational theatre. **CAT** uses interactive drama to work with students from Head Start to high school and offers workshops to parents, teachers, school administration, school leadership teams and corporations. Below is a listing of our current services.

Early Learning Through the Arts Program

Pre-K through 2nd grade & Head Start
Emergent Literacy · Socialization Skills

Elementary/Middle School Program

Grades 2 to 6/6 to 8
Literacy · Violence Prevention · Anti-Bullying

High School Program

Grades 9 to 12
Anti-Harassment · Health & Wellness · Literacy · College Readiness · Leadership Development

Shakespeare in the Classroom

Grades 2 to 12
NYC Student Shakespeare Festival
In class development of Literacy and Theatre skills via Shakespeare text

Youth Theatre

Youth Theatre: Grades 9 to 12 · Junior Youth Theatre: Grades 6 to 8
Year-long program developing original ensemble work

Adult Services Program

Conflict Management · Parenting Skills · Discipline · Supporting Academic Success
College Retention · Community Building · Workplace Readiness

Professional Development

On-site, interactive drama training for schools, social service agencies
and corporations in the Tri-State area

Paul A. Kaplan Center ~ M.A. in Applied Theatre

Graduate Courses and M.A. for Teachers, Teaching Artists and Youth Development Professionals

"CAT... departs from traditional approaches that focus heavily on merely identifying risk factors and at-risk youngsters, to a more meaningful focus on enhancing and creating positive environmental contexts and strategies -- in youth, their families, peer groups, schools and communities -- that, in turn, reinforce positive attitudes and behaviors."
- *Metis Associates Evaluator*

**CAT is an approved DOE vendor under multiple requirements contracts.
For more information, contact CAT Development Director, Jane Tennen,
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Early Learning Through the Arts

The Creative Arts Team's New York City Wolf Trap Program: Early Learning Through the Arts, actively involves pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade students and their teachers in interactive drama activities designed to explore human, social and curricular issues. Within the context of various story-lines, CAT's professional actor/teachers, together with the children, play a variety of characters and resolve the dilemmas in the story. Choices the children make often determine the story's outcome, offering young people the opportunity to examine consequences of their actions in a fictional context. Through their contributions, children also come to learn that they have the ability to positively affect themselves and those around them.

The **Early Learning Through the Arts Program** offers a unique focus on literacy and professional development. **CAT** actor/teachers collaborate with classroom teachers in order to best meet the developmental needs of each class and age level. The content of each session is carefully designed to build such skills as observation, sequencing, recognition of symbols, and visual imagery. Each session also integrates listening and speaking skills. The interactive style encourages group problem-solving, cooperation and concentration skills. Providing children with the foundation for literacy in later grades.



Residency information:

- Grades Pre-K through First
- 5, 10, 22-day residencies for three classes, each session lasting up to 1 hour or length of class period

Issues to be explored in the ELTA program

- Identification of feelings
- Communication
- Respect for self and others
- Understanding human differences and similarities
- Conflict resolution
- Bullying

Role of participating teachers

- Participate from the beginning until the end of the presentation
- Completion of an evaluation form at the end of each session

"Once in a great while, magic happens in a classroom. It was my experience that your gifted and talented messengers of drama-in-education never failed to create such magic. Quiet, shy students opened up before our eyes. Sensitive, creative students demonstrated their gifts and talents. The experience of teamwork in solving our problems had a wondrous effect on our class' cohesiveness."

- Elementary School, Brooklyn



Elementary School Program

The **Creative Arts Team's** Elementary School Program provides an exciting way to make learning fun and bring important curricular themes and issues alive in the classroom. Actively involving students in fictional dramatic situations, the program is designed to motivate critical thinking, socialization, decision-making, and the development of imagination and literacy skills.

Working alongside **CAT's** professionally trained actor/teachers, and their own classroom teacher, students are encouraged to enter imagined worlds in which they can safely explore challenging themes and issues which are relevant to their everyday lives. Special classroom follow-up activities are provided to encourage the development of reading, writing, and discussion skills.

CAT's newest interactive Elementary Program offers students the necessary tools to help overcome daily pressures and develop coping skills. The program's content stimulates and improves the students growth on a social and academic level, while providing them with an exciting story line that keeps them involved and engaged throughout the entire residency.



Residency Information:

- Grades 2-6
- 10-day residencies for three classes, each session lasting up to 1 hour or length of class period

Issues to be explored in the Elementary program

- Violence prevention
- Technology
- Communication
- Self-esteem

Role of participating teachers

- Present from the beginning until the end of the presentation
- Completion of an evaluation form at the end of each session

After school residencies are also available.

"I have seen first hand how CAT's drama-in-education workshops can inspire students, particularly those who have been unsuccessful with more traditional approaches to learning. CAT's workshops help students develop a strong sense of identity and are an exceptional introduction to the arts. It is just this kind of positive experience that can have a lifelong impact on students' attitude toward school and themselves."

**- Elementary School Teacher,
Queens**



Junior High School Program

Literacy & Violence Prevention Residencies

The Junior High School Program at **CAT** offers in-class participatory drama workshops to enhance students' communication and critical thinking skills. Through drama strategies such as role play students assume the characters in the drama in order to confront the issues in the story. Guided by **CAT's** professionally trained actor/teachers, students will also use improvisational techniques and problem solving skills to explore options and make critical choices throughout the session. Ultimately, it is the students who direct the events of the workshop.

CAT's interactive workshops allow students to examine relevant social issues through drama. The scenes are carefully designed to enhance students' communication and decision-making skills. Furthermore, they support literacy, allowing **CAT** to impact student achievement of performance standards in language arts. This is achieved by emphasizing several components of literacy, such as speaking, listening, comprehension and analysis.

Residency Information:

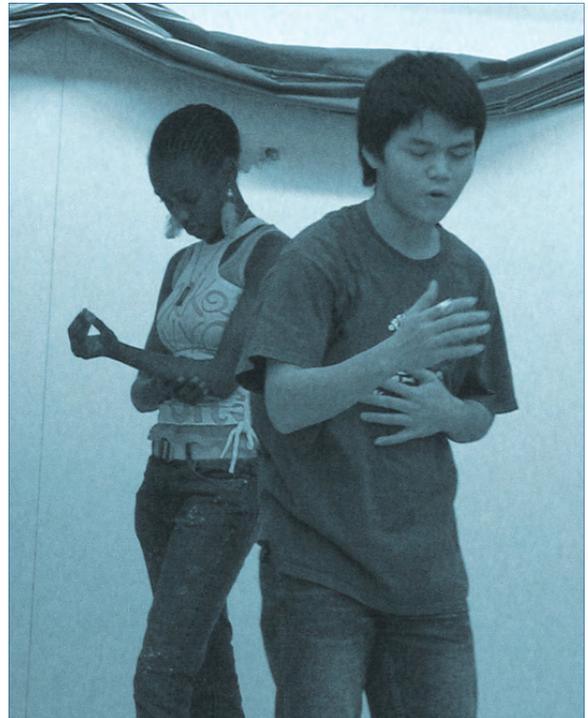
- Grades 6-8
- 5-day residencies for three classes, each session lasting up to 1 hour or length of class period

Issues to be explored in the Junior High School program

- Peer/family pressure
- Self esteem
- Violence prevention
- Substance abuse
- Literacy skills

Role of participating teachers

- Present from the beginning until the end of the Presentation/Program
- Completion of an evaluation form



"One day my friends and I were going to jump a girl. But your program showed me that fighting isn't the only way to solve a problem. I told my friends to leave the girl alone, that fighting wasn't the way to deal with her. Now, whenever we see that girl, we try our best to keep away from her. I think differently about violence. Thanks very much and keep it going strong."

- Junior High School Student, Bronx



High School Program

Literacy, Health and Wellness & Violence Prevention Residencies

The Creative Arts Team's High School Program specifically addresses the difficulties of adolescent years and, through the techniques of educational drama, helps students to navigate developmental pitfalls. For some students, CAT's workshops are the first and only place they can explore their questions and concerns. Working alongside CAT's professionally trained Actor/Teachers, students explore conflict situations presented in dramatic vignettes and stylized images.

Our youth today must cope with the many manifestations and effects of peer pressure and or/family pressure. The erosion and enhancement of self-esteem leads to both negative and positive attitudes and life choices. CAT's program offers a safe and supportive environment for the students to explore these issues.

Using improvisational techniques and role-play, students are asked to make their own choices to confront real-life sorrows, problems, and joys. Influences such as media, family, environment and peers are explored in depth throughout the workshops. The result is a one-of-a-kind educational experience that students respond to with enthusiasm and creativity.



Residency Information:

- Grades 9-12
- 4- or 5-day residencies for three classes, each session lasting up to 1 hour or length of class period

Issues to be explored in the High School program

- Health & wellness
- Violence prevention
- Literacy skills
- Prejudice and racism
- Self esteem
- Peer/family pressure
- Substance abuse
- HIV Infections/AIDS
- Family conflict
- Anger management

Role of participating teachers

- Present from the beginning until the end of each session
- Completion of an evaluation form

"Adolescence is often the most difficult and confusing time for young people to grow personally while continuing to meet academic challenges. Questions of self-identity, peer acceptance, and the transition from child into adult arise. In addition, the daily stressful feelings of anger, fear, depression, and low self-esteem can erupt into violence, racism, or risky sexual behavior. This places not only the adolescents themselves at-risk, but also those around them."

- High School Principal, Brooklyn



Parent & Adult Services

The **Creative Arts Team's** Parent Program uses interactive drama workshops to provide parents the opportunity to examine situations that jeopardize family relationships. Through educational drama activities, such as role-play and improvisation, participants learn how economic, work-related and personal pressures affect the stability of the family.

CAT's professional actor/teachers involve participants in carefully designed dramas exploring common issues in child rearing and household management. The program offers a unique opportunity for parents to understand the source of family conflicts, then to dramatize proactive solutions with their peers in a safe environment. Through this program, parents develop the tools to improve and nurture relationships within their families.

Given the range of issues impacting families, workshops are tailored to meet the needs of specific populations. Parents find that every topic covered is one that they have been faced with within their role as 'parent.' The bonding of shared experiences and common frustrations results in a community network that lasts beyond the duration of the workshop series.

"Things have certainly changed in my house since I've been attending these parent workshops!"

- Parent, Bronx



Program Information:

- Participants include parents, including teen parents, grandparents, foster parents and all other guardians or family members
- Single 1 to 2 hour workshop OR Series of 5 workshops, each lasting up to 90-minutes
- Special projects are also available

Workshop themes

- Communication
- Conflict Resolution
- Discipline
- Sex, Drugs and Risky Behavior
- Juggling Work and Family
- Stress and Anger Management
- Literacy/homework help

"After only two sessions I was learning how to listen and affirm my five year old rather than constantly telling him to be quiet and sit down."

- Parent, Brooklyn

"I can honestly say that I have learned something new today."

- Grandparent, Manhattan



Staff Development

Since 1974, the **Creative Arts Team** has built an international reputation on the use of dramatic activities and strategies to enhance the education of young people of all ages. Across the diversity of school curricula, drama-in-education, as used by **CAT**, is an essential ingredient in helping students to understand themselves and the world in which they live -- and goes far beyond the age-old view of drama as confined to the creation and appreciation of plays.

Process drama, **CAT's** specialty, is not about performance, but about active participation. It involves students in fictional dramatic situations structured to motivate critical thinking, socialization and decision-making, as well as the development of imagination and language skills. Drama is a powerful tool for shifting the focus between the individual and the group; for fostering self-esteem, social consciousness and constructive action; for motivating and energizing the development of language competencies, interdisciplinary investigations of history and culture, conflict management and reduction, decision-making and problem-solving.

Above all, it is student centered, active -- and fun! Right now, countless educators are discovering -- or rediscovering -- drama's power as a catalyst for learning and are seeking new ways to incorporate drama strategies into their curricula. **CAT's** professional development workshops can provide the guidance needed to help educators acquire new skills -- or further refine their existing expertise.



Working with their peers in a safe, supportive and fun environment, participants will:

- Explore the use of drama strategies in relationship to existing curricula
- Learn and experiment with teaching techniques such as roleplay and structured improvisation
- Develop strategies to promote critical-thinking, problem solving and decision making.

"It was more hands-on than any workshop I've been to -- the theories and the practical applications presented were well balanced. This workshop encouraged me to go deeper and take more risks."

-Teacher, Bronx



Shakespeare in the Classroom

The Creative Arts Team's Shakespeare in the Classroom residency is based on the simple belief that Shakespeare is best learned in the act of performing his words. During a series of workshops, professional Shakespearean actors will lead students through activities guaranteed to spark their interest in Shakespeare's work and to provide a creative outlet to explore meaning in the language.

CAT teaching artists will design the 5-day residency around a specific play selected by the teacher. Interactive physical and verbal activities will enable students to interpret and edit text and to use their own ideas in performance. Meanwhile, students will develop literacy skills by reading unfamiliar language, speaking the language in a meaningful way, and writing short pieces of criticism and scripts with a deeper understanding of the text.

Founded in 1994, the New York City Student Shakespeare Festival is a unique opportunity that encourages students to celebrate the raw power and dazzling beauty of William Shakespeare's work. Teachers who receive CAT Shakespeare residencies may have the opportunity to participate in the Festival. It is a year-long project that features workshops designed for teachers to increase their capacity to teach Shakespeare through performance and culminates with student performances each Spring.



Program Information:

- Grades 4-12
- 5 day residency for up to three classes, each session lasting up to 1 hour or length of class period

Workshop themes

- Literacy skills
- Group building

Role of participating teachers

- Present in the classroom for each workshop, in its entirety
- Completion of an evaluation form at the end of each residency

"The thing that surprised me was that everybody had to show lots of emotion to what they're saying. You have to understand Shakespeare's language to be able to perform it."

-4th grader, PS 123K



Youth Theatre Program

Theatre by Young People

The **CAT** Youth Theatre companies meet weekly to explore creativity and build skills. Members are divided into two age groups, junior high school and high school. Each company consists of members from New York's five boroughs. Students participate free of charge and there is no audition for admission. Students are admitted on a first-come first-served basis and there is usually a waiting list. New members are admitted each semester. Sessions include theatre games and exercises, improvisation, scene development and rehearsals, critical reflection and discussion. Under the dynamic facilitation of **CAT** staff, Youth Theatre companies create and perform original shows each year. This empowering experience broadens students' horizons, builds self-esteem, and creates community. The Youth Theatre began in the summer of 1995 as a result of integrating NYC high school students into a graduate course developed for New York University by Helen White, **CAT** Youth Theatre Director and Chris Vine, **CAT's** Artistic and Educational Director.

The achievements of this collaboration were acknowledged by the NYU community with the presentation of a LINKS AWARD from the President's Office in 1996. Courses in Youth Theatre that offer opportunities to work with Youth Theatre members are now offered through the City University of New York (CUNY). In past years the Youth Theatre has created many original shows devised or written by the company, held a 12 hour sponsored improvisation marathon, and performed at a wide variety of conferences, festivals, and events. The **CAT** Youth Theatre has been invited to perform in Chicago, London and the UN. Past projects include collaborations with young people from the Czech Republic, Taiwan, Germany, and England. In June 2000, Helen White was presented with the YOUTH THEATRE DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR AWARD from the American Alliance for Theatre and Education.



"The Youth Theatre has become not only an extra-curricular activity for me, but also a family."

- Youth Theatre Member

"It was some of the best theatre I have seen in a long time."

- Audience Member at Youth Theatre show