

THE READERS' THEATRE ADOPTS ANTI-BULLYING CAUSE: WITH LOCAL AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Readers' Theatre of Ithaca is very excited to announce that Acting Out New York and Ithaca's Suicide Prevention & Crisis Service have joined the not-for-profit theater company, aligning with PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center to support the fight against bullying. Together, all three local organizations will create an annual anti-bullying video interviewing youth and educators in the Tompkins County area. The three-to-five minute video will air on all the organizations' websites, in addition to PACER's.

Since bullying has become an epidemic in the United States, The Readers' Theatre decided, after viewing 30 plus anti-bullying websites, to choose this cause along with PACER as the cause they would promote and support. This initiative comes at the right time since October is National Bullying Prevention Month.

Bullying is a very serious issue that plagues far too many children, teenagers, and adults all over the world. Theater and film are affective ways of spreading awareness about timely social issues like bullying. Given the vast information about bullying that PACER has collected, the three local organizations hope to spread the word about what this community can do about bullying behavior.

At every Readers' Theatre performance reading, The Readers' Theatre will bring attention to this cause by providing educational anti-bullying flyers from PACER. Additionally, The Readers' Theatre's website will dedicate a page of information about bullying. It will include: the definition of bullying behavior; types of bullying; the differentiation between bullying and harassment; anti-bullying laws and policies (state by state); and the three steps parents can take if their child is being targeted by bullying at school.

"Not only are we seeing the subject of bullying a focus in the news on a daily basis, but many of today's plays address the subject of bullying. I'm glad The Readers' Theatre's Artistic Board agrees with me in aligning ourselves with this important message," said Anne Marie Cummings, Founder and Artistic Director of The Readers' Theatre. "Because bullying is such a difficult issue to tackle, characters in plays give audiences the opportunity to examine bullying behavior without pointing the finger at any one particular person in the community."

Julie Hertzog, Director of PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center, said, "It's wonderful when organizations use theater, music and art, as they are powerful mediums to creatively educate students about their role in preventing bullying."

Said Lee-Ellen Marvin, Executive Director of Ithaca's Suicide Prevention and Crisis Service: "In our work, we have some very difficult messages, and we use the arts whenever we can. I have a great appreciation for The Readers' Theatre's ability to bring important issues into an accessible format; one that allows us to think deeply and talk about what's going on in our communities. Even though very few youth that are bullied consider suicide, we always support young people seeking help when they're struggling with bullying."

"At Acting Out New York, we try to address issues our students are dealing with through creative expression, improvisation and film-making," said Darcy Martin Rose, Director of Acting Out New York. "All too often, bullying plays a central role in our productions because it is such a universal experience for our youth. We believe that the performing arts plays an important role in shining a light on the struggles of not only the victims but the perpetrators of bullying as well. Acting Out is very excited to team up with The Readers' Theatre of Ithaca and Ithaca's Suicide Prevention and Crisis Service in an effort to do so."

On The Readers' Theatre's website is PACER's anti-bullying petition. Please sign the digital petition and receive information about bullying and what can be done to prevent it. There are federal laws that protect students from bullying, so there is no reason why 160,000 US children should stay home from school every day out of fear. With help from everyone including parents, children, teachers, and administrators, bullying can cease to be a fear that so many children take to school with them every day.

For more information visit WWW.THEREADERSTHEATRE.COM.