



ASTHMA FREE SCHOOL ZONE

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To Whom This May Concern,

Having worked with Joanie Fritz Zosike and Lois Kagan Mingus of ACTION RACKET THEATRE, it is my great pleasure to recommend them as actors and directors.

The Asthma Free School Zone (AFSZ) is an asthma prevention program that aims to reduce illness and absenteeism in children by training school and community members to recognize environmental hazards and work for local air quality improvement - not an easy starting point for young people setting out to write their first play. Yet, over the period of several months, Joanie and Lois guided a group of AFSZ interns from giggling uncertainty to focused confidence. Under their direction, the teenage participants, part of a youth leadership program funded by the Citizens of NYC, Young Citizens Center, created a highly successful original play that taught about the experience of being asthmatic, the prevalence of asthma triggers, and the role that citizens can take in cleaning up the air.

Working with high school seniors in their last semester of school can be an exercise in patience and flexibility. Joanie and Lois displayed both, working around placement exams, graduation requirements, and class picnics with clarity and grace. They were always dependable, doing what was expected -- and, when required, more. With utmost care and respect, Joanie and Lois consistently made themselves available to the young people, listening to them, incorporating their ideas, enabling them to theatrically express those ideas on stage, and nurturing the young actors' curiosity and energies. They inspired the young playwrights to continue researching the play's topic -- as well as initiating in them an enthusiastic interest in the theatre!

The level of commitment and focused devotion to the project on the part of this team of theatre professionals was extremely impressive. I look forward to working with them again.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Kalin
Director
Asthma Free School Zone