

What Theater at Anderson Has Taught My Freshman...And Why Your 8th Grader Should Take it Too!

By An Accidental Theater Parent

First of all, let me be clear, my child is probably never going to be the lead in the school musical. He is bright, funny and a little bit on the reserved side. When he came home and said he wanted to take Theater his Freshmen year at Anderson I was pretty surprised. After much debating and over analyzing, he ended up in Theater Arts; and I am so THANKFUL that he did. Here is why it was a great choice for him, and why I think it is an excellent opportunity for so many incoming Freshmen:

Theater is good people. I about fell over one day at HEB when I found my son chatting with a group of Seniors in the frozen food section. On the drive home when I CASUALLY asked about the encounter, he shrugged and said that he knows them from Theater. Often when I ask him about what he did at lunch, he just says, "hung out with theater kids". Theater kids support each other and having a group of friendly faces to help you navigate the hallways of Anderson is a great thing.

Theater gives my child a much needed change of pace in his academic day. Anderson is an academically aggressive school, and I am so impressed with the level of teaching that goes on in every classroom. Theater at Anderson is a challenging and productive class. However, it is **interactive, expressive and 'out of the desk' learning**. When I ask my son how his day was, often the answer is, "Oh, it was good. I had theater today." Theater is a joyful part of his day, and I think that it helps reenergize him for his other classes and ALL THE HOMEWORK!

Theater class makes him do things he wouldn't ordinarily try. He memorizes monologues and performs them in front of his peers. He is learning to receive constructive feedback and give constructive criticism. He has learned new skills working tech, and what it means to see a project all the way through – including staying until every part of the stage is struck after a performance. Improvisation helps him with thinking on his feet in all of his classes, and he is continuing to develop the valuable skill of being able to work with a team and get a project done.

Bobbie Malone and Katie Wilson. They are the stars of the Theater program at Anderson. While he isn't the most naturally gifted actor, they have conveyed to my son that he is a valuable and wanted member of the Anderson Theater Department. That is a wonderful gift of confidence for a kid who looks more like a 7th grader than a high school freshmen!

There is a reason why students are required to take a year of Fine Arts. The Arts stretch you in ways that Geometry and Geography never will. They require you to use your brain and interact in way that may be out of your comfort zone. My child's experience in Theater at Anderson has been a joyful and positive **learning** experience that has added balance to his overall education. While I was watching this fall's production of Night of the Living Dead, I was delighted to realize that the little zombie who was upfront and center during the climatic dance scene was my kid! He never said a word, but I could tell he was pretty pleased with his performance!

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