

The BIG Picture

"Littles" Act Out at BBBS of NYC



"I learn how to express myself and open up to people I don't know," explains 13-year-old Alexa from Brooklyn when describing what she gets out of Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City's exciting new acting program. Two Saturdays per month, 20 Littles from various BBBS of NYC programs travel to BBBS of NYC's offices on East 30th Street to participate in an incredible free acting class that teaches them not only acting skills, but life skills. Taught by Mary Rose Synek, a professional actor and drama teacher, the class is part of a program supported by the Broadway Bound Fund, created by John A. Jenkins.

Jenkins formed the Broadway Bound Fund in honor of his close friend, Michael VerMeulen, a fellow journalist, editor and patron of the arts who recently passed away. Through the creation of the Broadway Bound Fund, John hopes to share Michael's love of creativity and expression with youngsters. The program provides a learning environment that fosters self-confidence, discipline, and strengthens the participating youths' collaborative abilities both in and out of the classroom.



"I feel free while I am here," comments 14-year old Kevin from Queens, adding "I learned how to show my emotions and really be able to act them out." The program began this past October, and in addition to bi-monthly classes, the Littles have enjoyed trips to see professional productions, including the hits "The Fantasticks" and "Gypsy." The class will culminate in a performance on Saturday, June 7 at 2:00 pm, which will be staged at the Royal Theater at the Producer's Club in Manhattan. "This has been one of the most fulfilling teaching experiences I've ever had. It's been fun to lead these students on a journey that awakens their own desires and sensibilities," notes Synek.

Mary Rose Synek has a Master of Fine Arts in Theater and has taught and performed in NYC for 20 years. Her last production was a collaboration with Dana Zeller-Alexis at the 78th Street Theater Lab, On the Line.

Jenkins currently serves as the Senior Vice President & Publisher of CQ Press in Washington. For more information about the Broadway Bound Fund, which supports BBBS of NYC youth, go to: broadwayboundfund.org