

*Ellsworth Avenue School
53 Ellsworth Avenue
Danbury, CT 06810
203-797-4740*

Dr. Anna Rocco, Principal
Carmen Marrero, Secretary

April 24, 2014

Dear Leslie,

Thank you for coming to Danbury on April 1st! *The Myth of Persephone* was a sensational performance for the 420 students and 50 staff members at Ellsworth Avenue School. Not only were students and staff extremely impressed with the engaging workshops, but the actual end-of-the-day performance awestruck us in ways we could not have imagined. Every scene unfolded in such a professional way! To think that every student felt an integral part of this production! In our eyes, the end result was as dynamic as a mini-Broadway show whereby our stage transformed into an amazing array of sets, performers transformed into mythical characters with full costumes and masks that lead us into a world of magical enchantment. The musical accomplishments, as well as sound effects were always on cue with Dale's masterful talents adding another layer of excellence to the workshops and to the show. Lindsay's beautifully performed solos reflected her talent as an artist. Leslie, under your artistic direction and talent as a performer, Lindsay, Johnny Julius, and Matt kept the audience fully engaged; even our youngest five year olds were mesmerized with the ongoing changing of

scenes, characters, conflicts, and costumes. All the while your troupe kept the audience on the edge of our seats, making it easy to follow the story plot and questioning, "Will Persephone be saved from the darkness of Hades and Lord Pluto?"

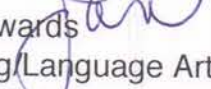
With all that said in regard to your troupe's level of professional expertise and excellence, let us not forget the children of Ellsworth Avenue School in Danbury, who learned their parts, thanks to the enthusiastic and interactive teaching methods used in the workshops. Ellsworth is an inner-city school with 222 ELL students and approximately 80% of the children have a second language, with Spanish being their first language and the one spoken at home. Some non-English-speaking students in attendance had only been in this country a week! Did this hinder them from participation in the workshops or show? Absolutely not. Did the students with special needs engage to their fullest capability or even beyond our expectations? Absolutely! One special educator noted that only one of her young students was beginning to lose his focus as he sat on the gym floor for over an hour amidst the entire school population. The work you do is so vital, and it is truly an experience that meets all levels and backgrounds of our academically diverse student population. The State of CT reports our school as a failing school. However, I am extremely proud of our students and teachers as they proved themselves as active participants, skilled listeners, learners of new knowledge (Greek history and common phrases) as well as the myth itself. Most of our students have not had experience in reading or comprehending a myth of this complexity.

It is the goal of our principal, Dr. Anna Rocco and all of our devoted teaching staff to make experiences for our students that will become memorable moments in their

lives. It is evident that this very special day has left an impression in the minds of all of us at EAS. Over the course of a week, as I listened into the student conversations, the student-teacher class meetings, the talk in the cafeteria and in bus lines or parent pick-up, I heard the level of enthusiasm in the school. Additionally, it is reflected in the students' writing, as well as the interactive writing on large chart paper by our youngest students. The message is clear. I hope you can feel the effects of your time with us, as you read the heartfelt letters. I only wish you could have been in school as the certificates of participation, signed by each cast member, was distributed and held dear by the students as they deciphered the signatures and cherished this small artifact!

Thank you for loving what you do, and for working so hard all day long to give the Ellsworth students the joy of a performance experience.

Sincerely,


Jan Edwards
Reading/Language Arts Specialist
Ellsworth Avenue School