

STISSING CENTER

for Arts & Culture

August 18, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to recommend and commend **Grumbling Gryphons Traveling Children's Theater** for their outstanding work bringing imaginative, engaging, and culturally rich performances to our community at the Stissing Center in Pine Plains, New York.

Our mission at the Stissing Center is to provide meaningful arts and cultural experiences for audiences -- including children and families -- in Pine Plains and the surrounding region. Grumbling Gryphons has been a wonderful partner in that work, delivering theater that is not only entertaining but also educational, creative, and deeply respectful of the cultural traditions they share.

Most recently, they presented *Trickster Coyote Shares the Fire: A Plains Indian Story*, a production that captivated our audience from beginning to end. The performance was imaginative, lively, and full of heart. The costumes, masks, and scenery—created by artist Ellen Moon—were colorful, beautifully detailed, and reflected authenticity and respect for Native American art, design, and culture.

The three principal performers—Leslie Elias (storyteller and Native American flutist), Daniel Saed (Trickster Coyote), and Natalie Resto (the greedy Fire Being)—worked seamlessly together, creating a vibrant performance that invited the audience into the story. What made the experience especially meaningful was the pre-performance workshop led by Director Leslie Elias, in which children and adults learned songs, chants, and even rehearsed dramatic roles. Participants became part of the production itself, taking on characters such as the Mountain Spirit, the Coyote Cub, and the Fire Beings. This interactivity created a sense of joy, connection, and empowerment for all involved.

This is the second time we have presented Grumbling Gryphons at Stissing Center, and both experiences have been highly engaging, memorable, and impactful for family audiences. We are grateful for their artistry and look forward to welcoming them back in the future.

Sincerely,
Patrick Trettenero
Executive Director

Stissing Center for Arts & Culture