

Theater Arts - Anna Andersen

1. How did you initially get involved with the PAFAC as Artistic Director?

A friend (Sarah Tucker) was showing me Webster's Woods, a few months after I moved to the area. When I saw the meadow I was struck by how magical it would be as a setting for A Midsummer Night's Dream. My friend had connections with the Arts Center and she set up a meeting. There was a wonderful and surprising amount of interest to make my dream a reality, and that is exactly what happened. Several times asking the way I have floundered, overwhelmed and unable to handle the myriad details with my creative and reactionary brain. Each time, Jessica and the FAC have been there, taking care of the logistics and creating a perfect environment for the production of Shakespeare's plays. With their support, I was able to fulfill the role of Artistic Director in spite of my own limitations, and the quality of the plays continued to improve. The Shakespeare festival was making a name for itself.

2. What impact have you seen the Arts Center have in supporting the development of theater arts in our community through Shakespeare in the Woods?

Part of the reputation that Shakespeare in the Woods has gained is for the training and experience it provides actors in the community. These plays are more demanding than the average community theater production, for everyone involved. The Fine Arts Center has provided a unique and professional atmosphere in which actors are challenged to rise above their typical level of effort. And their success led to greater achievement in their other endeavors. I've had several local directors comment on their appreciation for the skills we have taught, and how those skills translate into better work on every theatrical level. The teenagers especially have gained phenomenal experience that tends to set them apart from their peers.

3. What is your vision for theater arts at the PAFAC in the future?

As our community grows, we have an unprecedented opportunity to build on something that is both unique and beautiful. I envision our plays branching out beyond the summer months and even beyond straight Shakespeare, potentially building a venue that is widely accessible and increasingly comfortable, and eventually bringing in artists from afar to contribute to the magic that we create.