



FY16 AFT EDUCATION IMPACT REPORT



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AD HOC [HOME]

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About Face Theatre: Education

About Face Theatre creates exceptional, innovative, and adventurous theatre and educational programming that advances the national dialogue on sexual and gender identity, and challenges and entertains audiences in Chicago and beyond.



To further AFT's mission and advance dialogues regarding sexual and gender identities, About Face Theatre's Education Department offers four main programs: **Outreach, Interaction, Youth Task Force & About Face Youth Theatre.**

ABOUT FACE YOUTH THEATRE



"I have felt lost as to how I can be both an activist and artist, but am now more confident than ever regarding that. I feel and I know I have [an AFYT] family to support me through everything. I feel more confident in my theatre skills and experience and I am now better at channeling my energy into productive work."

Sandy, AFYT member, age 17



About Face Youth Theatre is an identity-affirming theatre activism program. LGBTQIA youth and their allies ages 14-23 explore and expand the boxes we use to define our intricate intersections of race, nationality, gender, and sexuality.

AFYT BY THE NUMBERS

18

Number of youth participants in 2016

18

Average age of participants

53

% of participants that identify as POC

47

% of participants that identify as transgender/gender non-conforming

47

% of participants that are current high school students

41

% of participants that are current college students

What does AFYT mean to you *as an artist/activist?*

100

% of participants agreed/strongly agreed they have a stronger sense of their own point of view as an artist and activist after working with AFYT this year, and feel they can more confidently make artistic choices that reflect this point of view and their own unique voice.

100

% of participants strongly agreed they will continue to make choices outside of AFYT that express their own artistic and activist point of view.



“AFYT has helped me find my voice and speak to hard hitting topics that happen in our community every day. I’ve been able to learn the tools to start conversations... It also allowed me to open up about myself and share my story in a way that could help others...My parents have become way more accepting and supportive of me because I got the opportunity to voice how I was feeling about the way they were treating me, so [AFYT] has honestly changed my life and my family’s life.”

-Elliott, AFYT Member, age 18

“Now I know how to prepare vocally and how to go the extra mile in my writing. I learned how to communicate, speak up more for myself, and that certain things aren't OK. I felt that addressing social issues, and issues in general, is a huge reason why I am into art. Before coming to About Face I walked on eggshells with my writing. Being informed on current events and being around people that felt just as furious about inequality made me more passionate with my acting.”

-Daisianee, AFYT member, age 18





“Before AFYT I felt very alone and very depressed. I didn't have a queer family or a sense of self love. I had just come out and I felt very lost. After joining AFYT I very quickly found my voice and a family. I was very quiet when I first joined and I quickly realized that it's okay to be 1,000% yourself...I've also just become a very confident person and a natural leader. I love leading and organizing and my role in [the Youth Task Force] helped me a lot. I'm a lot more comfortable in my skin now. AFYT changed my life and saved my life. I was in a tough spot when I started and they helped me. I love this company and the program. I don't know where I'd be without it.”





-Elliott, AFYT member, age 18

“The work here [at AFYT] is healing and continues to be a family and artistic home in which to heal, despite the things going on in my life. In every way, AFYT is the reason I am able to look at, and reflect on, and work though a lot of stuff while also feeling valued and supported.”

-Kyla, AFYT member, age 21



What does AFYT mean to you *as an individual?*

- 
 100% of participants agreed or strongly agreed they have improved their self management skills after working with AFYT.
- 
 80% of participants strongly agreed the self management skills they gained though AFYT will carry over into life at school, work, and home.
- 
 100% of participants agreed or strongly agreed they have developed and maintained positive and supportive relationships with their fellow ensemble members.
- 
 100% of participants strongly agreed the relationship-building skills they developed with AFYT will carry over into their relationships at school, work, and home.



AD HOC [HOME], the 2016 world premiere from AFYT, explored queer experiences of given family, chosen family, and the family members we collect and lose along the way. Through storytelling, video, and movement, the ensemble investigated the questions of who we are at our core and how families shape our identities.



Presented at the Chicago Cultural Center's **Claudia Cassidy Theater**

Number of performances: **8**

Number of audience members reached: **512**

The Press

“The cast—who set a standard for diversity in terms of race, gender, and physical type that professional stages would do well to emulate—are poised but not ‘polished’; their unaffected honesty is engaging, illuminating, and inspiring.”

-Albert Williams, *Chicago Reader*

“AD HOC [HOME] can also be universal...audiences find reflections of their own experiences of negotiating relationships within birth families throughout time or in creating chosen families of friends and loved ones”

- Scott Morgan, *Windy City Times*

"Last night About Face Theatre brought their artful voices and movement to St. John's Church. It was a moving presentation about sexual and gender identity. The five performers spoke with truth and vulnerability and did so without getting 'boxed in' by judgment and blame... I found each performer endearing. The performance was followed by enriching discussions led by members of the About Face Troupe"

*-Leslie Ritter Jenkins, Interim
Pastor, St. John's Church
of Arlington Heights*

OUTREACH



Outreach



The Education Outreach Program at About Face Theatre provides touring performances and workshops to schools as an entertaining, compelling, and necessary approach to starting dialogue about bullying, diversity, and intersecting identities.

The Show

It's For Real

25 min play & interactive discussion

IT'S FOR REAL is a collection of stories that connects issues around race, class, sexuality, age, gender, self-esteem, and family. Based on the true experiences of the performers in the show, the audience is encouraged to ask the actors about their stories and share experiences.

Our standard format includes a performance followed by a talk-back; however we do offer more in-depth break-out discussion sessions or hands-on storytelling workshops with the audience following the performance.

Outreach Numbers

34

Number of performances in FY16 (up from 32 in FY15)

13

Number of CPS performances in FY16

16

Number of schools reached in FY16

7

Number of CPS schools reached in FY16

6,240

Number of students, teachers, and community members reached in FY16

Here is a response from a Lane Tech student's parent, sent to a teacher following an AFYT Outreach performance:

Mr. Elkins--

I wanted to thank you for arranging for your LTAC Spanish class to go to [It's For Real] last week. My son, Aidan Olson, really enjoyed it, and told us all about it over dinner that night. I have found that plays can be really powerful, getting audiences to think about things in new and different ways. Thank you for giving the LTAC students a chance to experience this.

*Warm regards,
Dara Crowfoot (Aidan Olson's mom)*



INTERACTION

"[Interaction] has taught me to never let people steal my thunder, and that I'm stronger than I could ever imagine... I am proud of what I have accomplished and who I have become."

-Zachary, Steinmetz College Prep

Interaction

Interaction is AFT Education's after-school residency program. Drawing from AFYT's traditions of ensemble-devised theatre and group storytelling, Interaction is a week-long workshop series for high school aged students.

The week's sessions are spent sharing stories and building an original theatrical piece based on the participants' true experiences, similar to AFYT Outreach shows. About Face Theatre teaching artists use storytelling and devised theatre vocabularies to craft exercises specifically suited to the needs and experience levels of each group of students.



Rehearsing the final Interaction performance at Steinmetz College Prep.

Interaction looking forward...

While the experience was a rich one for those involved, AFYT Education continues to investigate ways to strengthen and market the program.

Interaction will be overhauled for FY17. The program will be offered alongside Outreach programming, streamlining the department's offerings and making the residency more accessible to CPS teachers with limited time and resources.

YOUTH TASK FORCE



Youth Task Force

The **Youth Task Force** (YTF) is AFYT's youth leadership committee, comprised of 4 ensemble members who are committed to the group's work. YTF leads the AFYT ensemble by selecting show topics/themes, facilitating workshop activities, organizing social excursions, and curating a special event each year.

Youth Artivism Symposium

For FY16's special event, the YTF reprised last year's **Youth Artivism Symposium** (YAS). This event brought together over 25 young and socially engaged artists of diverse mediums and backgrounds to share practices and celebrate artmaking for social justice.




Participants of YTF's Youth Artivism Symposium

Collaborations

This year, the YTF also spearheaded a number of artistic collaborations with local youth-driven arts organizations, including:

- *MCA's Teen Creative Agency (TCA)
- *Goodman Theatre's "Good Eddie"
- *Free Street Theater
- *Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health (ICAH)



“We have an affirming space and a safe space where we get to write about and explore aspects of our identities, and in the process, reach a sense of fulfillment. I’m discovering different aspects of my queer identity and embracing them.”

-Isis, AFYT member, age 19

THANK YOU!

Your ongoing support makes our critical work possible.

www.aboutfacetheatre.org

(773) 784-8565

<https://www.facebook.com/aboutfaceyouththeatre>

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“I am definitely more rooted in being a queer activist and am very passionate about the work I do with AFYT”

-Jimbo, AFYT member, age 17