

To Whom It May Concern:

I have known Michael Stoddard for the past five years. I first met him when he became the Theatre Director at Divine Savior Holy Angels High School where my daughter was a student. She was cast in a musical for which the director had recently resigned. To be honest, everyone was a little nervous about how the “new director” would be, especially since his predecessor was very hard on the kids.

To make a long story short, Michael exceeded everyone’s expectations. His enthusiasm, patience, charisma and talent started a chapter in DSHA Theatre that will be hard for anyone to match. Working with high school kids, especially girls, can be incredibly difficult. Somehow, Michael managed to both challenge and inspire the students to believe in themselves and create characters and performances that are far beyond what they thought was possible. He chose shows that required the kids to push themselves while bringing out their talents and strengths.

Michael has such a gift in working with kids – whether it’s the girls at DSHA (and other schools), the boys from neighboring schools or the grade school and middle school kids and adults who participate in the summer workshop program. He makes everyone feel special and talented and absolutely SO delighted to be part of any performance. It is also clear that his colleagues respect and enjoy working with him and he manages to also bring out the best in them as well.

In addition to her work with Michael in school musicals, our daughter has also worked with him professionally through the DSHA Community Theatre Works summer program and this has also had a profound effect on her as a young adult. He gave her the confidence to manage many aspects of a school theatre program and also deal with daily challenges, whether it’s the box office, staffing, production details or perhaps a “stage parent” or two. All of this was handled maturely and confidently – two traits I’m certain that she learned from Michael Stoddard.

As a parent, I’ve seen my kids work with many teachers – some bad, some good and a rare few that are nothing short of exceptional. Michael Stoddard is undoubtedly an exceptional theatre and teaching professional. I feel very lucky to know him personally and I feel especially blessed that my daughter was able to study under him and work alongside him. To paraphrase a line from a musical – because we knew him, we have been changed for good.

I heartily endorse Michael Stoddard for any program for which he applies. I assure you, he will succeed.

Sincerely,

Karen Waldkirch
1709 Day Court
Wauwatosa, WI 53213
(414) 774-7084
kmwaldkirch@yahoo.com

