

July, 2014

To Whom it May Concern,

I have had the privilege of being Michael Stoddard's colleague since July 2008 and have never worked with anyone as creative, well organized and fun. It's hard for me to imagine doing my job at Divine Savior Holy Angels High School without him. Nonetheless, I will try to convey to you the most unique qualities of my friend and colleague.

When Michael arrived at DSHA, the theater program was struggling, with the previous two directors having lasted one year each. He quickly turned the department into a positive place for our students to learn and to create truly professional-quality productions. As an all-girl Catholic high school, DSHA must also recruit male talent, which prior to Michael's arrival came almost exclusively from the city's all-boys Catholic high school. However, after just two years under Michael's leadership, we were attracting and continue to attract top male talent from high schools throughout the metro area.

Michael not only knows how to work hard, he also works smart. He is always prepared for rehearsals, class, and meetings. In fact, at the beginning of each production, he provides all participants with a daily/hourly rehearsal schedule that is extremely well thought out and efficient for all participants. I've never worked with another director at DSHA or any other school that comes close to his organizational skills.

During his time at DSHA, Michael has attracted an outstanding team of directors and assistants (choreography, costume, etc.). He's also used his connections and friendships from his time as a theater professional in New York to bring unique resources to DSHA. During our school's production of Legally Blonde in 2012, Michael brought in a choreographer from the Broadway production, an acquaintance of his, to teach our students four numbers over a weekend. That's the kind of once-in-a-lifetime experience students will never forget, and that raises the bar for Michael's productions to a unique level.

Above all, and the best part of Michael is, he is humble and honest. His strong professional and academic skills are not the whole picture. Behind the scenes Michael is kind, funny, and a good person. He genuinely cares about people, the well being of our students, and as the saying goes, he checks his ego at the door. A great deal of his success lies with his ability to effectively communicate in a consistently positive manner with everyone involved in a production. He leads by example, makes it fun, and inspires students and directors alike so that we all want to do our best work for him and with him.

Michael would be a tremendous asset to your program, even though all of us at DSHA, and I in particular, would miss him terribly. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Rebekah Wickert, Director of Choral Studies  
Divine Savior Holy Angels High School  
[wickertr@dsha.k12.wi.us](mailto:wickertr@dsha.k12.wi.us)