



2015-2016 Annual Report

prepared August 2016 by Karen Mockensturm, Executive Director

**Our Mission:** Fantasy Playhouse Children's Theater (FPCT) is a 501 c(3) non-profit now serving a third generation of Alabamians as a gateway to theatre arts and arts education. Since 1961, our mission has been to bring the magic of theatre and arts education to the families of the Tennessee Valley.

**Our Programming:** FPCT accomplishes its mission through these core programs: production of live children's theatre; education in theatre arts through classes and camps at the Fantasy Academy of Theater; partnerships with local schools; scout workshops; and outreach into the community to populations that may be at academic risk or otherwise denied theatre arts access due to social and/or economic factors.

**55th Production Season presented at the VBC Playhouse:** FPCT operates as a community theatre in the area of the state where professional theatre is limited to touring shows. With the corporate support of Season Sponsor Simple Helix along with funding from an Alabama State Council on the Arts and a Huntsville City Arts & Cultural grants, FPCT presented the following productions as part of our 55nd Season: *The Snow Queen* directed by Sam Marsh, October 9-11 and 16-18, 2015; *Winnie the Pooh* directed by Jessica Alexander, February 19-21 and 26-28, 2016; *The Little Mermaid* directed by Lezlie Lanza sponsored by Jerry Damson Automotive Group April 22-24 and 29-May 1, 2016 and the SEASON EXTRA *A Christmas Carol* directed by Jeff White, December 4-6 and 10-13, 2015. *The Snow Queen*, *Winnie the Pooh*, and *The Little Mermaid* featured study guides developed specifically for teachers and students attending 6 reduced-price school matinee performances. Historically, these matinees act as a first-time theater experience for many in the Tennessee Valley, providing an entry into lifelong theater attendance and support of the arts.

*The Little Mermaid*, 2016 photo credit: Jeff White



#### **Academy:**

We at FPCT believe that theatre arts education can help students become self-confident, academically successful, creative-thinking citizens who invest in their communities as adults, maybe even sparking the next generation of theater artists, leading them on career paths that they otherwise might not be exposed to: actor, teacher, set designer, costume designer, makeup artist, lighting technician, director, or playwright. Under the leadership of Education Director, Candice Cooper, a team of professional teaching artists is committed to providing high-quality theatre arts education to our students; developing their bodies, voices, minds, and imaginations, enabling them to grow as artists. Simultaneously, students master "life skills" such as active listening, creativity, self-confidence, perseverance, and concentration. The FPCT Academy experienced tremendous growth under Cooper's leadership; almost doubling registration numbers from just under 700 to 1359.

#### **Year Round Classes:**

FPCT Academy offered 12-week semesters in both Fall 2015 and Winter/Spring 2016, providing a full spectrum of theatre arts training, ranging from preschool "Bitty Broadway" creative dramatic classes to advanced performing arts

skills and technical theater, serving children ages 3-18 from the Madison County public, private and homeschool sectors. New class offerings in 2015-2016 included a Teen Acting Showcase presenting *Little Women*, a Saturday morning Musical Theatre Showcase, *The Big Bad Musical*, offered at the Academy for Academics & Arts, and production-based courses geared toward elementary aged students based on the themes of the 55th Production shows: *The Snow Queen*, *The Little Pooh Bears* (for *Winnie the Pooh*) and *Under the Sea* (for *The Little Mermaid*) in which curriculum simulated the actors' production process, including talk backs w/ the FPCT 55th Season cast &



creative teams and created scenic design elements for a condensed version of the play. The mini productions were supported by design/execution work of students in FPCT costume and/or stage make-up classes.

2016 Teen Acting Showcase, *Little Women*  
Photo credit: Jeff White

#### Holiday Camps:

In addition to week-long Fall and Spring Break Camps where students worked on different elements of theatre including acting, voice, movement, improvisation and more, Cooper launched the first ever-Veterans Day and MLK "Play in a Day" camps.

#### Summer Camps:

The most significant change in Academy programming under Candice Cooper came in the Summer of 2015, when she introduced FPCT's inaugural full day summer camp programming, complete with optional before and after care services. June 2015 welcomed just under 200 students into our classrooms at 3312 Long Avenue for weeklong theme based performance camps for ages 5-15. In July, students were invited to take part in half-day specialty camps (CSI, Improv, Stage-Make-up, etc) and/or enrolled in a two-week Musical Theatre Performance Camp.

#### After School Theater Classes in Partnership with Local Schools:

Fantasy Playhouse Children's Theater (FPCT)'s after school partnership program with local schools, ***Fantasy in the Classroom*** (FIC) focuses on developing the Actor's Tool Box (Body, Voice, Mind, Imagination) to inspire creativity and build self-confidence. During the 2015-2016 school year, FPCT partnered with 16 schools to offer 57 sessions (509 hours of instruction) to 767 students in Madison County. Students were divided into age-appropriate groups and met with professionally trained teaching artists for one hour a week to explore elements of theatre that were developmentally engaging. At the end of each 8-10 week session, students applied their learned skills in a "sharing", presented to invited family & friends. During FIC, students interpret a narrative story, develop characterization, learn and execute stage direction, use public speaking skills and learn adaptability and flexibility in a collaborative learning environment. These activities increase self-confidence, develop leadership skills and hone a goal-oriented approach to work. We exceeded the expectations of the planned 2015-2016 program, thanks in large part to the hiring of Lauren Carlton as Education and Outreach Coordinator (a 30hr per week contract). The added manpower (and Lauren's experience in developing curriculum as a teaching artist), helped us meet the growing demand for our program in local schools, as well as helped us launch a new FIC curriculum, ***Adopt-a-School***, designed for middle

school students at Central School in Madison County, which provided the opportunity for students to produce a one-act musical, *The Adventures of a Comic Book Artist*. Most importantly, FPCT entered into a partnership with Huntsville City Schools to provide unique curriculum to their arts magnet programs to satisfy the 2015 DOJ order. The FPCT Academy led Advance Musical Theatre and Shakespeare classes for 3 & 5th graders at the Academy for Academics and Arts in Spring, 2016.

#### Outreach:

Because FPCT is committed to creating arts access to all, regardless of socio-economic factors, we are fully devoted to outreach in our community.

**Invited Dress Rehearsals:** Each 55th Season production's final dress rehearsal offered free attendance to guests of local community organizations catering to the underserved or special needs populations in our community. During 2015-2016, these audiences were made up of clients of Girls, Inc.; Boys & Girls Clubs of North Alabama; Lincoln Ministries; Head Start; Kiwanis organizations' K-Club; 305 8th Street, Rotary Club mentor program members, Second Mile Development, and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Parent Association of Madison County.

**Ridgecrest Elementary:** FPCT received grant funding from the Jane K. Lowe Foundation to bring year-round 2015-2016 *Fantasy in the Classroom* opportunities to every third grade Title 1 student at Ridgecrest Elementary and



all students at Second Mile Preschool. This funding also provided free tickets to these students' families to attend all 55th Season Productions at the VBC, as well as free student matinee tickets to *Winnie the Pooh* and *The Little Mermaid*. Additionally this funding provided tuition assistance (full scholarships) to 25 West Huntsville students wishing to participate in regular Academy camps and classes during 2015-2016. Seven of those students were then offered full tuition assistance during Summer Camp 2016.

Ridgecrest Elementary Students pose for their parents during an FIC sharing, April 2016

**Players & Jr. Players** 40 young performers aged 10-12 (Junior Players) and 13-18 (Players) began working and rehearsing each Monday evening under the direction of Lucas Kiker, Ethan Mitchell and Maeghan Edwards. Julia Ramsey was in the Players Producer role, coordinating rehearsals and booking requests for these incredible performing ambassadors throughout the year. Both levels of Players performed a vast repertoire of work at Panoply and Santa's Village. They also represented FPCT at an improvisation workshop at Rainbow Elementary in Madison.

**Scout Workshops:** In Fall 2015, Candice Cooper began offering Boys & Girls Scout workshops. These 90 minute workshops are designed to teach scouts the basics of theatre production, earning them their theatre badge. Pricing may or may not include tickets to a mainstage show.

#### Additional Highlights

**Scholarship Recipients:** In May 2016, the Herriott Scholastic Scholarship was awarded to graduating homeschooled senior Jason Lightfoot and the Morris Technical Scholarship was awarded to graduating Buckhorn High School Senior Stella Broussard. Both Jason and Stella have a wonderful history with FPCT on and off stage, and with the Academy. They each received \$1500 awards, which will be used to pursue degrees at Liberty College and the University of Alabama at Huntsville, respectively.

**Honors:** Madison (City) Chamber of Commerce recognized Executive Director Karen Mockensturm as the 2015 Excellence in Leadership and Service Winner.

**Special Events:** In February 2016, the FPCT Academy was asked to present a morning workshop for 80 students at the VBC in conjunctions with BTL's touring presentation of Disney's Beauty & the Beast.

FPCT was asked to join the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra as part of their free Young People's Concert in February 2016. Under the coordination of Karen Mockensturm, the creative team of director and puppet master Ethan Mitchell, choreographer Claire Mitchell, and designer of Heather Baumbach led an outstanding ensemble to present a unique live staging of *Mr. Bear Squash You Flat* and *Carnival of the Animals*, accompanied by the live orchestration of the HSO. This stellar puppetry and dance piece was presented for more than 4400 audience members at the Mark C. Smith Concert Hall at the VBC.

Additionally, FPCT provided face painting support for the HSO for their Halloween Concert, as well as face painting and the magic of a personal appearance by the Snow Queen at Parkway Place Mall's Santa Pajama Party in November 2015.

#### **Corporate Support & Community Partners**

Simple Helix was the 55th Season Sponsor and Jerry Damson Automotive Group was a Performance Partner this year. Additional support either through advertising dollars, corporate funding or in-kind donations were provided by AEGIS, Ameritek, Animal Care Clinic, Austin Physical Therapy, Bloom Dance & Activewear, BNI Alabama, Butler Family Medicine, Chameleon Fabric & Interiors, Center for Speech & Language, Coral Seas Mermaid Tails, Costco, Cyber Protex, Dinner by Design, Doctor Osborn, Functional Chiropractic, Gigi's Cupcakes, Huntsville Hospital Wellness Center, Huntsville Pediatric Associates, Jack Young & Company, Jersey Mike's Subs, Junior League of Huntsville, KB Dancewear, Lawren's, Latham UMC Child Development Center, Lolletta's, Lyrique Music Productions, Maxillofacial Surgery Center, Mix 96.9, Old Gin Carpets, Performers' League of Huntsville,, Regions, Redstone Federal Credit Union, Renaissance Theatre, Rocket City Mom, Secure Destruction Service, Spectrum Services, USBORNE Books & More, ValPak of North Alabama, WAAY-TV 31, WAYY-FM, WLRH, and WW Supplies.

**Grant Awards:** Due to the efforts of Rene Seigh and Executive Director Karen Mockensturm, 2015-2016 saw a significant increase to grant money awards for FPCT: a 2016 Alabama State Council on the Arts Community Arts Grant \$5200; a 2016 Alabama State Council on the Arts Consolidated Project Grant \$10,500, 2016 City of Huntsville Arts & Culture Grant \$8003, and a 2015 Jane K. Lowe Foundation Grant \$22,277.

**Business Overview:** FPCT is a volunteer-driven organization, led by a full-time paid Executive Director who oversees a combination of paid and volunteer staff, including a full-time paid Education Director, a part time Education and Outreach Coordinator and a staff of over 24 professional teaching artists.

The FPCT Board of Directors is made up of a blend of cultural advocates and community and corporate leaders. It is headed by an Executive Committee consisting of the President, Executive Vice-President, Vice-President of Production, Treasurer, Secretary and Immediate Past President. The Executive Director reports to the Executive Committee and oversees day-to-day business, furthers FPCT's presence in the community, develops community business partnerships and expands FPCT's vision and long-term strategy. Work is done within committee and presented to the entire Board for approval, as per our Bylaws. Production Programming is executed by the Production Management Council and a core of community volunteer artists and technicians, actively pursuing artistic excellence.

FPCT business practices are aligned with the Standards of Excellence for Non-Profit Management. Our active Long-Range/Strategic Planning Committee and President's Advisory Council allows us to expand the legacy of FPCT and bring the magic of theater to a fourth generation of Alabamians and beyond. FPCT is currently developing plans for a capital expansion that will support 25,000+ square foot Administrative and Theatre Arts Training Center, in addition to a new state-of-art performance space to serve our production season, as well as support the growing artistic offering of North Alabama.

FPCT is a financially robust organization with over \$950,000 in assets. FPCT operates within a balanced budget with cash reserves on hand as well as investment holdings. Revenue comes from a combination of box office, donations and fundraising, including corporate sponsorship and grant monies. Earned vs contributed income percentages for 2015-2016 were 81% to 19%, respectively.

**By the Numbers 2015-2016:**

- Total program attendance: 17,335
- Total Season Ticket Holders: 886
- Total volunteer positions: 679
- Total participating artists (paid & unpaid): 425
- Total Organizational Expenses: \$434,529
- Number of full-time staff: 2
- Number of part-time and/or contract staff (including artists): 29
- Total In Kind Services (including volunteer hours): \$555,536
- Total Payroll Expenditures: \$158,236
- Total Organizational Expenditures: \$436,050



Fantasy in the Classroom students at Madison Elementary, Fall 2015

**2015-2016 Board of Directors**

Elaine Hubbard, President  
Rob Warren, Vice President  
Todd Gandy, Secretary  
Renee Gardiner, Treasurer  
Gay Broad, Past President

Members at Large:

Jessica Alexander	Karen Alexander	Brook Anderson
Lindy Atkins	Lena Austin	Cassie Barber
Margaret Bibb	Charles Blaylock	Lynn Broad
Sarah Brown	Cheri Furno	Enitza Gillespie
Elizabeth Houssain	Lorie Hubscher	Clint Hughes
Russ Hunter	Barbara Kearns	Terrena Mann
Kevin O'Brien	Tom Prohaska	Julia Ramsey
Rene Seigh	Joey Shelton	Susie Shelton
Ronda Lewallen Shickles	Steve Shickles	Zine Smith
Scott Trites	Bruce Westfall	



Some of our most special audience members, 2016

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