



# *The Young Shakespeareans*

## Organizational Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy

TYS serves underfunded, underserved, and marginalized communities. Immorality aside, from a practical standpoint, continuing the situation perpetuates a cycle of poverty and unfulfilled potential. TYS' was founded to address these short-sighted inequities, and to raise broader awareness of these communities' achievements and realizable possibilities.

A multiplicity of perspectives is critical to our burgeoning organization. Our Partner Schools and Advisory Council represent a racially and economically diverse cross-section of LA's educational and non-profit sectors. Recruiting procedures are in place to attract a diverse body of Teaching Artists via online job postings with general and targeted sites, colleges and trade schools, organizations focused on racial equity, and direct appeals for referrals from the memberships of Arts for LA, the Arts for Healing and Justice Network, and the national registry of BIPOC Theatre Professionals.

We employ an impressive roster of loyal Teaching Artists of varying race, gender, sexuality, age, and cultural background who are all professionals in their respective fields, and are compensated equally and well. All are experienced teachers working as peers whose contributions and modifications to our carefully designed curricula are solicited and often incorporated.

Equitability, respect, and compassion are central to our curriculum with behavioral/attitudinal codes and recommended procedures in place to: raise awareness, understanding, and acceptance of differing paradigms; examine and embrace the value of differing backgrounds, traditional education, and life experience; kindly deliver and tolerate criticism; constructively mitigate conflict (open, timely address is moderated, encouraged and supported).

TYS workshops, rehearsals, and performances take place at ADA compliant LAUSD public schools, welcome all mainstreamed students, and encourage physical and intellectual inclusion. Students and Teaching Artists of varying physical and intellectual abilities are supported by modifying text, blocking, choreography, and general movement to ensure everyone's full and empowering experience. This creates opportunities for our students to work with people who struggle differently than they do, teaching them to assess/value/incorporate the gifts each person has to offer, and helping them practice habits of respect and compassion.

TYS supports economic inclusion and accessibility through: providing reams of paper sufficient to print all student scripts/handouts; requiring only free software/app downloads, or covering low-cost software/app downloads; providing all specialty equipment and/or materials; fundraising for program needs that schools are unable to cover.

Shakespeare's plays (often indictments and satires of the euro-centric, patriarchal power structure of his time) explore the spectrum of human nature, from the glorious to the grotesque. Biases in familial cultures, religious beliefs, and political leanings can be as common in our students' homes as they are in the works we study. TYS' policy is that discussions regarding such issues are facilitated through questions/challenges towards rigorous thought/analysis, and moderated to discourage judgment and imposition of personal positions. Likewise, if students confide or seek guidance when dealing with challenging situations at school or at home, our Teaching Artists are trained to be supportive but not intrusive, and to inform our Program Manager and Artistic Director of anything worrisome that should be discreetly shared with School administration.

***"If I Can Do Shakespeare, I Can Do Anything!"***

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