

MCT MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission Statement of Missoula Children's Theatre

We live in a highly competitive era. Youngsters are introduced at an early age to the critical realities of our achievement—and success—oriented society. From academics to athletics to social interaction, children are pressured to get the best grades, to score the most points, to have the most friends. At the same time, segments of our society tend to view the arts as a luxury, a frill, an extra-curricular activity running a distant second to the popular status of sports. Add to these conditions the natural curiosity of the child, the tendency toward self-exploration, the adolescent impatience to put away the things of the child and emulate adult role models – for better or for worse. Pressure. MCT approaches children with a full awareness of these conditions and strives to use participation in the performing arts as a vehicle to develop the lifeskills (social skills, communication skills, self-discipline, a strong work ethic, an understanding of the team concept and self-esteem) necessary to answer the challenges of our time.

Although MCT's programs tour to major metropolitan centers, MCT remains dedicated to providing financially accessible arts experiences to all communities, regardless of size or economic status. Many of the communities served by MCT are isolated, culturally deprived and/or economically depressed. Live theatre participation, qualified drama teachers and educationally sound music programs within the curriculum are often non-existent or low on the priority scale. Constructive opportunities in the performing arts are rare, and the chance to spark a new interest often goes unkindled. MCT's programs can and do provide the kindling to ignite the flame of interest.

Within each MCT cast, girls and boys are equal; the disabled become able; the shy experiment with bravery; the slow are rehearsed to perfection; and the gifted become part of the whole. The lesson they learn is that all of them are necessary for the show to go on. Few arenas exist where responsibility is taught and learned so clearly. MCT provides a unique opportunity to learn the lessons of group dynamics while excelling as an individual – a lesson from art that carries into life.

Unsolicited testimonials to the practical value of MCT participation are received on an almost daily basis. A stronger performance in a geography oral report, better grades, a healthier rapport with teachers and classmates, confident self-control in that first job interview, an increased sense of tolerance and respect for others, tunnel-vision enthusiasm for the most challenging project, a blossoming imagination and sense of individuality, a perceptible sense of emotional and physical well-being--a happier child; these are among the positive results of MCT participation often noted by parents and educators alike.

Yes, MCT provides a top-quality entertainment experience for audience members. Yes, MCT nurtures and challenges the abilities of those rare children with career performance ambitions and potential. Yes, MCT provides a healthy and wholesome ambassadorship for the arts and opens the door to new life experiences and aesthetic pleasures. But, the primary goal of MCT—indeed, the organization's mission—is:

the development of life skills in children through participation in the performing arts.