

Subj: A word of thanks
Date: 97-04-25 16:19:43 EDT
From: [REDACTED] (Frances Morrison)
To: RoadsideTh@aol.com

This is an open letter to Roadside Theater:

Today, 6 of the finest people I have ever met left Alexandria, LA to return home. I was fortunate enough to be the tour guide and in charge of local arrangement for Roadside and Junebug Productions. My life will never be the same.

These 6 artists touched the lives of so many people - young and old alike. We toured schools and I photographed as they transformed excited, bored, unsure and cockey kids into willing, listening participants. They helped to bring people into our theatre that had never been before, but promise to return.

A teacher of "24 16 year old, juvenile deliquent 9th graders" felt "intimidated" by the skills of Adella Gauthier, Ron Short and John O'Neal. These wonderful performers got kids that normally sleep or read in class, to pay attention and willingly go to the front of the class to listen to the stories. At least one out of this class came to the show the following night and brought his family. He also made sure that he got autographs from the people that had touched his life.

In another group of 30 kids, I saw a metamorphsis occur right before my eyes. Storytelling was introduced to young people interested in theatre. After a brief introduction and explanation, they were broken up into groups of 3 and in less than 20 minutes, these groups not only had produced stories, but presented them, one in poetry as a matter of fact, to each other. They started out with "I don't have a story" to "We want to go first!"

What you represent is what I have fought for all my life - but without the skills and grace that is present in your companies. I was born, raised and have lived in Louisiana all but 3 of my 34 years on this earth. I felt that I was fighting a losing battle...until I met you.

For all of us that are still fighting for equality for EVERYONE - we salute you in all that you do. If I can ever be of service to you, please do not hesitate to call on me. I feel that I have found friends and for friends, I'll do anything within my power.

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----- Headers -----

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Received: from n [REDACTED] (mailhost.worldnet.att.net [204.127.131.33])
by min59.mail.aol.com (8.8.5/8.8.5/AOL-1.0.1)
with ESMTP id QAA25289 for <RoadsideTh@aol.com>;