

All-of-us Express Children's Theatre

GUILD BOOK

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Introduction

What is the All-of-us Express Children's Theatre Guild Program?

It's part of what makes All-of-us Express unique and has been part of the program since its inception in 1989. The Guild Program is the system that encompasses all of our backstage crews and the different leadership levels of each one. Each individual Guild Crew has three badge levels: **Apprentice**, **Journeyman**, and **Master**. Each badge level has a determined list of requirements to complete before moving on to the next badge. Completing a badge takes at least one production but can take multiple shows.

When you begin working on a crew for the first time, you are automatically working on your Apprentice badge. At the end of the production, you will receive an evaluation from your Crew Head which will include a determination on whether or not you have earned your badge for the show. Once you have earned your Apprentice badge you can move up to the next level the next time you work on that Guild Crew, if you choose to.

The Guild Crews currently offered are **Costumes**, **Lights**, **Makeup**, **Props**, **Puppetry**, **Sets**, and **Sound**. **Assistant Directing** and **Assistant Stage Managing** are also Guild Crews but require the completion of other crews before you can begin working on them (see page 12 for more information).

Within this booklet you will find all of the information you need to get started in the Guild Program. You can always talk to an All-of-us Express staff member or Crew Head if you have questions or are interested in being an Assistant Director or Assistant Stage Manager.

We look forward to watching you grow as you progress through the Guild Program!

Crew Expectations

Each badge level of each Guild Crew has a list of tasks you will be expected to accomplish during your time on the crew in order to move up to the next badge level. These tasks, determined by current and past Crew Heads, will help you develop the skill set you will need in order to one day be able to lead a crew like this on your own if you choose to (and many will be helpful in your non-theatre life as well!). There are certain expectations that you will have to meet every time you work on a production, regardless of what crew or badge level you are working on.

Attitude: We expect that you will arrive to crew meetings with a positive attitude. You should be helpful and kind to your Crew Head as well as all cast and crew members.

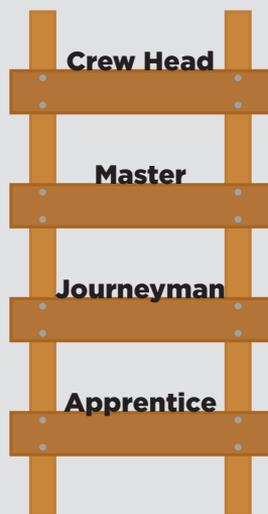
Teamwork: Each production is made up of a team — anywhere from 50-100 youth — and each cast and crew member is a member of that team. You should participate as part of the team and be prepared to jump in on whatever task is needed of you — this may include helping out with a completely different crew if they need extra help.

Punctuality: You are expected to show up on time to every crew meeting and inform the Stage Manager of the production if you are going to be late.

Preparedness: Each member of each crew is expected to read the script and be familiar with the story and its characters. You should arrive at every crew meeting with your script and any other materials you need (such as a water bottle and a pen or pencil).

Progression

If you work on one crew several times, you can work your way up the ranks to eventually earn your Master badge. Once you have earned that badge, and are 18 years old, you may be eligible to be a paid Crew Head. There may also be opportunities to work as a Youth Crew Head prior to turning 18.



Costumes

Ages 11-18



On this crew, you learn how to acquire or create costumes for characters that are portrayed by diverse actors, from six-year-olds to seniors in high school, who may be playing anything from dragons to detectives, lords to ladybugs, mice to monks.

Costumes and the production team work to design according to the needs of the show. These needs may include ensembles suited to specific time periods, costumes allowing specific movements by the actors, and garments that can facilitate quick costume changes. Previous experience with sewing is not mandatory, as it will be taught during crew rehearsals. During tech week and performances, the Costumes crew organizes the costume pieces, assists actors with complicated quick changes, and makes any necessary alterations or repairs in time for the next show.

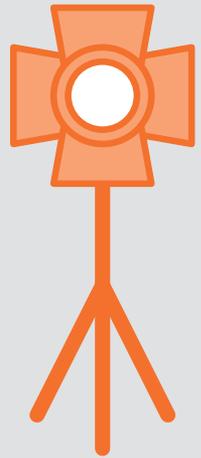
Some of the skills learned on this crew include:

- Hand and machine sewing skills
- Making alterations on existing garments
- Basic costume design principles
- Researching the fashion of a particular time period or aesthetic
- Creative problem solving
- Working collaboratively



Lights

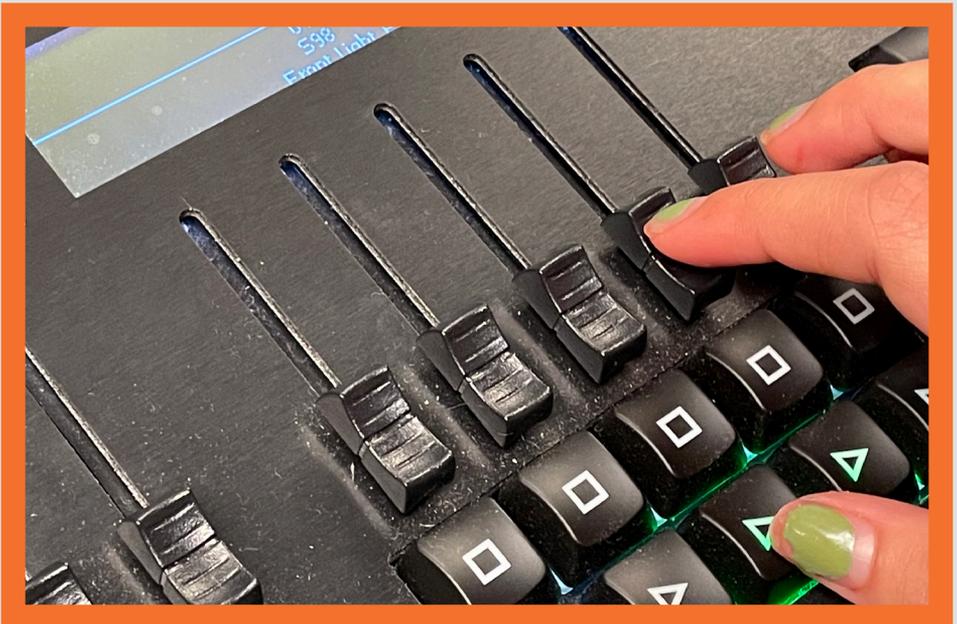
Ages 12-18



On this crew, you learn about the elements of lighting design, as well as programming or setting the lights for a live production on stage. The crew works with the Director's ideas to create the setting and mood of the various acts and scenes of the play. This might include setting lights to represent a dark tunnel, a bright meadow, or a storm at sea. Lights crew members are expected to be at all rehearsals during tech week and at all shows.

Some of the skills learned on this crew include:

- Using light to affect the mood of the show
- Working with members of the production team as needed to bring about the Director's vision
- The basics of board operation, computer networking, and basic circuitry



Makeup

Ages 11-18



On this crew, you learn how to design makeup and hair for characters that are portrayed by diverse actors. Makeup can include characters depicting humans, animals, magical creatures, or whatever the script requires for a show. The Makeup crew shares the initial designs with the production team and then teaches the cast how to apply their own makeup and assists throughout the run. Hair design includes adjusting for the actor's natural hair, adding hair pieces and accessories, and learning period-appropriate hairstyles.

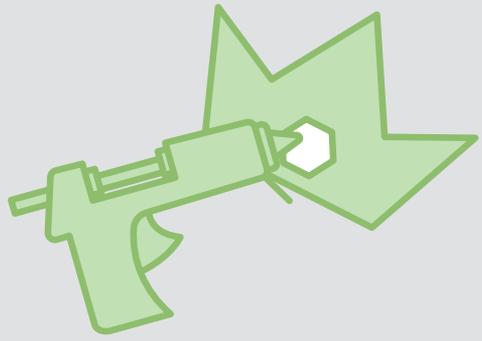
Some of the skills learned on this crew include:

- Matching foundation (we call it base) to diverse skin tones
- Basic elements of stage makeup design
- Creating a variety of hairstyles and executing them in a timely manner



Props

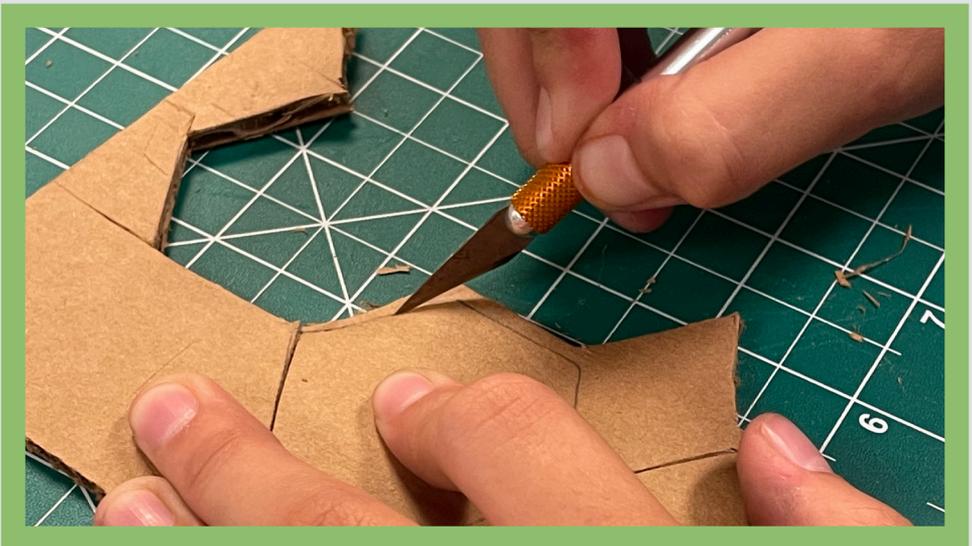
Ages 11-18



On this crew, you learn how to find and make props for the cast to use during a live production. Props are the items that actors use on stage to help the action look more realistic. The Props crew may need to create faux food, craft a glowing wizard's staff, make a bouquet of flowers, locate daggers and swords, or anything else the cast needs to create the scene. The Props crew attends every show, organizes the props tables, and allocates the props to actors backstage.

Some of the skills learned on this crew include:

- Researching props specific to a time period or setting
- Creating a props list based on the script
- Prop construction methods, including: painting, papier mâché, hot gluing, sewing, and more
- Organizing and tracking props backstage during shows
- Dressing a set based on the Director's vision



Puppetry

Ages 11-18

* Puppetry crew is not available for every production, but will be offered at least once per season.



On this crew, you learn how to design, create, and perform all the puppets used in a production. These puppets could be as small as finger puppets or as large as multi-person puppets with different people controlling various body parts. The Puppetry crew members attend all shows and perform the puppets they built.

Some of the skills learned on this crew include:

- Different styles of puppetry
- Designing puppets based on the script and Director's vision
- Performing different types of puppets on stage
- Puppet construction methods, including: pattern making, sewing, hot gluing, and more



Sets

Ages 11-18



On this crew, you gain the experience of designing, building, and creating a set for a live stage production. The crew works with the Director's vision to fabricate the physical elements of the stage. Crew members may also be required to serve as set movers once production has started. Sets will also adjust or replace any set pieces damaged during a rehearsal or performance. Sets, props, costumes, and the Assistant Stage Manager work as a team during set changes to keep the actors safe as they exit and enter the stage.

Some of the skills learned on this crew include:

- **Painting sets with various techniques to depict scenery (forests, glass, wood)**
- **Construction of pieces that can be safely walked across or sat upon by the actors**
- **Fabrication of pieces that stand in for scenery (making trees, castles, clouds)**
- **Safely moving quickly and quietly in semi-darkness**



Sound

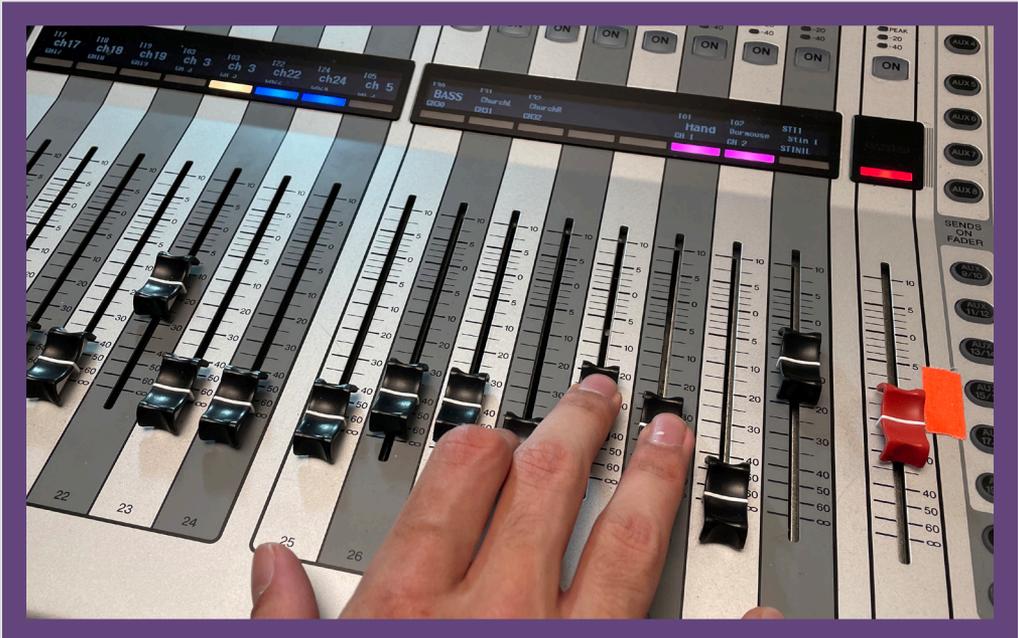
Ages 12-18



On this crew, you learn about the elements of sound design and, depending on the production, possibly about music and vocal amplification. The Sound crew works with the production team to add and support the story of the script, adding the elements that might be written in the play (like a knock, crash, or roar) as well as additional sounds that the director finds necessary (like guitar music if an actor doesn't actually know how to play the instrument but needs to pretend).

Some of the skills learned on this crew include:

- Programming a sound cue list into a computer and programming the sound board
- Working with the Director and Stage Manager to time and set cue volumes
- Exploring the basics of sound theory and how sound works



Assistant Stage Manager or Assistant Director Requirements

Lights or
Sound Crew

+

Costumes* or
Makeup Crew

+

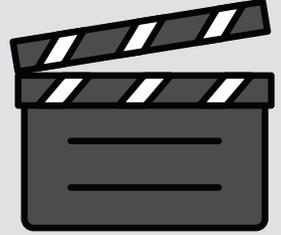
Sets or
Props* Crew

**Puppetry Crew can be
substituted for one of these
crews, but not both.*

Assistant Directing

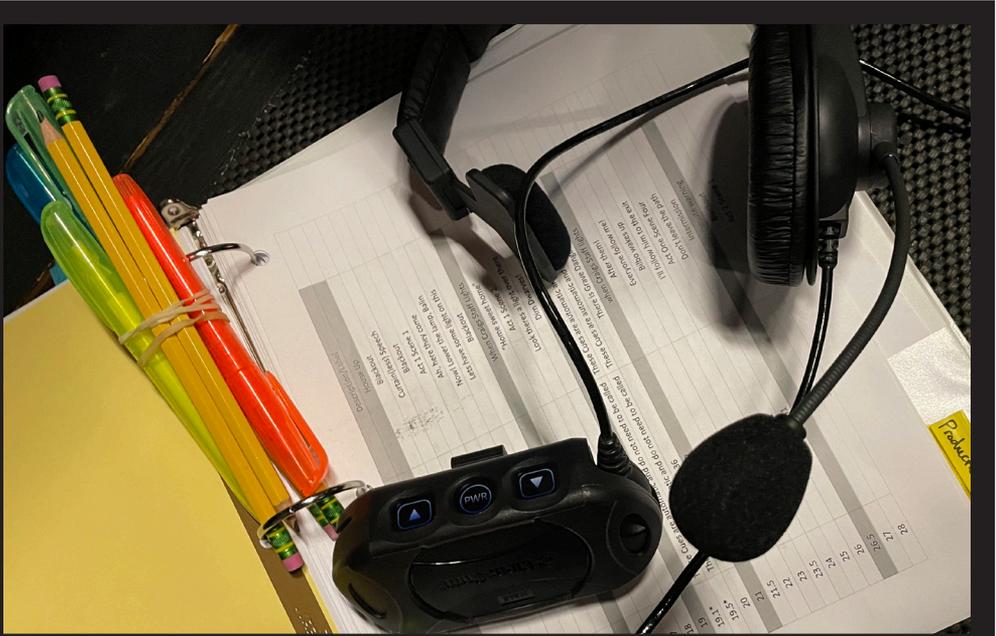
Ages 14-18

The Assistant Director (AD), under the supervision of the Director, will learn about the artistic process of the show. They will be a vital part of casting, teaching the actors during rehearsals, and being in charge of the cast backstage during shows. Assistant Directing requires a serious time commitment and sincere interest in learning the skills associated with these positions. ADs are required to attend production meetings, auditions, rehearsals, tech week, and all shows.



Some of the skills learned in this position include:

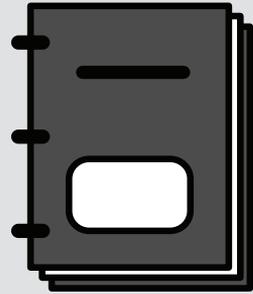
- Determining blocking for each scene
- Explaining blocking to cast members
- Deciding on the best overall design for each area of the production
- Supervision and organization of the backstage area during performances



Assistant Stage Managing

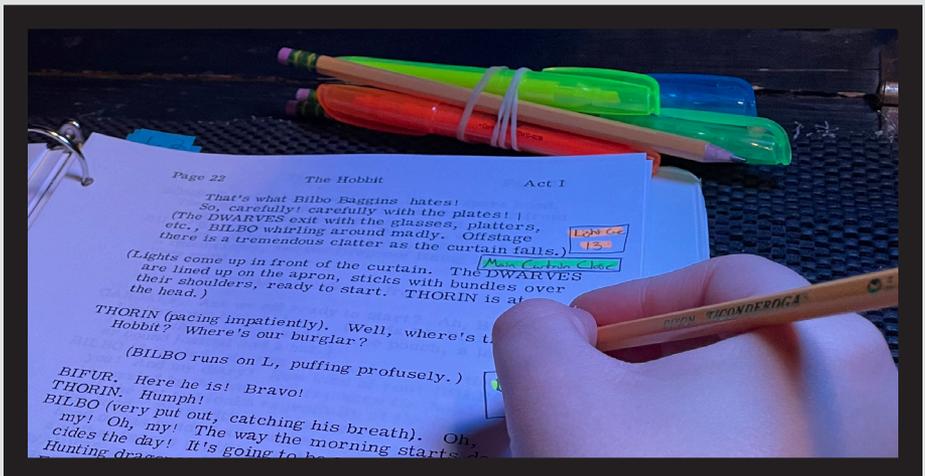
Ages 14-18

The Assistant Stage Manager (ASM), under the supervision of the Stage Manager, will learn every aspect of what goes into making sure the show stays on track, keeping all the Crew Heads and the Director informed of what is going on, and calling cues for the shows backstage. This crew is for those who are interested in learning technical, communication, leadership, and organizational skills. ASMs are required to attend production meetings, auditions, rehearsals, tech week, and all shows.



Some of the skills learned in this position include:

- Monitoring the progress of each crew and determining how to best assist if needed
- Creating a cue script and calling cues during the show
- Maintaining communication among the entire production team
- Determining how to properly organize set changes during the show



FAQs

Q: I was cast once, when can I audition again?

A: Once you are cast in a show, you will not be cast again until you serve on a crew for another production. The crew can be a Guild Crew or an Experience Crew (usher, party or audition crews).

Q: I love being on a crew. Do I have to audition for cast in order to participate again?

A: No, you do not need to be cast again to be on a crew again. Some kids prefer backstage to the stage, and we honor that preference. The opposite is not true; as stated above, once you have acted once, you must serve on a crew before you can be cast again.

Q: How many crew points can I save up, in case I want to audition for the whole season of shows?

A: You can accumulate up to two crew points in your “bank” in the case that you are cast twice in a row and do not have time to be on a crew in between.

Q: What is the difference between a crew point and earning a badge on a crew?

A: A crew point is earned by participating in any crew (Guild or Experience) through the run of the show. Being on a crew and participating earns you a crew point, but it does not guarantee you the badge on that crew. A badge is earned after the crew member has demonstrated competence in the list of skills at their Apprentice, Journeyman, or Master level.

Q: How do I know if I earned my badge?

A: The Crew Head will go over expectations as soon as they know what level badge you are working on (Journeyman and Master levels are expected take part in pre-production meetings). You and the Crew Head will discuss if the show is likely to allow you to earn some or all of the badge requirements. You and the Crew Head will have a mid-production check-in to see how you are progressing toward your badge. At the end of the run, the Crew Head will complete a badge evaluation report to determine if you earned your badge or not. It will not be a surprise when you earn your badge or if you need to try again during another show. Remember that it can take participating on a crew for multiple shows to earn a badge.

Testimonials

Being on a crew helped me develop a lot of necessary life and social skills. Because the crews work so closely together, we are like one big family helping each other out when needed. We work together to overcome a challenge and this can be used in real life situations as well. (*Luke, 15*)

Working with the AECT crews has been an amazing experience! Every crew has a different job to help bring the final show together; whether you're making props for the cast to use or making costumes for the cast to wear, everyone has a part in the production of the show. I've been on many crews such as Props, Sound, and I even Assistant Directed a show. Each time I've had the same welcoming feeling from the crews and Crew Heads, I can honestly say that AECT is like my second family. I know from past experiences that it may seem intimidating and even scary when starting off on your first crew, but, if you have any questions the Crew Heads, Directors, and even returning crewmates can always help you out! (*Genesis, 13*)

I have learned a lot of things by being on the Props crew, including valuable skills like hot-gluing, stitching, and papier-mâchéing. I think the best part of being on a crew is that, in addition to learning new skills, you also get to socialize and make new friends. So far, being on crew has helped me to develop leadership skills, crafting skills, and socialize with the cast and crew; all things that I am glad to have learned. (*Reynie, 13*)

The best thing about being on a crew is you get to work on amazing projects that are necessary to run a show. Without people working on the crews the whole theatre production wouldn't work and a show might not happen. (*Luke, 15*)

Testimonials

When I was on Costumes crew I learned how to sew and serge clothing, along with how to trim and cut cloth. The best part of being on Costumes was probably when we were all working together and getting to see the finished product. Being on a crew helped me with teamwork skills and making sure that I'm able to be myself. (*Seth, 15*)

By being a part of the Props crew, I learned how to be a good team member, and it taught me how to solve and fix problems by simply talking with my crew members. (*Luke, 15*)

I was the youth Props Crew Head for 5 years, and I can honestly say the Guild Program helped shape me as a person. Through the guild I learned how to take on responsibility, how to be reliable and complete things on time, and, most importantly, how to work as part of a team with kindness and empathy. By going through the guild system, I found the thing I want to do for the rest of my life, and met some of the best people in the world. It was a wonderful, educational experience and I highly recommend it, even if you prefer acting or you're not sure which crew you'd like - give them all a try! (*Audrey, Alumna*)

Being on the Costumes crew helped me to become a better leader. I am so much better at delegating tasks, giving instructions and, rather obviously, my sewing skills have improved by leaps and bounds. (*Tori, 17*)

Crew Head

Testimonials

I keep returning as a Crew Head because I enjoy helping the kids bring their ideas to life. (*Nina, Costumes Crew Head*)

Being a Crew Head has been a really great experience for me. I have always struggled with teaching technology aspects to people, and having to learn how to teach complex ideas and problems to children has helped me both become a better technical director and a better person in the community. Plus the kids are just fun to work with!
(*Cody, Lights and Sound Crew Head*)

To be honest becoming a Crew Head has really shaped who I am as a person and as a leader. Going from being a crew member to a Crew Head was an odd transition at first. All of a sudden I had a group of kids really only a few years younger than me looking at me as the “adult” in the room even when I didn’t fully see myself that way yet. But out of necessity and determination I learned to keep the crew running smoothly even through all sorts of bumps and challenges. I learned how to delegate, how to teach to all different skill levels and experience, and I learned that doing your best every day is all you can do. And now when my crew still looks to me as the adult in the room, always convinced I’m older than I actually am, I can smile instead of doubting myself. And I don’t know if I could have gotten there if not for the amazing people at AECT. (*Caitlyn, 17, Makeup Crew Head*)

Watching the Props crew in action was amazing. The Youth Crew Head did such a great job working with all the crew members that the team accomplished all their tasks and had a blast doing it.
(*Joy, Props Crew Head*)

Where Are They Now?

I'm currently attending the University of Michigan for a BFA in Theatre Design & Production! AECT allowed me to discover what I'm passionate about and gave me the high quality experience needed in order to pursue it at a higher level. (*Audrey*)

Being a part of the AECT community taught me about leadership and how to work with kids. Stage management, working with kids on crews and on stage put me on the track to be a teacher. I am currently attending Lansing Community College pursuing a degree in teaching. (*Blake*)

As a child, I participated in the All-of-us Express Guild Program and earned at least one badge in every crew we offered. The Guild Program taught me everything I know about theatre and has shaped my entire life. I use the skills I learned in my everyday life – at All-of-us Express as well as other theatres in our area. (*Liz, AECT Artistic Director*)





CHILDREN'S THEATRE



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Find All-of-us Express program information by visiting:
www.cityofeastlansing.com/allofus

Find details about the All-of-us Express 501(c)(3) nonprofit, historical information, and donor information by visiting
www.allofusexpress.org

**East Lansing Hannah
Community Center**

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