

Two Former HAI Youth Facilitators Talk Back

The healing power of the arts can have long-term benefits for all involved. This summer, HAI Founder Michael Jon Spencer heard from two former youth facilitators in the Prevention Education department. These letters illustrate the positive ripple effect of HAI's work within the community.



Dear Michael,

Hello. I know it's been a long time, but I had to write to tell you about an experience I had with your company. When I left Hospital Audiences, I got a job working as a youth advisor for a YMCA program called Teen Action. We're based in a high school in Brooklyn called Brooklyn Studio Secondary School. It's a combination middle school and high school. You can imagine my surprise when I came to work and they told me there was an assembly period with a performance by a youth group called *Project Respect* and it turned out to be an HAI group. I ran down as quickly as I could, missing the first 15 minutes, and was pleasantly surprised to see one of OUR students, Lily Ng, in the performance.

I wanted you to know what a hit this program was with our school. Students have not stopped talking about it. Several have come to my office asking me how they can get involved with this group. People have said this was the BEST program the school has ever received. I was very happy to see the students so happy, and very proud to know that I worked for this organization that has impressed the students so. I feel proud because I was the person who initially gave the Coordinator of Student Affairs your number when I first came to this school. I'm glad the relationship has blossomed into such a positive one that the students can benefit from.

I just thought you'd like to know that even after all this time, and it's been at least 6 years since I've worked for you, your programs are still incredibly effective. I'm very proud of HAI and I hope you are too. Keep up the good work. Sincerely,

Spencer S. Barros
YMCA Teen Action Advisor

Dear Mr. Spencer:

I joined the HAI family in 1991 as an actor and facilitator for the HIV/AIDS Education and Prevention department. Throughout these years, I have seen it grow and continue to provide valuable services using the arts as a valuable vehicle and tool of communication to populations that many times are overlooked and underserved. You have also provided us artists with a meaningful way of earning our living using our talents to educate, inspire, transform, and touch the lives of many.

Throughout these years I have grown as an actor and educator. I have also acquired valuable knowledge and skills that have served me well in many other personal and professional endeavors. I have also grown as a human being and have developed sensitivity and compassion for those less fortunate.

I was recently hired as a Health Educator for the Brooklyn AIDS Task Force Education Department in the Women's Division. I will be providing workshops in sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS education and risk reduction to women of color in Brooklyn. **And, as told by my interviewer, now supervisor, my unique style of delivery, my [HAI] experience and knowledge on the subject matter made me a great contender for the position, and finally landed me the job.**

Though I will not be as available as I have been in the past years, I will definitely want to maintain my relationship with HAI, because I do feel very proud to be associated with such a wonderful organization. ¡Muchas Gracias! Sincerely,

Sandra Rodriquez

Over...



Hospital Audiences, Inc. (HAI)

www.hospitalaudiences.org
email: hai@hospaud.org

548 Broadway, 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10012-3950

phone: (212) 575-7676
fax: (212) 575-7669

This October, HAI will provide Hope And Inspiration to an audience of more than 23,800 people at more than 890 events by offering opportunities...

...to enjoy dance, theater, concerts and more

* In October, the **Cultural Events Program** will host over 60 events, providing cultural opportunities for over 5000 people with limited access to live arts. Events include:

<i>Cookin'</i>	New Victory Theatre
NY Knicks	Madison Square Garden
Amateur Night	Apollo Theatre
HAI Masked Ball	EXIT
American Ballet Theatre	City Center

* HAI's **Community Performing Arts Series** will present Klea Blackhurst in *Everything the Traffic Will Allow: The Songs and Sass of Ethel Merman* on October 27th at 2pm at the Electrical Industries Auditorium in Flushing. For ticket information please call (212)575-7660

* HAI's **Omni*Bus Program** comfortably and safely carries people who use wheelchairs and individuals who are bed-confined from hospitals, nursing homes and rehabilitation centers to cultural events throughout the greater New York area. In October, HAI will arrange for over 1,000 individuals to attend 50 events, including *The Frank Sinatra Show* at Radio City Music Hall, New York Waterways Cruises, Great Adventure, Fall Foliage sightseeing tours, Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum, Big Apple Circus and trips to Westchester Broadway Theater.

* **Tickets to Go** provides New York City seniors, age 60 and over, with greatly discounted tickets to renowned cultural and entertainment events. In October, 2,660 registered participants of the program will enjoy productions of the New York City Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, American Ballet Theatre, National Ballet de Cuba, Suzanne Farrell Ballet, New York Philharmonic performances and concerts at Carnegie Hall. On and Off Broadway theatre offerings in October include *Mamma Mia*, *Lion King*, *42nd Street*, *Golda's Balcony* and *The Three Penny Opera*.

* This October, HAI's **On-Site Performance Program** will reach over 7,500 people with 150 performances. Events include Italian music and dance from Billy Grey & the Hot Shots at Silver Lake Specialized Care and Florence Nightingale Health Center, Annabella Gonzalez Dance Theatre Inc. at Kingsbridge Heights Nursing Home and John Adisano performing vocals & guitar at Hearst Children's Center.

...to develop competence through artistic expression

* In October, 650 hours of participatory **Arts Workshops** will reach an audience of totaling 9,800. Dance and music workshops will be held at respite programs, including Brooklyn Services for Autistic Citizens Saturday Program, Carl Fenichel Community Services/The League School Saturday Program, E Hab Human Services, Evelyn Douglin Center Avenue S Respite Program, Evelyn Douglin Center P396K Respite Program and YAI Saturday Evening Program. Workshops are provided with funding from the Family Support Program of the Brooklyn Office of the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

Also this October, **FreshArt**, a non-profit organization providing opportunities to New York City artists with special needs, will present a show entitled *People, Places, Things* at the HAI Loft exhibit space from October 16 through November 15. FreshArt is currently using space donated by HAI and the work of participatory arts workshops participants will be featured in the exhibit. The opening reception will take place on October 16 from 6pm to 8pm.

...to acquire skills for supportive/independent living

* ...through the **Prevention Education Program**, which uses theatrical role-play to develop decision making skills with respect to HIV/AIDS, Homelessness, Youth Leadership/Violence Prevention and Medicaid Managed Care. In October more than 30 workshops will take place reaching over 1500 individuals. *Peace-by-Peace*, Violence and HIV Prevention workshops will take place at The Community School for Social Justice, The Colonial Hotel, The Women's Survival Shelter, and The Soundview/Throggs Neck CMHC. In October HAI will begin its fourth production of *Respect* in collaboration with Tony award-winning director George Faison.

...to gain access to information and to learn more about our mission

* Visit HAI's website, www.hospitalaudiences.org and view *Access for All: Guide for People with Disabilities to New York City Cultural Institutions* and its update, *Addendum 2001, On the Go: A Guide to New York City Culture at a Discount for Seniors* and the monograph, *Live Arts Experiences: Their Impact on Health and Wellness*.