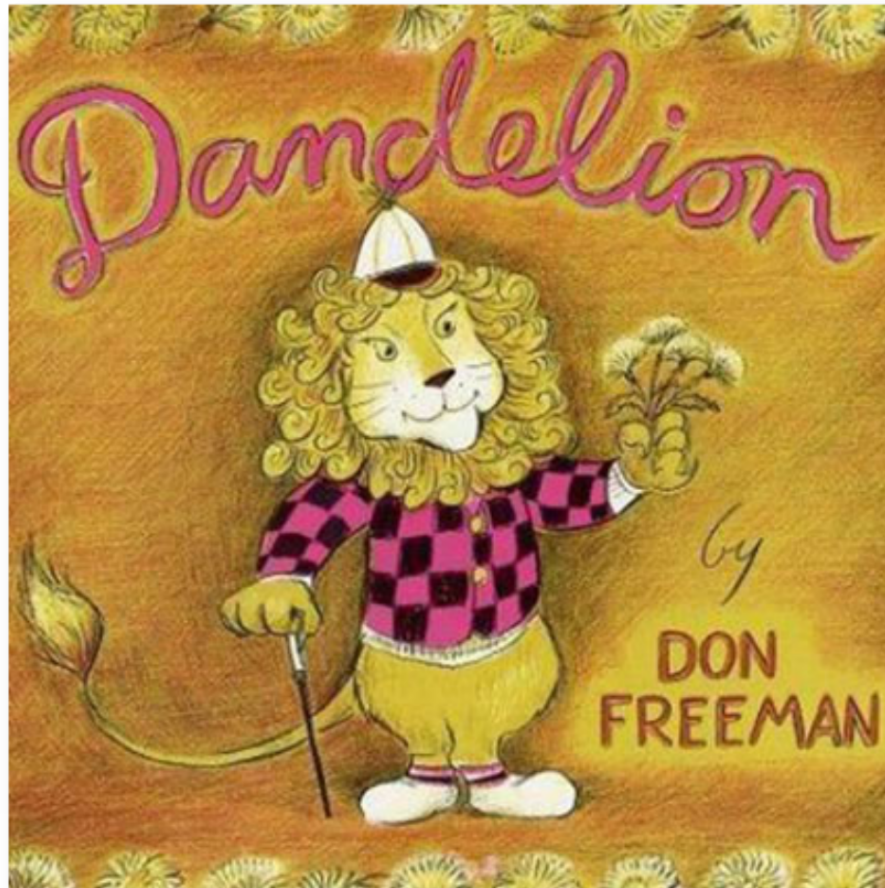


DANDELION

Adapted from the children's book by by Don Freeman
Book & Lyrics by Joan Ross Sorkin
Music by Mary Liz McNamara
World Premiere!



A Study Guide
by Liv Fassanella and Jill Zarcone

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A NOTE FOR STUDENTS

In a few days you will be attending a production of **DANDELION** at Playhouse on Park. Some of you may have attended performances of live theatre before, and for others, this may be a new experience.

When you arrive at the theatre, you will walk through the lobby and into the theatre, where you will each be assigned a seat in the audience. Soon after that, the lights will get dark, and the show will begin!

This show is a musical, so you will see live actors singing, acting, and dancing. Please be quiet and focused throughout the production so you do not disturb others in the audience or the performers onstage. Please only ask to go to the bathroom if it is an emergency, and try to leave between songs or scenes if possible. You may quietly return when an usher or a teacher says that it is a good time. We do not allow photography, texting, ringing cell phones, or any noisy distractions, so students, please remind your teachers to please make sure that all electronic devices are silenced and put away before entering the theatre at the start of the show!

Now that we've gotten what you can't do out of the way, there are many things that we hope you will do! We would love to hear applause after a song and at the end of the show. We hope to hear you laugh if something is funny, and participate when the actors ask for your help. At the end of the show the actors will bow. Just as you thank the actors by clapping, bows are the actors' way of thanking you for watching. If you really love the show, feel free to stand up while you are clapping during the bows to give the actors an extra special thank you! This is called a **standing ovation**!

THEATRICAL TERMS

The world of **Theatre** comes with a lot of fun terms to describe the various roles people perform and the things done! You may hear some of these terms when you come to the Playhouse or maybe you have heard them before!

Work together to figure out what these theatre terms

ACTOR/ACTRESS

DIRECTOR

REHEARSAL

BACKSTAGE

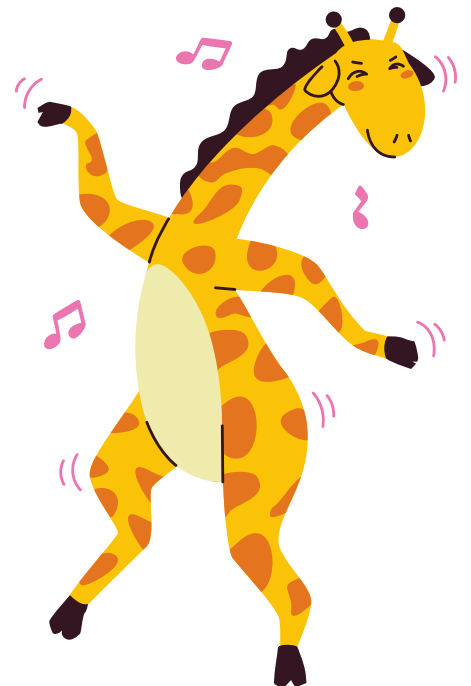
GREEN ROOM

PROP

SWING

STANDING OVATION

BREAK A LEG



DEFINITIONS

- **Actor/Actress** - someone who performs in a show. Also known as a performer.
- **Director** - someone who will tell the actors and actresses what to do during the rehearsing of a show. The director also helps the designers in making the show come to life!
- **Rehearsal** - When everyone gets together to learn their roles, study their lines, block the scenes and get the show ready to perform!
- **Backstage** - This is the area behind the stage or behind the curtain where the actors wait for when it's their time to go on stage.
- **Green Room** - Where the actors get dressed and ready for the show.
- **Prop** - things that are used by actors and actresses on stage
- **Swing** - a actor or actress who studies all the roles in the show so if someone gets sick or injured, they go on in their place! It's a very exciting and very important role!
- **Standing Ovation** - When an audience really loves a performance, at the end, they will rise from their seats and clap and cheer for the performers!
- **Break a Leg** - A way of saying "Good Luck!" to a performer! The theatre community can be a superstitious bunch! Performers believed saying "good luck" would actually bring bad luck on stage, so they'd tell one another to "break a leg" instead. That way, the opposite would happen. Instead of breaking a leg, the performer would put on a flawless performance.

SYNOPSIS

This musical tells the story of Dandelion, a shy, awkward lion. He is filled with middle school angst when he is invited to Jennifer Giraffe's impromptu party. Dandelion decides to reinvent himself, but ultimately discovers it is better just to be yourself! In addition to the theme of being yourself, the musical raises issues of bullying and social exclusion.

CHARACTERS

JENNIFER GIRAFFE - a kind-hearted, gregarious giraffe, age 12

TOBY - Jennifer's annoying 8-year-old brother

DANDELION - a shy, lovable lion, age 12

ROSCOE - a mean, macho lion, age 12

ZIPPY ZEBRA - a zebra science nerd, age 12

PIPPA PARROT - a friendly parrot, age 12

MAXIE MOUSE - a street dude haberdasher

LOU KANGAROO - a barber with a flair for hair

ROSIE RABBIT - a florist who is also a romantic

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST AND CREW!



Sage Jepson
"DANDELION"



Liz Davis
"JENNIFER"



Ryan Phelps
"ROSCOE"



Dan Zimberg
"ZIPPY/LOU"



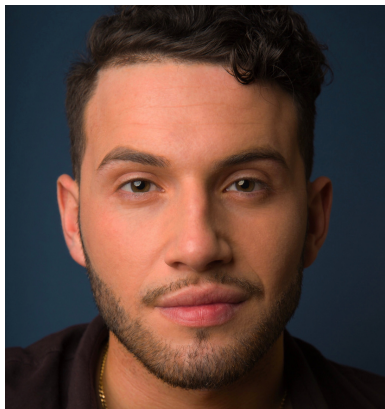
Jong Sang Rheu
"TOBY/MAXIE"



Sydney Weiser
"PIPPA/ROSIE"



Alia Irshaid Gilbert
SWING



Niko Torous
SWING



Jill Zarcone
DIRECTOR

WHO WROTE THE SHOW?

DON FREEMAN- AUTHOR OF DANDELION



DON FREEMAN (Book Author, 1908-1978): Born in San Diego, Freeman is the best-selling author and illustrator of Dandelion, Corduroy and other beloved children's books. Like his character Dandelion, he learned that the best way to go through life was to be honest to who you are. Don's way was with a sketchbook, observing people and using his imagination to create stories with pictures. He lived being true to this spirit, and he learned with all the difficulties and hardships of life that this is what creates true friendships.

JOAN ROSS SORKIN- BOOK AND LYRICS

JOAN ROSS SORKIN (Bookwriter/Lyricist): Musicals: Dandelion, Black Swan Blues, Monet, In The Theatre, The Real McCoy, and award-winning family musicals Isabelle and The Pretty-Ugly Spell and Go Green! Prince Charming's Quest for Love and Ecology in NYC. Operas: Strange Fruit, White Witch, and The Reef (Finalist, Pellicciotti Opera Prize with Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Anthony Davis). Plays: (mis)Understanding Mammy: The Hattie McDaniel Story (Drama Desk nomination for Capathia Jenkins) and other plays in NYC/regionally. This Is Serious and song "One Small Box," nominated by TheaterMakers Studio as Best Play of the Year and Best Song of the Year (2020-21), respectively. Member: Dramatists Guild, BMI Musical Theatre Workshop, ASCAP, and Opera America. Board Pres., York Theatre Company. www.joanrosssorkin.com

MARY LIZ MCNAMARA- MUSIC

Mary Liz McNamara (music): Current musicals in development (book/music/lyrics): The Good Girl, Sister Ann, Body and Soul. Mary Liz is a member of the BMI Musical Theater Workshop (Composer/Lyricist/Librettist/Screening Committee), where she won the Harrington Award for outstanding achievement and the BMI Foundation Eileen Schwartz award for outstanding lyrics. She has won two Manhattan Association of Cabaret (MAC) awards for best comedy song ("Bacon" and "Christmas in Michigan") and five ASCAP Plus awards for songwriting. She is currently collaborating with playwright Aaron Ricciardi on an original musical, GOING AWAY. Proud member of AEA, SAG/AFTRA, Dramatist Guild. Her songs are available on all major streaming services.
marylizmcnamara@gmail.com

A CONVERSATION WITH ROY FREEMAN

AN EXCERPT

INTERVIEWED BY LIV FASSANELLA

Liv: About Dandelion the Musical. Your father was a musician as well as being a painter and writer. Do you think he ever would have thought that his work would be on the stage? How do you think he would have reacted?

Roy: My father's autobiographical novel is called Jigsaw Summer, and it opens with him doing what he did as a kid in San Diego, he was making "make up theatre productions", and "make up movies". So he was into theatre from birth. He went to New York and fell in love with musicals and the whole theatre world. He was even in one William Saroyan play on Broadway playing the trumpet. He had a very dramatic personality. So definitely he would have loved that his books were being made into musicals. I've heard all of the music that Joan and Mary Liz wrote and it's incredible. He would have been overjoyed with what they've done, it's fantastic! He would have been the first one backstage, waiting for the musical to happen. He would be very very happy.

Liv: That's so heartwarming. We're so excited to produce this! The writers have really taken the core of the book and expounded on it and made it electric. I think kids and adults will love it. That universal message of being yourself and sticking up for one another speaks to everyone, I don't know what a better legacy to leave than that.

Roy: I haven't seen the production, but in the book they're sitting around at the party and Dandelion says "you know that guy who knocked on the door? That was me!" He could have been ashamed and kept that quiet, but he was honest enough to say that to everyone. To me, that makes the story even richer, that he came out with both sides of him. The side that dressed up to be accepted, and the side that learned that that was crazy. That's a good part for kids to look at. If you're in the process of trying to be yourself, you don't have to hide. Today, it's a challenge for a lot of young and old people to openly come out as who they are, and Dandelion sets a great example. It's kind of fun that Dandelion learns that lesson by getting thrown out into the storm and everything got washed away. For me as a natural scientist, nature played a role!

Liv: There's really a "why this play now" element to *Dandelion* as well, with all the book banning and discrimination against gender expression that's going on right now. Without directly speaking to that, it does speak to that.

Roy: My father marched in Washington for equal rights and spent the night in jail. He really really cared about equality in terms of gender and color. He would be furious at book banning and be doing what he could to prevent it. We've lost some of our humanity, and I think *Dandelion* has a little tiny piece of that. Be yourself, whoever that is.

Liv: About the story, legacy and message of *Dandelion*: What do you want our audiences to know and what do you think your father would want our audiences to know?

Roy: I imagine that I would wish the same as my father, that the audience, kids and adults, enjoy the story. Have fun, enjoy the excitement and the music. That was one of his loves of theatre. He also cared about the point of the story, about being yourself. I'm sure he would appreciate it if somehow that caught on with the audience. It's fun to put on nice clothes and try to be somebody else, but if that's not really who you are, it's not gonna work. It's about friendship and honesty. That's where being yourself really counts, and I think everyone knows that but it's wonderful to see a theater portray that message with music and fun and a communal experience. All these things are what I hope for and that I think my father would hope for.



Roy with his parents, Don and Lydia

DESIGNING DANDELION!

It takes many talented people, besides our performers, to create the world of *Dandelion* on stage! One of them is the **COSTUME DESIGNER!**

Costume design is all about the clothes the actors in a play will wear onstage. This will be decided by the costume designer, who will work with the director to make these decisions. Hair and makeup will also be considered as part of the costume design. The costume designer then often makes the clothes themselves or has a team of people working for them.

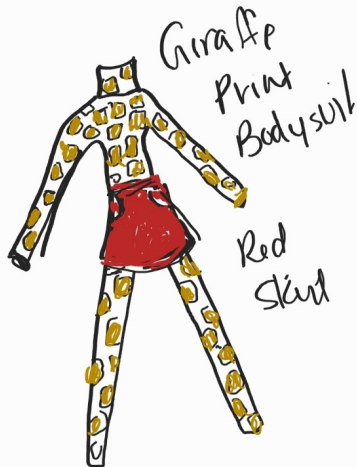
Costumes can tell you a lot about the characters on stage, including when and where they are from, what job they do and even what their personality is like. Costume designers will choose different fabrics, colors, textures and even props to create a character's 'look.' Costume designers work in theatre, television and film.

Costumes are really important, as they help actors transform into their characters. For *Dandelion*, we wanted to have the characters have both cool human and animal details!

Dandelion's costume designer, **Vilinda McGregor**, is a wonderful and talented artist and had the amazing task of creating original looks for our cast members so that they look and feel like the characters they are portraying on stage!

Here are some amazing designs that Vilinda did for *Dandelion*!

Jennifer
Giraffe.
Two 'knots' hair



Brown
sneaker/
boots

MAKE MAKE

goldtone
Paw
watch



Blue
Tie



Brown
athletic
shoe

Tan shortskirt
shirt



Brown
Tweed/
Plaid
waistcoat

Brown denim
(brushed
fabric)

Pippa
Parrot



individual
cuts of
Bright
colors:
Prints
stitched
individually

Layered
with
feather
trim at
Top: skirt edge

ROSCOE Black leather
Jacket or
Vest

Vest Tee?
Joggers



Red Tee shirt



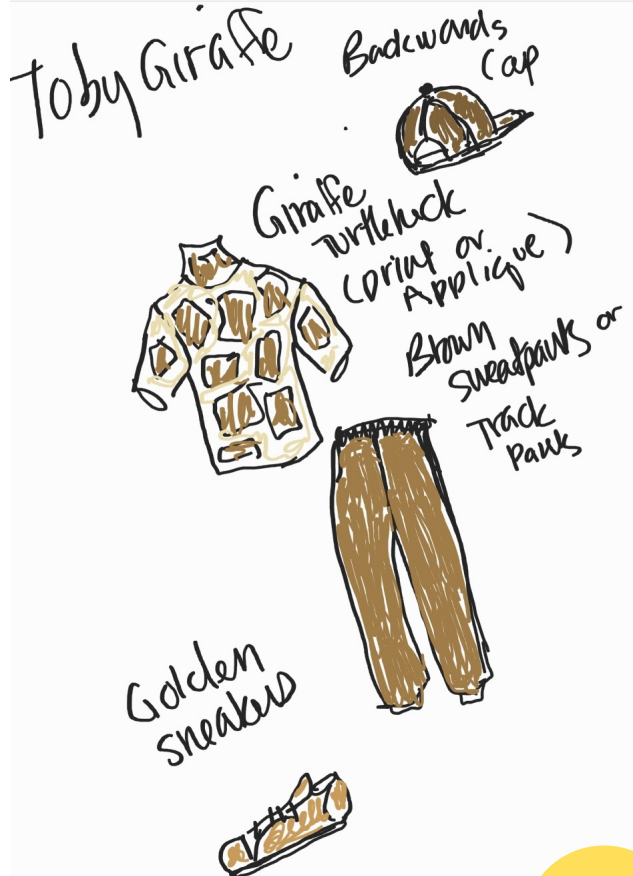
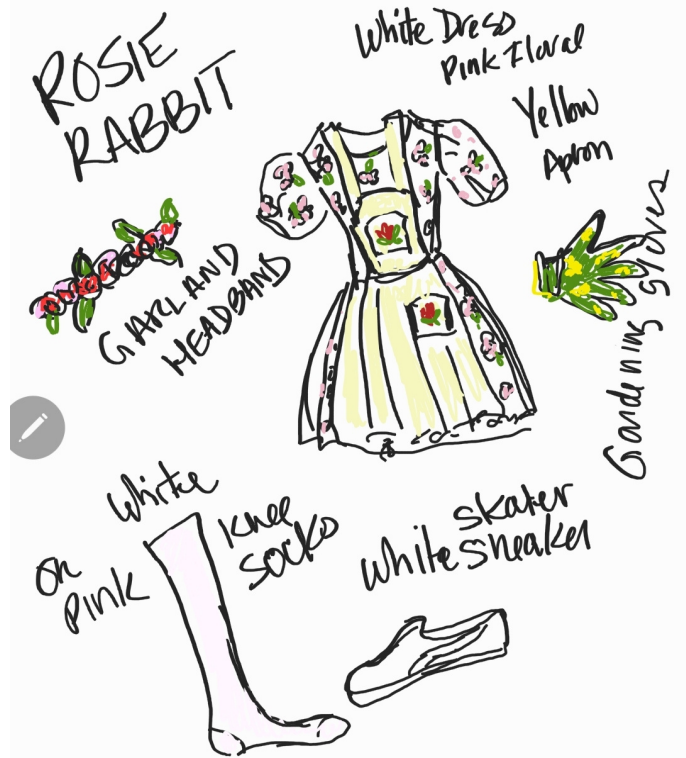
Black
Moto
Boots



White
skater
shoes



Gold
Yellow
cord
or
gold
joggers
Gold
Tie



ACTIVITY #1: DESIGNING DANDELION!

Materials: Paper, crayons, markers, pencils

Teachers: This activity can be done prior to the pre-show workshops. We would love to collect them (or copies of) to hang up and display in the Playhouse lobby so when students come to see the show, they will see their fantastic designs!

Instructions: Now that you've seen Vilinda's designs, we would love to see YOUR very own costume designs for Dandelion!

What do you think the characters should look like?

What clothes would they wear?

What would their hair look like?

What sort of makeup would they wear?

Use your imagination and there are NO wrong designs!

YOU CAN PICK 1 OR 2 OF THESE CHARACTERS!

JENNIFER GIRAFFE - a kind-hearted, gregarious giraffe, age 12

TOBY - Jennifer's annoying 8-year-old brother

DANDELION - a shy, lovable lion, age 12

ROSCOE - a mean, macho lion, age 12

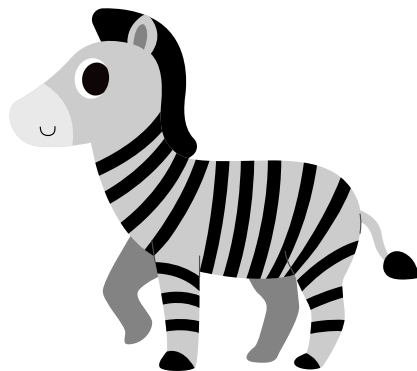
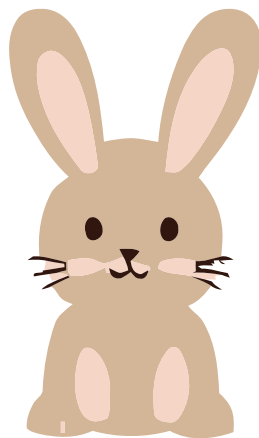
ZIPPY ZEBRA - a zebra science nerd, age 12

PIPPA PARROT - a friendly parrot, age 12

MAXIE MOUSE - a street dude haberdasher

LOU KANGAROO - a barber with a flair for hair

ROSIE RABBIT - a florist who is a romantic



ACTIVITY #2- WHAT I LIKE ABOUT ME AND YOU!

Materials needed: Something to write or draw with, copies of the activity (pages 16-17).

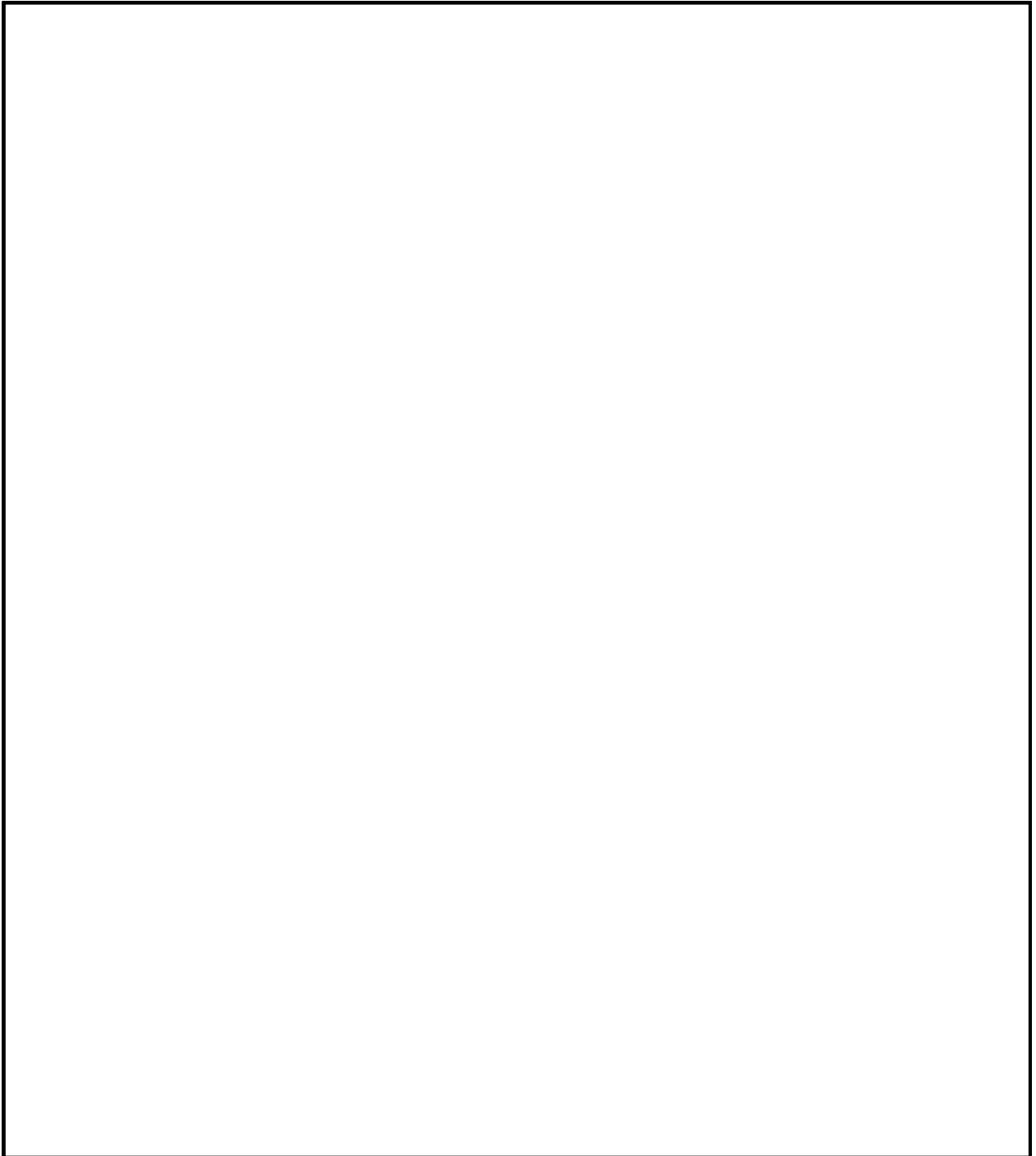
Teachers: Our teaching artists would be happy to do this during the pre-show workshop. Or it can be done during your class time. Up to you! Also, we would love to collect the completed activity (or copies of) from you and have them displayed in our lobby for Dandelion performances!

Instructions: In the production of **Dandelion**, our wonderful friend Dandelion realizes that the best thing to be is YOURSELF! His friends and family love him for who he is. It's important to see yourself as the beautiful person you are and to love all that makes you YOU!



WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT YOURSELF?

It can be anything! Your hair, your smile, your favorite shirt, that you love hugs, or maybe pineapple on your pizza! It's all wonderful! Think about what you like about yourself and WRITE it or you can ever DRAW a picture of it down here:

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for a child to write or draw their answer to the question above.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT A FRIEND OR A FAMILY MEMBER?

Sometimes our friends and family need to be reminded that they are special too and are loved for who they are. A compliment is sometimes just what is needed. Think of a friend in class or even a family member and what you like about them. WRITE it or you can even DRAW their picture down here:



The Truth About Dandelions

Maybe you've heard your parents complain about all those "weeds" in the yard. They may be talking about dandelions! Dandelions are among the most familiar plants in the world. They are one species that just about anyone can identify at a glance! A long time ago, Dandelions were praised for their golden blossoms and used as food, medicine and maybe a little magic like making wishes! But then, eventually, humans decided that the dandelion was a weed. This isn't so!

DID YOU KNOW?

These flowers have been around for THOUSANDS of years and people have grown and used dandelions for much of that time.

Every part of the dandelion has a unique use! Their flowers, leaves and roots have been used for food, medicine and even dye for clothing. You can even buy Dandelion tea!

The name dandelion comes from French word *dent-de-lion*, meaning "lion's tooth" because of the pointy shape of its leaves.

Dandelions can be used to tell the time of day and even the weather? Their yellow flowers close at dusk and when rain is approaching! Bees love them and having Dandelions in your yard means more food for bees!

AND....Many cultures consider Dandelions good luck or a symbol of success! Have you ever been told to make a wish on a Dandelion? No one knows for sure how or why people started making wishes on dandelions but legend has it that if you blow all the seeds off a dandelion, while making a wish, that wish will come true. Another legend is that when you blow the seeds in the air, you are sending love and positivity to those you love. Plus, blowing a dandelion's seeds in the air has a positive environmental impact! Where those seeds fall on fertile soil, there likely will be new dandelions in the future! Which means more food for bees!

HERE ARE SOME MORE NEAT ARTICLES ABOUT DANDELIONS!

Ten Things You Might Not Know About Dandelions
<https://www.mofga.org/resources/weeds/ten-things-you-might-not-know-about-dandelions/>

Think Dandelions are Just Weeds? Think Again :
<https://www.farmersalmanac.com/dandelions-for-health-12274>

HOW DO I WISH ON A DANDELION?



First look for the fluffiest dandelion you can find. The seeds should be about to fall off but it is best when none have already done so. If you are lucky enough to happen upon a patch of them you will easily tell which of the stems is crying for your breath. Pick that one and don't make the magic wait any longer.

Pick the dandelion carefully. You don't want to send any seeds on their way prematurely. If the wind is blowing you may need to block the breeze with your body as you prepare your seeds for flight.

Once you have your stem, it is time to think about your wish! Continue thinking about your wish as you take a deep breath. Hold the fluffy head of your dandelion near your mouth and turn carefully in the direction of the breeze. This ensures a good flight for your wish and keeps all the seeds from landing on your clothing or in your hair.

Take a few minutes and watch as your wish floats out of sight. Don't rush this part. Part of the magic is knowing that your wishes are being sent far and wide. Watching until the last seed is out of sight helps the wish come true.

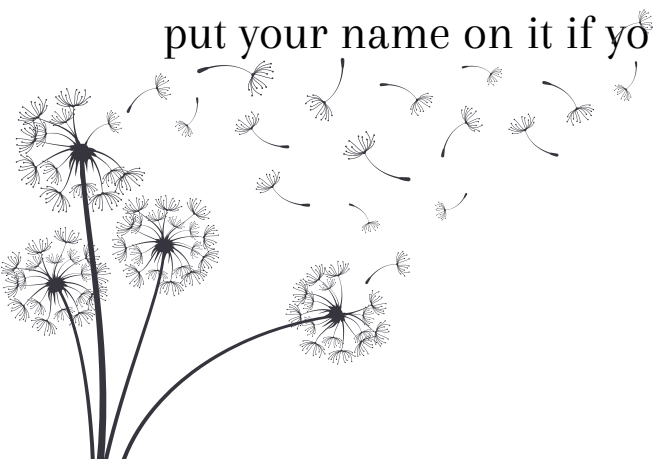
Reference: <https://www.dandelionpress.com/dandelion-blog/2015/4/6/how-to-wish-on-a-dandelion>

ACTIVITY #3- WISHES

Materials Needed: Marker or crayon, copies of Dandelion wish card. You will need one for every student in your class. White or different colored copy paper is fine to use!

Teachers: This activity can be done during the pre-show workshop if you like! Please make copies of the wish card template given here in the study guide prior to the workshop and then our teaching artist can guide the activity. Once completed, our teaching artist will gather the wishes and bring them back to our theatre. When the students come to see the show - they will see their wishes on the Dandelion Wish Wall!

Instructions: We may not have actual dandelions to make wishes on, but we would love for you to write a wish down on your piece of paper. Think about your wish carefully and it can be for you or for someone else! It's your wish and up to YOU! You don't have to put your name on it if you don't want to!



Make copies and
cut so each
student has a wish
card



SEVEN LESSONS IN CREATIVITY - FROM DON FREEMAN!

1. Let your passions feed your work.
2. Explore and observe voraciously.
3. Take what you see around you and give it your own fun twist.
4. Be versatile [in your methods and techniques].
5. Keep evidence of your process so others can learn.
6. Make friends and spread yourself around.
7. To keep from getting distracted, if necessary go stay in a studio, room, even a hotel when you have a deadline coming up!

***Excerpted from Seven lessons in creativity from Don Freeman by Christine Wold Dryud, The Kerlan Awards in Children's Literature, 1975-2001, Ruth Berman, Editor, Pogo Press, University of Minnesota, 2001, pages 310-414. Roy added some edits here.**

WRITE A LETTER TO THE CAST!

Thank you for bringing your students to see Dandelion at Playhouse on Park and for encouraging the arts in your classroom! We would love to hear from students what they thought of the production and any questions they may have for our cast and crew!

Mail your class letters to us at Playhouse on Park, we will send a thank you letter back to your class!

Please mail class letters to:

**Playhouse Theatre Academy
Playhouse on Park
244 Park Rd
West Hartford, CT 06119**

Teachers: if you have thoughts or comments regarding educational programming at Playhouse on Park, please email Jill Zarcone, Director of Education, at jzarcone@playhousetheatre.org.

Dear Dandelion Cast and Crew,

My favorite part of the show was:

My question(s) for you is:

From,
