

# filament

T H E A T R E

4041 N. Milwaukee Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60647

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with tremendous pleasure that I recommend Andrew Marikis as a drama teacher for your school. I have had the great pleasure of working closely with Andrew for many years as both an actor and educator, and can attest whole-heartedly to his talent, leadership, skill, and enthusiasm.

Although I initially came to know Andrew as an actor, he immediately took to Filament Theatre's community-minded vision and helped to grow our programming for family audiences into the robust organization we are today. He pioneered Filament's summer camp programming - a unique hybrid of drama workshops, youth devising, and new work development with professional artists. His ability to create a joyful, supportive ensemble with young people of a wide range of backgrounds and experiences is absolutely astonishing. His rigorous commitment, thoughtful communication, and collaborative spirit invite young people to bring their best selves into the room, and to push themselves to try new things. His guidance and teaching artistry produced some of the best youth-developed work I've seen in Filament's fifteen-year history.

Based on his exceptional skills as an educator, I brought Andrew on as a co-creator for a project called *Forts: Build Your Own Adventure*. It was an audience-driven installation piece for young audiences, created by a team of artists who had very little experience working with children. Andrew's expertise provided necessary training to adult artists, helping them to create a safe and playful environment for our young audiences. He advocated for the agency, autonomy, and safety for our young patrons, while championing his adult collaborators and stewarding a truly exceptional artistic product. His ability to navigate those challenging dynamics - and competing priorities - with humor and confidence was a critical asset to the team. It was a joy to collaborate with him so closely. I learned so much from our partnership, and am grateful for every opportunity I have to work with Andrew.

Andrew's unique skill set makes him an invaluable part of any classroom, school, theatre, and arts organization. He is civically-minded, with an eye toward the arts as a tool to empower young people and improve communities. On his own, he is a strong leader, and can work independently at an incredibly high level. With others, he is a generous and fierce collaborator, always fighting for what's best for the project and for his students, never for his ego.

Andrew enriches every organization in which he participates, treats young people with respect and dignity, and dives into new challenges with verve. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have more questions about Andrew's work, or would like additional information. I feel tremendously fortunate to have worked with him, and am confident that he will be an extraordinary asset to your school.

Sincerely,

Julie Ritchey  
Artistic Director  
Filament Theatre