

Halena M. Schuster

38386 Loman Ct.

North Ridgeville, OH 44039

August 19, 2019

Dear Prospective Employer,

I am a third grade ELA and social studies teacher in the Elyria City Schools. This fall I will begin my fifteenth year as an elementary educator. I am writing today to share what an absolute pleasure it was to be able to work along side Melissa Crum as a teaching artist for three consecutive years.

Melissa, along with her teaching partner were placed in our building through Playhouse Square with the intent to increase student achievement on the Third Grade Guarantee State Test. As a teaching artist, Melissa came into our classroom for an entire school day, once a week for the entire calendar school year. In her position she would work with both small and large groups of students, selected based on standard areas of need. Through innovative, creative instruction Melissa helped students gain understanding through interactive games along with dramatic play. Additionally, Melissa worked with district curriculum specialists, along with myself and my teaching partner to dissect curriculum and testing results by standard, to target areas of the most needed instruction. Furthermore, Melissa with her teaching partner planned an end of the year performance including all of the third-grade students, showcasing what students learned throughout the school year for both parents, Playhouse Square Representatives and Investors of the program.

Melissa without a doubt showed a passion for her craft, imbedding it into elementary education. Her creativeness, along with her willingness to learn increased the overall moral of our learning environment. Through her program, overall student's achievement increased during her three years implementing the program. Her flexibility and patience with the process made this new experience extremely enjoyable for our team.

I would without hesitation recommend Melissa Crum for a position. If you need any further information please feel to contact me at 440-452-4932 or by email at halenaschuster@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Halena M. Schuster

3rd Grade Teacher

Elyria City Schools

August 19, 2019 To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter on behalf of Melissa Crum. Melissa and I partnered with Playhouse Square on the Third Grade Literacy Program for three years at Crestwood Elementary School in Elyria, Ohio. During this time, Melissa's role as a teaching artist was beneficial to both the students and me.

Melissa has many strengths as a teaching artist. Melissa's lessons teach literacy skills as well as promote verbal and nonverbal communications skills, dialogue, creativity, teamwork, and respecting others. Elementary students have a wide variety of personalities and ability levels. Melissa is always prepared for these challenges. Her lesson plans are well thought out and always inclusive. For example, Brianna began the year at a 1.9 grade equivalent in reading. She would not make eye contact and refused to participate in class. Through using drama to learn reading skills, Brianna's reading level improved significantly and she was one of the key speakers in our end of year performance for parents and administrators.

Melissa also has excellent organizational and communication skills. She was instrumental in working with Playhouse Square administrators as well as Elyria City Schools administrators to schedule the weekly program visits as well as the end of year performance. Through her, we were able to communicate the academic needs of our students and she passed this information on to Playhouse Square in order to refine the program.

In conclusion, I would highly recommend Melissa Crum. Watching her teach my students through drama has given me a whole new set of skills to help my students learn. If you would like more information, you may contact me at 440-284-8002 or by email at colemanann@elyriaschools.org .

Sincerely,

Ann Coleman

Third Grade ELA/Social Studies Crestwood Elementary School

Elyria City Schools

440-284-8002

colemanann@elyriaschools.org



August 21, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to enthusiastically recommend Melissa (“Missy”) Crum as an independent contracting teaching artist with your organization. I have had the pleasure of working with Missy for nearly ten years, and she is one of the most gifted teaching artist with whom I have ever worked.

In 2010, I was Director of Education for Great Lakes Theater Festival, and doing some consulting for another local not-for-profit organization, Bill Rudman’s The Musical Theater Project. Bill was looking for a teaching artist to join his team in the second year of his organization’s outreach program, Kids Love Musicals, and Missy came in and auditioned for us. She blew us away. Her vocal ability was and is extraordinary, but more than that, her heart and passion truly won us over. She was quickly hired to deliver interactive lesson plans in elementary school classrooms for The Musical Theater Project, and was one of the finest teaching artists they have ever had the pleasure of hiring.

The following season Great Lakes Theater Festival was holding auditions for the full-time position of Actor-Teacher. This is one of the most coveted teaching artist jobs in the region, requiring a college degree and providing consistent work for nine consecutive months. When Missy auditioned for the program, it became evident that her skills went beyond the elementary school level and that she was extremely adept at everything from teaching kindergarteners through seniors in high school. In her role as an Actor-Teacher, she portrayed some of the greatest roles in literature: Shakespeare’s Lady Macbeth, Juliet, Cassius; Arthur Miller’s Elizabeth Proctor and Linda Loman; Tennessee Williams’ Laura in “The Glass Menagerie.” But in addition to performing these great scenes, Missy led classroom activities and discussions with students across a diverse spectrum of schools: urban, suburban, rural, public and private. She has worked with students of all abilities and temperaments, always with grace and love.

By the time she completed her tenure of several years with Great Lakes, I had moved on to my current position at Playhouse Square, and one of my first decisions was to hire Missy as one of

our teaching artists for a brand new program designed to teach reading using drama as a learning medium. Missy created groundbreaking lesson plans with her partner, Eric Perusek, and together they served students in three underserved elementary schools several times per week. After two years I was able to hire her full time, and she became an ambassador for Playhouse Square's education programming in the community. Missy was also one of our inaugural Disney teaching artists, helping to create sustainable musical theater programs in Cleveland public schools where such programs never previously existed. She additionally worked our weekend workshops, providing classes to children attending professional live theater for the first time. And she worked in our Classroom Connections outreach program, visiting schools prior to and immediately after they attended a student matinee performance at Playhouse Square.

In short, Missy did it all, and did it with extraordinary talent and heart. It is now, as she follows her own dreams of being a full time artist that I eagerly await her next successful venture, as she continues to find ways to touch the lives of those she encounters.

Missy Crum is the gold standard in teaching artists, and any classroom fortunate enough to have her talents is truly fortunate. I recommend her wholeheartedly.

Sincerely,

Daniel Hahn Vice President Community Engagement & Education

Playhouse Square

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216-640-8450

August 20, 2019

To whom it may concern,

I am happy to write this letter of recommendation for Melissa Crum. Melissa is an exceptional actress, teaching artist, and colleague. We have known each other for several years and have worked together in many capacities. Most recently, I supervised Melissa as a staff teaching artist for several of our education programs at Playhouse Square including Classroom Connections, Family Theatre Day, and Disney Musicals in Schools.

Whether working individually or collaboratively, Melissa was excellent in creating and developing lesson plans while also executing specific teaching strategies and delivering curriculum goals. She was wonderful in the classroom. She was exceptional in challenging and encouraging students while still creating a safe environment for them to explore and express themselves. She was inspirational to teachers and educators, helping them uncover their own artist voice.

As a staff teaching artist at Playhouse Square, Melissa demonstrated a very high standard of quality in performance, program implementation and community engagement. Her ability to provide students with a powerful and visceral connection to the arts was exemplary. I would be happy to contract Melissa again, in any capacity as she would be a wonderful asset to any theatre arts program.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sheffia Dooley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sheffia Dooley
Assistant Director,
Community Engagement and Education
Playhouse Square