



## [ Extracurricular ]



### JUNIOR THESPIANS

These future stars of the stage have participated in KidScape Productions workshops.

“yes and...” theory, which means students agree to a circumstance as presented to them (a scene setting or a particular dramatic twist, for example) and then add on to make the experience personal and relevant.

“The students make the outcomes,” says Michelle MacKay, lead instructor and curriculum supervisor. “We’re there to work with them as they find their voice and develop their own sense of confidence.”

KidScape holds summer camps, after-school workshops and community shows. But Frank says she’s also focusing on trying to incorporate curriculum during instructional hours, as the core concepts taught through lessons lead to better outcomes for students.

“My goal is to enhance what’s already going on in the classroom with added skill sets like presentation skills, diction, problem solving and conflict resolution,”

Frank says. “The focus of our program is to not just address the here and now, but for the kids to understand how different aspects of the games we play apply today in school and tomorrow in their careers.”

Students learn to make eye contact, to speak to small and large groups, to project and to creatively solve problems.

And parents are brought along on the journey, receiving weekly emails that outline the skill sets addressed and describing the games



# Drama much?

KidScape Productions offers life lessons through dramatic techniques

BY MIKALEE BYERMAN

**As a graduate of Roy Gomm Elementary School, Swope Middle School and Reno High School,** Reno native Christiana Frank acknowledges benefiting from a great education — with perhaps one missing element.

“I think I mostly learned to present and communicate through life and experiences,” she recalls. “So I saw an opportunity to bring that kind of teaching to school-age children, to fill a gap in arts education that wasn’t just about drama, but about life lessons and confidence.”

Her passion for the arts and communication led her to explore her own educational opportunities at Juilliard in New York City, and then at Yale. And her passion for the community brought her back to Reno to teach these life lessons to local children.

Frank started KidScape Productions as a means of teaching local children about confidence, life skills and self-esteem. Since its beginnings, KidScape has been working in cooperation with the Washoe County School

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District in different capacities, just recently expanding to Clark County as well.

The professional acting program is for children 3 and older and specializes in drama workshops that use speech, movement, improvisation, character and plot development to teach students acting, communication, verbal and social skills.

“It’s incredible to watch the kids come out of their shells throughout the workshops,” says April Kasper, program director for KidScape. “Just watching their voices develop shows the confidence they learn: They’ll start with a whisper in day 1, and then they’re projecting and shouting by the end.”

The curriculum base, according to Frank, is called a

that serve to teach the concepts.

“During the first day of a new class, we challenge the kids to tell us a job where communication isn’t important,” Kasper says. “It doesn’t exist.”

Frank agrees, adding that developing these skills will prepare them for a successful future.

“In life, you’ve got to be able to think on your feet,” Frank says. “We’re here to help them find their voice, have fun and succeed.”

Parents or teachers looking for more information about KidScape Productions, including a calendar of upcoming workshops, can call 787-3900 or visit [www.KidScapeProductions.com](http://www.KidScapeProductions.com).