



PAPA TANK
THEATRE FOR INCLUSION

Our Mission

Embracing and respecting the uniqueness of all people, we create artistic opportunities for young artists and families.

Our Short History

Papa Tank Theatre for Inclusion is the brainchild of Bryann Burgess, a local musical theatre artist born with Down Syndrome and Larry Hembree, a local arts administrator who has been mentored by Bryann to understand we all have unique abilities we have the right to explore. 2023 was our pilot year, funded graciously by a Connected Communities grant from Central Carolina Community Foundation.

We learned a lot. We had a blast. We made a lot of new friends. We made mistakes. We had some lightning bolt moments. We laughed. We cried. We danced. We sang. We painted. We drew. We GREW.

Who is Papa Tank?

The theatre gets its name from Papa Tank, the grandfather of co-founder Bryann Burgess. Born and raised in the land of Abraham Lincoln (Springfield, Illinois), he lived by the values of the Gettysburg Address, which proclaimed America "a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that ALL are created equal." A veteran and POW during WWII, Papa Tank never gave up and never compromised his commitment to these values. In the spirit of Papa Tank, the Theatre for Inclusion is about having no limits, determination, and the bravery to try new experiences - all while having fun!

What We Do

We gather a group of young people of all abilities several times a month.
We bring in teaching artists to help us create original live theatre.
When ready, we share our work with the public.

What Guides Our Work

- We Believe everyone harbors an artist inside them and has a story to tell
- We Value the uniqueness in everyone
- We Honor the process of creating art, the product is secondary
- We Know experiencing the power and beauty of uniqueness and inclusion creates a better world
- We Understand that our work must focus on removing labels
- We Acknowledge that we are limitless
- We Agree that having fun unleashes the creative spirit

Where We Create Our Work

We partner with Washington Street United Methodist Church, located in downtown Columbia.

What Are Our 2024 Plans?

Coming up this Spring, in partnership with the Mattie Stepanek Foundation, we will present a new work based on the poems of the late award-winning young poet, Mattie Stepanek. Coming up next Fall, in partnership with the national Penguin Project, we will present *Annie Kids*.

Spring Workshop Dates: February 3 and 17, March 9 and 23, April 6 and 20, May 4 and 25

Performance Dates: June 8 and 9. Pricing to participate in this program is \$175 per student, with \$100 for each additional sibling participant.

For more information, contact Managing Director Tonya Cobb, Tonya@papatank.org