

Jim Cermak

Managing Artistic Director



As a kid, I was given eleven years of dance lessons, sometimes for free when we couldn't afford them. In high school, a theatre teacher showed me that theatre production could get me a college education. At SMS in Springfield, Mo., my mentors explained that life skills and theatre skills were the same thing. Fifteen years as a designer, technician and stage manager proved that working in the arts meant life long commitment to hard work. My doctoral studies in the arts management, theatre for youth and organizational communications reminded me that our society should begin working with kids to offer them the creative outlet that is so important at an early age. Working with the Gooseberry Kids has given me a chance to return to these kids some of the opportunities that I've been given. My son and daughter taught me that to be balanced with art and music and dance and theatre activities. In our lives, we will always have work, a job, responsibilities but we also need to have a way to channel and release those physical and emotional tensions that build up. Theatre is hard work and it's physical and creative. If kids can learn all these things early enough, they'll find that they can have full and rewarding lives as adults, not only at work, but also at play, not only with their job and family, but as a contributing part of their community, using all their talents and capabilities.