

About Our Instructors

Julie Binus is a past student and longtime instructor of the ACT Drama camps. This will be Julie's 14th year teaching with ACT. She has performed onstage with ACT in numerous shows, most recently in "Steel Magnolias." Julie has a B.A. in Theater as well as a B.S. in Elementary Education. She has taught at other children's theater workshops in the past in Arizona and Pennsylvania. Julie's full-time job is with Blair County Head Start as a Child Development and Education Coach.

Ben Cossitor has been involved with Altoona Community Theatre since 1995, when he played a young prince in his first show *The King and I*, and he was a participant in the summer drama camps. He is frequently seen in ACT productions, either in the Mishler's pit orchestras playing the oboe or performing onstage (most recently in "Romeo and Juliet" and "A Little Night Music"). Since 2015, he has also been a member of the comedy improv troupe, Rail City Improv. For the past five years he has been the theatre director at Altoona Area High School as well as teaching drama and English classes.

Mara Guinard went from being a "Sparkle kid" and former drama camp student to teaching our C-1 Workshop last year. Mara is involved behind the scenes at ACT on the Marketing Committee and has performed onstage in productions, most recently in "Elf, the Musical." She has worked as stage manager and choreographer for several local high school/middle school theatre productions including Hollidaysburg's HACT. Mara works as the Box Office Manager at the Mishler Theatre. She is also a sophomore in college currently obtaining a degree in Early childhood Education with a minor in special education.

Brooke Meadows has performed onstage in numerous productions with ACT, Penn State Altoona, Things Unseen and McConnellstown Playhouse. Brooke is the Co-Advisor and Director of Hollidaysburg Area Children's Theatre (HACT) and has taught summer drama camps in Hollidaysburg and at the Blair Regional YMCA. Brooke studied Communications and Theatre at Slippery Rock University and has her PA Teaching Certification for grades K-6 from St. Francis University. She is a first grade teacher at Tyrone Elementary school.

Karen Volpe initiated our summer drama camps in 1988, after directing ACT's production of "Annie." For the past 40 years, she has been involved with ACT as director, actor, producer, board member, board president, and camp instructor. She also wrote and directed 13 "Sparkle Shows" involving hundreds of young people from the area. She recently retired from the Blair County Arts Foundation where she served as program specialist for the Mishler Theatre and coordinator of the Blair County Arts Festival. Her theatre experience includes touring with a professional musical comedy troupe based out of Las Vegas as well as acting and directing in Ohio and Nevada, and studying theatre at Butler University.

Kate Kale Wolf has been involved with ACT since 1990 and has performed in, stage managed, and directed numerous productions as well as co-founded the Isaac Awards 15 years ago. She has taught many children's summer drama camps at ACT since 1995 and directed Family Theatre series productions "Awesome Allie" and "Charlotte's Web" recently. Kate directed the musicals at Central Cambria High School for 14 years while working as a guidance counselor in their elementary school. She is currently a licensed professional counselor who is an outpatient therapist in various elementary schools in Altoona Area School District.