

Senior Theatre League of America

Issue Area: Cultural, Educational and Social Opportunities

Contact: Senior Theatre League of America
Educational Theatre Association
2343 Auburn Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45219
(513) 421-3900 (Phone)
(513) 421-7077 (Fax)
stla@edta.org



Date Published: August 2004

Summary:

Volunteer theatre clubs and groups may have been considered a trend of the past twenty years, but more recently senior theatre clubs and groups are beginning to gain popularity. Theatre provides yet another artistic avenue for older adults to express their creative talent. The Senior Theatre League of America provides a comprehensive assistance program that aids the efficiency and number of senior theatre clubs. Senior theatre clubs can provide avenues for educational attainment for seniors by learning new ways to express creativity, as cultural opportunities by providing a variety of cross-cultural plays, and as social opportunities since theatre groups provide an easy means to meet and bond with new people.

The Senior Theatre League of America promotes and nurtures the growing senior adult theatre movement. They act as a network of experienced thespians who provide leadership, advocacy, and opportunities for its members to share their knowledge, talents, and fellowship. STLA is a branch of a bigger theatre organization called the Educational Theatre Association whose main goal is to make theatre an important art of lifelong learning. The Senior Theatre League of America has a bit more refined mission, which is to provide a forum for lifelong learning in the theatre arts to older adults. The organization accomplishes their mission in three main ways: conducting a festival, providing resources to strengthen senior theatre organizations and artists, and promoting the visibility of senior theatre. At their festival, which took place last year in Harrah's Casino in Las Vegas, one can see as many as twenty-two different performances, take a theatre playwriting workshop, or attend one of thirty-eight different workshops that cover almost every aspect of senior theatre.

The STLA strongly believes that the skills of theatre and art performance are life skills older adults should maintain to promote physical and mental fitness. The STLA website depicts these main values and provides a plethora of information. They provide articles and discussion boards for people to learn more about theatre. Most importantly the STLA is guided by several key principles:

- Offer opportunities for older adults to celebrate theatre arts through participation and observation by (1) providing a festival for its members and (2) being dedicated to the creation of new work.
- Collaborate with allied fields to promote healthy and creative aging.
- Provide comprehensive resources on theatre arts and aging.
- Encourage research in creativity and aging by connecting researchers with performers.
- Promote excellence in the field.
- Provide education and training to meet the needs of the membership.
- Identify and communicate key issues affecting older adults and theatre arts.
- Encourage community service and outreach through performance.

All of these principles help make STLA a great resource for older adult groups to start or improve their own theatre club. Theatre for older adults provides avenues to accomplish all sorts of opportunities whether it is educational, social or cultural.

Related Resources:

Senior Theatre League of America. <<http://www.seniortheatreleague.org>>.

“Reminiscing with Kitty Carlisle Hart.” *The Cincinnati Post Online Edition*. August 3, 2004. <<http://www.cincypost.com/2004/08/03/kitty080304.html>>.