

Dear Families,

My name is Carissa and I am so excited to be piloting our important program with Hampshire Shakespeare this summer. After working with kids in multiple roles (nanny, teacher, coach) and performing for kids for many years while an undergrad at Smith College I pursued my graduate degree in Drama Therapy at NYU. Drama Therapy is the intentional use of drama and/or theater processes to achieve therapeutic goals (nadta.org).

Our program this summer does not have “therapeutic goals” and is NOT drama therapy. However, in this pilot session, we do plan to place greater emphasis on the social and emotional aspects of theater processes including social skill building, empathy, and emotional expression/awareness. Approaching them more directly still means the children will learn theater games, theater skills, and create a show to present at the end of the week. The difference will be in small moments and discussions as they arise in the work. Children do not always present their feelings solely through words and my application of interventions used in drama therapy will provide a developmentally appropriate opportunity for the campers to vocalize their thoughts and feelings.

An example of one such intervention is called “doubling.” During a scene actors are asked to freeze and audience members, one at a time, put their hand on the shoulder of an actor and identify what the character might be thinking or feeling. This encourages students to engage with the motivations and feelings of others, thus building empathy skills.

Please know that I will maintain open communication with parents. I will reach out to you if something seems to need your attention and you may always contact me with questions or concerns. Thank you so much for considering our program and I look forward to seeing some familiar and new faces in July!

Warmly,

Carissa Dagenais, MA (RDT Candidate)