



## Do You Dance? YES!

"We all dance," says Jacquelyn Buglisi, Artistic Director of Buglisi Foreman Dance, which on April 20th brought an interactive ballet performance to adolescents at Rockland Children's Psychiatric Center. "We dance at weddings, we dance when children are born, we dance at graduation. We dance at these rites of passage we go through in life. And so when I say to the children, "Do you dance?" they always say "YES!" Right away they are relating with us, they are a part of us. My heart goes out to those children who perhaps have not had the opportunity to be loved in our world. Dance is a tremendous way of allowing expression, especially when you cannot express everything in words. There is no greater reward than to be able to touch the hearts and minds of all of our children. They have all possibilities within them."

Lisa Allen of Rockland Children's Psychiatric Center conveys the effects of this Buglisi Foreman Dance performance upon the adolescents in the audience: "The performance was very unique, unlike anything we've had before. The dances were beautiful and the children seemed intrigued by what they were watching. It was difficult for most of the children to see the interpretation of the events of 9/11 in the dance, but the dance instructor was interactive and explained what certain moves represented and the children got it. Another interactive part of the show was when the dancers invited some of the children up on stage to learn part of a dance." Other staff marveled at the positivity and rapt attention of the audience. Above: Artistic Director Jacquelyn Buglisi, Buglisi Foreman Dance outreach.



**Michael Jon Spencer, Founder & Executive Director of HAI** Photo: Lynn Padwe

At a recent HAI performance, there were three people over 100 years of age. Shortly thereafter we had a different presentation at an elementary school. These are the "new faces" of HAI... people much older and much younger than when we started nearly 40 years ago. At that time the goal was to harness the arts to help those who had been institutionalized for decades in New York State's psychiatric centers. The world has since changed dramatically, and HAI's mission has evolved to meet new challenges. First was adapting services to reach deinstitutionalized mental health consumers in hundreds of community settings. Over the years, we have devoted increasing energies to growth as well as healing. After the events of 9/11, and in collaboration with Princeton University, HAI extended and expanded work with schools. Children today are more vulnerable to the impact of violence, abuse and neglect. In response, HAI has developed an array of school programs, including several that use role-play and student-created theater presentations to confront critical issues. The most recent addition to HAI's educational theater pieces, *Take Ya Time*, developed in conjunction with Region 7, addresses bullying and other threats that elementary school students face. It joins a broad range of services (see pages 6 and 7) that HAI provides to the schools.

The admonition to *Take Ya Time* cannot apply to HAI as an organization, whose agenda for the coming years is full. Planning has begun to celebrate the 40th anniversary year beginning July 2008. And, when our current 10-year lease expires on our Soho office/loft in March 2009, we will once again have to move. The 40th anniversary will present an opportunity to "take stock," to look back and celebrate our accomplishments as pioneers of the arts-for-healing movement and innovators in developing exciting ways to reach people through the arts. Then, as HAI later approaches its half-century mark, the agenda will focus on transitions: a move to a hopefully permanent location, if we haven't already, and preparing for a new generation of staff who will be just as dedicated as the Founder and senior personnel have been for decades, to advance HAI's mission of healing and growth through the arts.

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