

FAMOUS  
PEOPLE  
PLAYERS

where special happens

# EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS & STUDY GUIDE

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT

– Diane Lynn Dupuy, CM

Famous PEOPLE Players is a non-profit charitable organization that specializes in engaging PEOPLE who are developmentally challenged. Founded in 1974, we are Canada's premier Black Light Theatre Company and have built a state of the art dinner theatre that is internationally known for its spectacular performances. From Las Vegas, Broadway and around the world, we have brought integrations to the forefront and changed the way people perceive people with disABILITIES.



As a child I was a slow learner in school. I could never concentrate and pay attention. I couldn't sit still and I always interrupted the class. . I repeated grade 3 and grade 6. I felt like a loser and I took a vow I would never try anything again for fear of failing. If that was today I would have be diagnosed with ADHD. For me, ADHD means Awesome Dreams with High Drama. Most teachers were pulling their hair out saying, "What is going to become of Diane?" But there was one teacher who recognized that I was born with a gift—the gift of my imagination. She allowed me to explore my creativity and I loved her.

My work with Famous PEOPLE Players started because I saw something in these young people, who at that time in our country were labelled "mentally retarded"...a terrible word but that was what it was. I met with a doctor who was the head of the National Association for the Mentally Retarded and told him I believed that these people could be integrated into society and become normalized. He agreed but did not know how to prove it. "I do," I said, "I will start up a black light theater company where no one will see the players, just the stunning and beautiful glow in the dark props and puppets that defy gravity on stage."

That is how FPP was founded. Six months later we opened in Las Vegas for the world's most famous entertainer, Liberace –who was more famous than Justin Bieber is today! The reviews were spectacular. No one knew anything about the company or the players, just that the show was great.

Premier Bill Davis, inspired by what happened in Las Vegas, shut down the schools for mentally retarded and integrated all students into the regular school system. In 1986 Famous PEOPLE Players won rave reviews on Broadway, and the Associations changed their name to Community Living. We are a part of Heritage Canada.

In honour of Canada's 150th birthday, this is how your students should celebrate-- with diversity, inclusion, creativity, and with hope in their hearts to learn to make their dream come true.

A teacher is the most important person in a child's life. They will remember you forever. Take them on a flight to imagination and let them discover, with Famous PEOPLE Players, that nothing is impossible and that when we work hard we can achieve many great things.

Our study guide is a journey into the hearts and minds of our future entrepreneurs of the world.

# Behind the Scenes

## The History of Famous PEOPLE Players

Famous People Players started with a dream. From that dream grew what is now a world-famous theatre company with a long-standing tradition of excellence.

Diane Dupuy began to establish herself a reputation as a solo puppeteer in the 1970's. Her mother, Mary C. Thornton was a talented seamstress, and realizing Diane's talent, built her a puppet theatre. Starting small, Diane would perform in front of her classmates, friends and family. She was then asked to perform at the Canadian National Exhibition.

Diane learned about the Black light technique where when the people who perform in it cannot be seen. Thus the seed was planted for the forming of Famous PEOPLE Players

At that time in our country these people labeled MR were segregated, but Diane was convinced that these people could be integrated into society and thus be normalized. She decided that the best venue to enrich the minds of these individuals was in the world of black light theatre. This working environment would prove that these individuals were capable of what was once thought to be impossible. Diane also wanted to inspire the philosophy that EVERYONE has a creative core inside of them that can be unlocked.

The road to building the dream was not an easy one. Diane was met with much opposition from people who were doubtful that her dream could be a reality.

Famous PEOPLE Players received a three-month grant from the Federal Government's Opportunity for Youth Program. They were hired to perform at the Canadian National Exhibition during the 1974 edition of the Toronto fair. Anyone that attended their performances was not made aware of the people behind the glow in the dark puppets as they were not seen. The three month experiment proved successful they were capable of be integrated into society and they were normalizing themselves into society. Even though the grant had run out the future of Famous PEOPLE Players was doubtful, Diane did not give up on her dream.

Shortly there after the company was invited to perform at a special luncheon honoring the greatest entertainer Liberace in 1975. From the company's inception, the late and famous Liberace was an inspiration. His larger-than-life showmanship was a perfect model for the black light company, and *Aruba Liberace* was the company's signature piece.

Liberace had no idea of the concept of FPP he just fell head over heels in love with the show and invited the company to open for him in Las Vegas. When he found out who the players were he was insistent that Famous PEOPLE Players join his act, saying, "It's not because of who you are that makes these people applaud you. It's because you're good. You are truly talented people and you have every right to be here on this stage." In October, 1975, "Famous PEOPLE Players" was on a Las Vegas Marquee!

After that big break, there was no stopping them. They toured with Liberace throughout Canada and the United States. They have been on many television shows and toured to the People's Republic of China. The company re-opened Radio City Music Hall to rave reviews in 1980. "Special People", a movie about the origins of the company aired in 1984, with several of the company member playing themselves in the film. The show "A Little Like Magic" had a successful run on Broadway with rave reviews, in 1984 and again in 1994 with "A little More Magic."

The company has since traveled all over the world, including tours to Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan, Chile, Bermuda, and Hawaii.

On February 18, 1994, Governor General of Canada, The Right Honorable Ramon Hnatyshyn opened the first dinner theatre in the world dedicated to people with special needs. Famous PEOPLE Players is not only a theatre—it has an excellent reputation for teaching and integrating people with developmental challenges all over the world, providing them with first hand work experience in restaurant, theatre, arts administration, and visual arts (prop shop).

Famous PEOPLE Players has had the pleasure of working alongside many famous benefactors such as Actor Paul Newman, who graciously funded the restaurant, Pop star Phil Collins, who donated the sound for the theatre, and Actor Tom Cruise, who filmed a special promotion with the company.

Famous PEOPLE Players has faced challenges, such as having to find a new location for the Dine and Dream dinner theatre, but the dedication and hard work continues to pay off, and the company continues to receive recognition and fame for their work. Forty-three years later, FPP is still a successful company. Today there are two performing troupes: one that remains at the Dine and Dream theatre, and another that tours extensively around the world. New people join and must learn how to remain true to the company's exact standards of professionalism, while seasoned performers move to other challenges and adventures. One thing is certain however—the experiences of Famous PEOPLE Players performers will stay with them for a lifetime and are unlike anything that will be learned anywhere else.

Diane's creative talents have not only been dedicated to the theatre—she is also a best-selling author. Diane has written 5 best-selling books for both children and adults: *Daring to Dream*, *Throw Your Heart Over The Fence*, *The Little Girl Who Did...WHAT?!!*, *The Teacher & the Soul*, and *Cocktails in the Chemo Lounge*.

Diane's efforts have been recognized in many ways, including bestowment of honorary degrees from five Universities: Windsor, Trent, Calgary, Brock and University of Toronto. She has also been appointed a citizenship court judge, swearing in new Canadian Citizens.

# ACT I – Black Light Classroom ROCKS!

## Half-Day Programs & Full-Day Programs

In addition to the magic of the Black Light Theatre performance, you may enhance your students' experience at Famous PEOPLE Players with a wide variety of Elementary and Secondary program options.



## Social media

- Famous PEOPLE Players is all about positivity and inclusion -- Challenge your students to help make the world a better place by only posting positive messages and images on social media.
- Students participate in a discussion about the good, the bad and the ugly aspects of social media, then have the opportunity to post about their experiences at Famous PEOPLE Players through the lens of 'doing good'.

## Team-Building

- The magical black light performances at Famous PEOPLE Players exist solely as a result of the dedicated teamwork of all the PEOPLE involved.
- FPP Workshops for students will reinforce the important message that ***one person can make a difference, but it takes a team to make a miracle.***

## The Entrepreneur Within

- Dianne Dupuy has won world-wide recognition for the results of her entrepreneurial dreams, including the EY Entrepreneur of the Year award. A visit to Famous PEOPLE Players with the focus on encouraging students to follow their own dreams can help to awaken the possibilities of a future generation of entrepreneurs.
- The achievements of those who have dared to believe in themselves at FPP teaches kids of all ages to push beyond any limitations they may perceive having, and to rise to be their best true selves

# ACT I – Black Light Classroom ROCKS!

## Cooperative Education, SHSM/ICE

- Famous PEOPLE Players offers opportunities for secondary school students to integrate their academic studies with practical experience in business and industry through a Cooperative Education program placement at the theatre.
- Famous PEOPLE Players is proud to be aligned with The Ministry of Education as part of the Specialist High Skills Majors/ Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship program, which let students focus on a career path that matches their skills and interests while meeting the requirements of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

## Catholic School Retreat

- Famous PEOPLE Players offers a spiritual retreat, making dreams come true through the power of prayer. Endorsed by Jean Vanier, and based on Diane’s book *The Teacher and the Soul*.
- The Teacher and the Soul is available at a special price of \$10 each, plus HST, when purchasing a box of 40. (Regular price \$24.95)

## Special Education

- Famous PEOPLE Players is the perfect place to take your special needs students. A visit to FPP, “Where Special Happens” provides first-hand exposure to the possibilities that your students have available to them. A day at Famous PEOPLE Players can reinforce your students’ belief in themselves and their potential to achieve beyond expectations.

## ACT II – The Performance



### **Black Light Theatre Performance**

#### **FPP Theatre Etiquette**

- Arrive 30 minutes prior to the start of the show
- No electronic devices in the theatre
- No food, drinks, candy or gum inside the FPP facility
- Flash Photography and Audio-Video recording is PROHIBITED
- For safety & etiquette, it is mandatory to remain for the duration of the show
- Be respectful of others in the audience trying to enjoy the show
- Be respectful of FPP staff
- Do not leave the theatre during the show
- Do not walk, or throw anything on the stage
- Laugh, cheer, clap and ENJOY!

## Act III – Dine and Dream



### **Pizza Lunch**

Following the performance, your class can have the perfect after-show party when they gather in the Dining Room to enjoy a magnificent Pizza Lunch. It is the perfect opportunity to allow your students to engage in conversation about the Famous PEOPLE Players black light performance while enjoying a meal together.

### **Share the Experience – Be an FPP Ambassador**

Students attending the *Black Light Classroom Rocks* with their class will receive a coupon to return for dinner and a show.

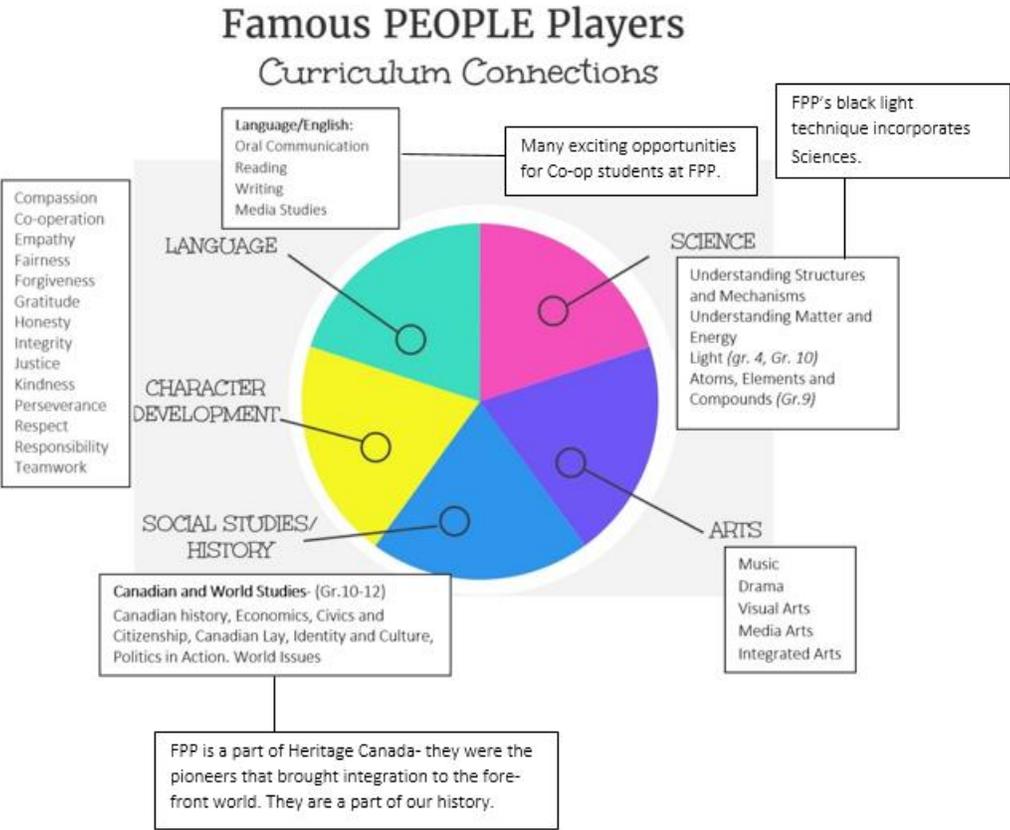
*\*Student's dinner and show will be complimentary when accompanied by a paying parent/caregiver.*

# Encore! Curriculum Connections

In addition to the obvious connections to the **Arts Curriculum** (Drama, Dance, Integrated Arts, Media Arts, Visual Arts), a visit to Famous PEOPLE Players can be a valuable compliment to many other courses as well.

Famous PEOPLE Players is proud to work with SHSM students to obtain certificate training in a variety of areas. Famous PEOPLE Players is also the perfect placement for Co-Op Education students.

**Here are just some of the Ontario Curriculum  
Elementary and Secondary School courses/subjects  
that can be enhanced by a class visit to Famous PEOPLE Players:**



# FPP Curriculum Connections- Follow-Up Activities

## Arts:

- Making Masks - students can make masks that portray a particular emotion  
- students can paint masks with fluorescent paint, trying to make the mask look happy or friendly in ordinary light and scary under black light
- Crayon Resist - students colour a picture of the glowing puppets using bright or fluorescent Crayons, then paint over with black paint
- Paper Mache - create a paper mache mask or small figures that represent puppets that inspired you when you watched the Famous PEOPLE Players show
- Puppets - shadow puppets, or finger or hand puppets, and write a script around the characters

## Writing

- A Review - write a newspaper or magazine article about the Famous PEOPLE Players show you just watched... think about which important facts you want to get across to your readers
- Point of View - write a story or monologue about the performance from the point of view of one of the puppets or props
- Creative - imagine you could glow in the dark like the Famous PEOPLE Players puppets. What kind of adventures would you have?
- Letter Writing - write a letter to the Famous PEOPLE Players, telling them how you enjoyed the show. Send the letters to us!

## Social Media

- Responsible Citizenship - Post your experiences at FPP on social media and 'put positive messages out there' to make the world a better place.

# FPF Curriculum Connections- Follow-Up Activities

## Science

- Light (elementary) - use prisms to examine the spectrum of visible light
  - produce and explain a rainbow
  - predict and then use black light to determine the fluorescence of a variety of materials
- Light (secondary) - describe and explain various types of light emissions (chemiluminescence, bioluminescence, incandescence, fluorescence, Phosphorescence, triboluminescence)
  - describe properties of light, and use them to explain naturally occurring optical phenomena

## Drama

- Mime a Story - in groups, listen to a piece of music and then work together to mime a story that goes with the music you have heard
- Be a Puppet - in pairs, or groups of 3 or 4, pretend that you are a puppet that your classmates have to manipulate you to make you move
  - puppets must remain motionless unless moved by their puppeteers
  - switch roles!
- Shadow Plays - experiment with shadows by shining a bright light on a hanging white sheet
  - tell a story through shadows, using your body and optional props

## SHSM/ICE

- Create a plan on how to advance Famous PEOPLE Players into the future, creating new audiences and awareness.
- Investigate how to restructure business plans and marketing for non-profit companies to achieve more success

# FPP Curriculum Connections- Follow-Up Activities

## **Social Studies/Canadian and World Studies/History**

- Human Rights - How has Diane Dupuy and Famous PEOPLE Players made an impact on Human Rights in Canada?
- Identity/Citizenship/Heritage - In what ways has Famous PEOPLE Players contributed to the development of Canadian heritage and identity?
- Historical Perspective - describe some significant instances of social inequality for people with developmental disabilities in Canada, and how progress is being made
- Civic Issues - “What is the difference between equity and equality? How does Famous PEOPLE Players promote equity and equality?”

## **Character Development**

- Motivation - Is it more difficult to do something if other people say you can, or say you can't? Explain your reasoning.  
- Reflect on why you do things, and what you get out of it? Think about the performers in Famous PEOPLE Players. Why do they do what they do?
- Social Justice - In what ways does the work of Diane and her company inspire social justice?
- Virtues/Traits - What virtues or character traits do you see in the people involved in the production of Famous PEOPLE Players shows? How are these virtues or traits demonstrated?
- Why do you think they are called “Famous PEOPLE Players”?