

By Randy Harris '68

In addition to their focus on performance art that includes on-campus and traveling commercial plays, Shakespeare & Company has an aggressive resident and outreach focus on Education and Training which continues the legacy that was started on the campus by Lenox School. Their education programs focus on youth under 20 and their training programs on adults over 20 that are interested in a theater career. The S&Co goal is to help each individual to discover the world of Shakespeare through creative learning experiences that create joy, excitement and passion, explore the language and offer performances in company productions. Described below are S&Co's varied programs, which show that education is at the very core of what they do and that the education legacy of the campus lives on.

Their student and school-oriented "Flagship" education programs involve both a spring traveling show and the Fall Festival of Shakespeare. The traveling show (New England Tour of Shakespeare) involves introducing Shakespeare to students in schools and theaters (approximately 77) throughout New England, New York and New Jersey, with a student workshop added on to each visit. The Fall Festival of Shakespeare involves hiring contract employees to concurrently conduct a nine week course at 10 separate area schools to produce a play with up to 35 cast members. The instructors work with students for part of the day and return to S&Co to work on sets and costumes for the remainder of the day. On the 10<sup>th</sup> week, everyone comes to the S&Co campus and performs all ten plays over a single extended weekend, with the actors watching all the performances.

Summer youth programs on the campus include the "Riotous Youth" a 2-week day camp for students from 7 to 15 and the Shakespeare & Young Company (SYCO) for students 16 to 20. Occasionally rooms at Lenox High School have been used if on-campus space is limited. Adult training programs are also offered.

Additionally, a voluntary program for Massachusetts youth offenders is also provided for several communities at least annually or more frequently if the number of offenders choosing it so warrants. The program grew out of a previous S&Co Educational Director's experience with the Department of Youth Services. Non-incarcerated offenders are sentenced to 5-6 weeks, 4-days a week, 3-hours a day during which they prepare and then put on a play for family members. The experience benefits the offenders by instilling confidence, a sense of accomplishment and team-building skills. Roles are often split between participants so that memorizing lines doesn't become an overwhelming task.

Teaching-the-teacher training is also not forgotten and two programs exist. One is an on-campus residential 1-week course and the other is a 4-week residential program offered three out of every four years. This program, most recently held at Amherst College, is called the National Institute on Teaching Shakespeare and is sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, which precludes continuous sponsorships, hence the break every fourth year.

Thus, as you've read, the education of youth both continues on campus and reaches out from it, touching almost 25,000 young people and their teachers each year. The LSAA is proud to support these programs through its annual scholarship and donation to S&Co.