



Wednesday, March 25, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

Last month, I had the wonderful opportunity to work with Donna Washington on a five-day storytelling residency that reached over 3,600 youth in our community. The experience of working with Donna from the initial inquiry to the booking itself all went incredibly smoothly; and above all, it was such a treat to make Donna's artistry accessible to so many children in our community.

Our booking with Donna consisted of 12 shows in area schools and two student matinee performances at our site for bussed-in school groups. During the five days, Donna was a joy to work with; she was always at schools in plenty of time to get ready for the show, very accommodating, and easy to work with from start to finish.

Furthermore, the feedback we received from all of the school hosts was overwhelmingly positive. Many were amazed at how Donna could sustain the children's interest for a 45-minute show with just two stories. Her facial expressions and vocal dynamics lit up the stage, and I stood amazed in our theater the morning of our student matinees at how one person could captivate a sold out crowd of elementary students in such a meaningful way. Personally, I thoroughly enjoyed listening to Donna tell stories and interacting with them myself, and I could tell from the level of involvement among the students in our theater that they were also having a blast.

Working with performers like Donna is always a dream for presenters. I would highly recommend bringing Donna Washington to your community or venue. She is a high-quality performer whose artistic ability combined with her knowledge and experience of performing for school audiences make her extremely adaptable and able to work with a variety of ages. Because she caters her shows specifically to the age make-up of the audience, everyone leaves the performance with a fuller experience. Additionally, Donna's art of storytelling provides a fantastic point from which to link Language Arts and literacy curricula.

We are so happy to have included Donna Washington in our School Show Series this year and look forward to having her back in the future at some point. Maybe next time, we will add on a public performance for our family audience as well!

Sincerely,

Brooke Kesterson  
Director of Children's & Family Programs  
The ArtsCenter