

Performing Arts and Community Exchange Feedback

Guest:

We have been trying ever since Friday morning to find the words to describe our reactions and our emotions after attending Through These Walls. The performances by inside and outside students were amazing, but the spirit that permeated the entire room -- inside and outside students, incarcerated men who did not perform, teachers, advisors, jail staff, friends and visitors alike -- was absolutely inspirational. We think everyone there was about 2 inches taller at noon than they were at 10 a.m. Please let the men in the RSVP and the USF students know that they made change that day-

I'm writing to thank you so much for the performance today. I was really touched and inspired. It feels like such vital and important work. The shaman, Mike Brown's poetry words, the rap lyrics and performance of the rap, the very complete dance about money- better than what I often see in theaters on the outside.

WOW- I guess I wasn't expecting such a powerful piece- I knew it was in the jail and wondered if it was going to be overly emotional...you know the confessional over top stuff...The section that made me weep was when the men listed people who have died (was it people they have killed? People they loved who have been killed?) and layers of bodies placed on the floor- gun violence/power/pain...there is so much grief.

There is much to say but as an educator and part of USF I am proud that PACE is at USF. It is what the mission of the university proclaims. The Q & A was particularly moving for me- to hear from the men in RSVP about the change they have felt occur about education- this is what it is about...how education can be accessible to all. The men are already educators- they taught me so much that day. Thank you.

What a beautiful piece the Babel Story is- it was my favorite part of the performance this year. I enjoyed speaking with Troy after the performance and he remembered me from last year. I've printed the piece and have it posted in my cube in my office. Thanks for all your work in supporting this project once again...

This was an incredibly powerful show. I feel grateful to have witnessed it and am very inspired by all involved. I have the desire for the speech by the man in the gold (really he sounded like a prophet) to be accessible to the public in some way. Profound. Life changing. And real news given all the crap that is going on right now.

Thank you for inviting me to attend your performance last week. I am so glad I was able to see the work of your students and "inside" performers, and I was glad my husband was able to attend as well. Towards the end of the performance I was crying so hard I was afraid that my sobs were distracting to the people around me, but really I found the experience moving from start to finish. The content was wonderful, but even more powerful for me was the energy of the performers before, during, and after the show. I was also so moved by the presence of both older and younger prisoners- there was something very powerful about the respect and connection they had to one another.

USF student:

This class is an exchange between communities, we are both giving and receiving knowledge directly from people, a knowledge that no book could ever teach. By developing artistic collaborations with people you may never have interacted with, this class prepares you to leave college with an understanding of people and of your place in your community.

Man incarcerated at SF Jail #5:

It takes a lot of guts to walk into a jail and create a safe place where those of us who are incarcerated want to come every week. It made me look at a different side of me, that weather we are locked up or on the streets we all have something good inside.

USF Student:

I have learned just how valuable listening is. The women in SF Jail #8 have taught me to search deep within people instead of judging them based on surface appearances; class, race, language, clothing, location.

Woman incarcerated in SF Jail #8:

We have developed hope and understanding regardless of race or money. I walked in scared and not knowing what to expect and now my perceptions of people has changed, it is powerful to bring us all together through art. It has made me realize that I should never judge a person by what I hear about them, but by what they show me of themselves.