

## CSAC PARTNERS WITH UNIFIED THEATER™



"The Connecticut Student Activities Conference is thrilled to be partnering with Unified Theatre™. We look forward to sponsoring workshops to assist our member schools in launching this fantastic educational opportunity for students."

- Dave Maloney, CAS Assistant Executive Director

Lights dim. Students excitedly wait backstage. Music selected for the perfect "opening number" echoes through the auditorium. Actors step into the spotlight. They dance, laugh, sing, and act as one cohesive unit - one they've developed over the last six weeks of student-led rehearsal. This production is unique in that it equally features students of all abilities, interests, and backgrounds: the student with autism who loves to sing; the football team captain who has some trouble memorizing lines; the valedictorian who thought she was too shy to perform;

the girl with down syndrome who leads a dance number; the new student who didn't feel welcome in other school groups; the young person who uses a wheelchair and says lines in sign language. The audience sees students genuinely want to be performing together. They've developed friendships that will last long after curtain call. In the closing number, the audience jumps to a standing ovation - smiling widely, many with tears on their cheeks.

**This is Unified Theater™.**



Photo by Michelle Gardella

At Unified Theater™, we work with schools to help them develop and sustain student-led theatrical groups equally featuring the talents of individuals with and without special needs. Productions are fully inclusive. They facilitate collaboration between students of different backgrounds, passions, and abilities join in a putting on a show that pushes them to shed inhibition, take risks, and challenge perceptions of ability together. Right now, we work with eight schools and three community agencies to support their Unified Theater™ groups and we'd like to work with your school too! We're a CAS approved activity that will challenge your students and school community to emphasize ability over disability, creativity over conformity, and collaboration over competition.

"Unified Theater™ is a group that challenges everyone that's involved to step out of their element and grow as a person."

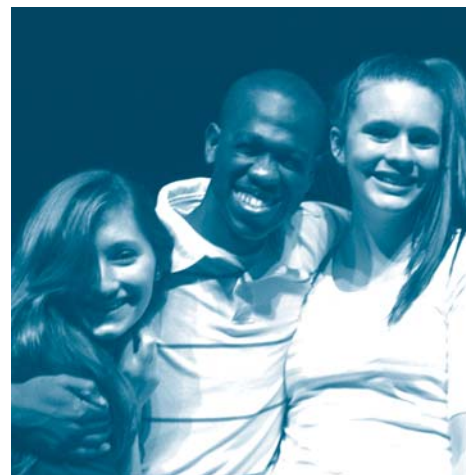
- Ali, Unified Theater™ Alumnae

"In my experience, no program or activity reaches the elusive goal of inclusion as completely - or as joyously - as Unified Theater™."

- Tom Fiorentino, Parent  
Former Chair, West Hartford  
Board of Education

"I enjoy Unified Theater™ so much is because from all the troubles and stresses of the school day, you get two hours to have as much fun as you want while still being a great role model and friend to kids who don't have the abilities you have."

- Brady, Unified Theater™  
Participant



## Principal to Principal

"Unified Theater™ is, in my mind, the single most inspiring event that we have at Conard High School every year. I am never more proud of our students, nor our whole community, than when I watch students from all different backgrounds, and abilities, come together in a performance that lets everyone be a star. It really reminds me of the power education can have to lift up the spirits of children, and families, and it truly provides definition to the term "least restrictive environment". If I could choose one evening event for my entire staff to go to, it would be this, for it is the very embodiment of the possibilities of all students, and powerful evidence of the ability for all to learn when placed in the proper environment. Every year when the performance ends, not only am I speechless, but tears of joy are streaming down my face. Being a part of Unified Theater, and being able to support it at Conard H.S., is perhaps my greatest privilege as principal."

- Tom Moore, Principal  
Conard High School, West Hartford

## YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE:

- ★ Visit [www.unifiedtheater.org](http://www.unifiedtheater.org)
- ★ Nominate a student leader in your school. Visit the "Start a Group" section of the website or send an email to [contactus@unifiedtheater.org](mailto:contactus@unifiedtheater.org).
- ★ We'll be holding a student leader training on January 21st at CAS in Cheshire. Join us!!!

