

Justin Carr Wants World Peace



POSTS

THE SHOW MUST GO ON

NOVEMBER 4, 2016 | SUSAN TOLER-CARR | [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

THE SHOW MUST GO ON!

Written 11/3/2013

I am visiting with Justin's (Juju's) little cousins Mia (7 yrs.) and Dashton (3.5 yrs). I keep saying to myself, "This is not how it is supposed to be. Justin has been the one to entertain and play with his cousins- not me!" However, I can't let them know my pain, so as I watch them play attentively, my mind can't help but wander back to the good old days when Justin was their age. I sit here and watch them play with pure joy and creativity in their hearts-I just have to smile.

Darrell and I have no regrets on how we raised and loved Justin. We noticed his affinities for the arts a long time ago. As any wise parent should do, we nourished, encouraged and applauded him every

step of the way. This was in spite of some kids trying to steal his joy. Performing for boys his age only became popular for the young folks- after “Disney High School Musical” made its debut in 2006. Remember that?? The boys began to think it was cool to be multi-talented, to dance, sing etc. on and off the playing field. Parents take heed. Let your kids minds run free, there is no reason to cage up their thoughts “ to be” just because it may not be the majority rule or not gender specific.

As I sit here watching Mia and Dashton play in their house, which is consumed and invaded by toys and trinkets, I have to smile and watch in wonder as they move between their huge selection of toys and adventures. A few minutes ago, my heart skipped a beat when they pulled out their homemade puppet theater and began setting up the stage for “the show”. Dashton ran to get the puppets, and they both huddled in the small box theater ready to go. Then, all of a sudden, little Mia blurted out “Wait, I have to get the back drop scenery!” She ran and pulled a few drawings from her own personal stack of her art pictures she drew- then she said” “ THE SHOW MUST GO ON! You see, when Justin was Mia’s age, he uses to pull out his puppet theater, make sure the set was technically sound, set up the seats for us to relax, and then he would present one of his many magical shows. Mia is an exact replica of Justin, because she too loves art. When she is not in school, she does wonderful paintings and drawings, just like Juju did when he was her age. Dashton, on the other hand, is the builder. I have been watching him move from legos to blocks as he uses his imagination to build support systems for his trains, boats, and cars. Juju lives on through both of his little cousins, I have to believe.



Dashton and Mia

After Mia and Dashton presented their 2-minute show, I had to quietly and quickly leave the room because my eyes were getting full. I then went to re-read Justin’s application that he wrote in 2011 for a Technical Theatre program. The following excerpt describes his passion for the theater. Darrell and I knew from an early age that he loved the theater.

Center for Creative Youth (CCY) Application Summer 2011
Justin Carr Autobiographic Statement

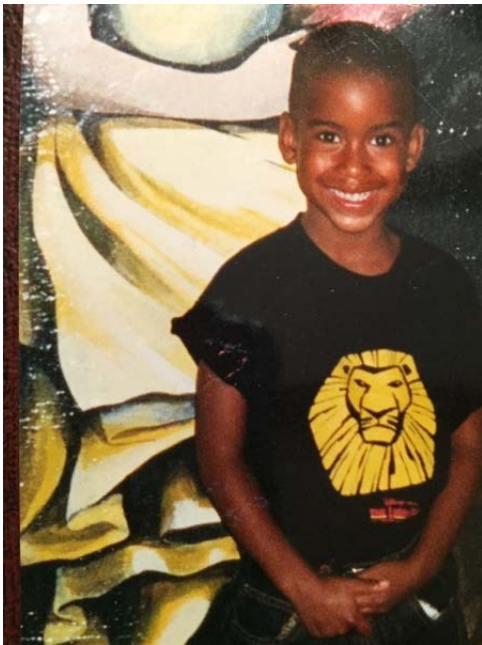
When I was in first grade, I was introduced to performing arts through my teacher and my principal when they asked me to participate in a few school performances. I was the Wolf in The Three Piggy Opera and a munchkin in The Wizard of Oz. Each year I participated in the school plays and I quickly got used to performing on stage. I also watched with a close eye how the older students designed and built the show sets. I even had my mom bring me to school on Saturdays so I could help in any way I while they prepared for the productions. Ever since I haven’t been able to get enough of the arts whether it is in

visual or performing art skills.

When I was 7 years old “Santa Claus” gave me my first miniature stage. I would spend many hours preparing the stage for shows with my friends. I learned how to use various discarded items found around my house to design the sets. I even remember using flashlights for the stage lights and some burgundy fabric for the curtains to duplicate the stage at my school.”

Justin saw “The Lion King” Broadway show 5 times when he was in Kindergarten. Each time he came back home and would study the program, look at the pictures and cast and then tell us how the set design and show had changed, since the previous one. He also left behind a drawer full of playbills and ticket stubs from over 30 shows that he enjoyed throughout his short life. He was able to see “Wicked” on numerous occasions and he enjoyed the backstage tour.

He also made sure he was in every show at McKinley Elementary School when Ms. Q put on a show. He was in about 13 productions. From the Big Wolf when he in 1st grade to Rafiki when he was in 4th.



I never heard him practice his lines nor songs and we were completely surprised and in awe each time when we watched him perform on the opening night.



Merle saw him in Lion King and told us that he should go to Harvard-Westlake to continue with his passions. He was in productions at Church, and for outside agencies and for each performance he would master his lines posthaste. Boy oh boy, he loved it.

I remember after he played Balthasar in Romeo & Juliet

when he was in 7th grade, he said he was happy with the small part he got. After the show, his friend Autumn Chiklis dad Michael came up to us and said “ Your son was great, I will enjoy watching him in the years to come! His Auntie Hester said, “ There is no small role, just small actors.” During Justin’s performance in “Grease,” as he belted out the song “ Mooning” and the actor Blair Underwood happened to be in the audience. I watched him nod his head and smile. After it was over, Blair looked over at me and gestured as if to confirm he was my son, gave thumbs up, and said, “Your son has talent!” Justin shied away from compliments and would always just respond politely “ Thank you” He did not want a lot of hooplas, he just was having fun and doing what he loved best!



Justin as Bert Healy in “Annie”

Fast forward to the summer of 2012. I recently learned that Justin and his friends (Via Face book) were trying to figure out what school play was going to be selected. Honestly, he felt a bit mediocre about the selection of “Oklahoma” and when he got an ensemble and role of Slim, he was a slight bit upset for the moment. However, he felt that if he dropped out, he would not be able to be in the finale show during his senior year. So he realized his shortcomings and just did his best!



After

“Oklahoma” was over, Justin’s mind went into overdrive as he tried to give hints to the heads of the Theatre Department choices for the Fall 2013 Musical. He studied the original and sequential “Hair-spray” videos, and went to work on his proposed “Cast List”

Every chance he got; he tried dropping hints to all who would listen. He said to me “ Mom, I hope they do “Hairspray” next year. I don’t have to be in it, I can just build the set and help with the choreography, this way we can get a lot of diverse HW talent to be in it!” I truly believed him. However, I knew that he would be a great candidate for the lead role of Seaweed because he was a triple threat (as they say in the acting world) and he could indeed, sing, act, and dance!

So, we were thrilled last January when we learned that Pasadena Community College was doing a production of “Hairspray” Karen Benjamin, the mother of one of Justin’s friends Molly, spearheaded it. Subsequently, we made plans to see it on Friday, February 22, 2013.

Justin’s famous last words to me on this dreadful day will forever be embedded in my heart and mind. He called me from swim practice around 3:10 p.m. He happily said “ Hi Mom, this is Justin, Molly is coming home with me to see “ Hairspray”. I said, “OK Honey, I will pick you guys up and we will have dinner before”.... We all know what happened next.... That is why I made Justin’s celebration of life program around the theme of “Hairspray” We also picked songs from his favorite musicals for the solos i.e.

“ We are Family” from Dreamgirls”, I know where I have been “ Hairspray” and “ Make them hear you” from “Ragtime” as passionately sung by his friends, Channel, Taylor and Ryan and the Harvard-Westlake Chamber Singers.

Guess what? Harvard-Westlake did select “ Hairspray” as this year Fall Musical. So, as I brace myself, to watch this fabulous show on Friday, November 8, 2013, I know that the kids will do a wonderful job in the production, and I will smile in between the tears. I also got a chance to see a copy of Justin’s cast list that he put together in August 2012. He was 95 percent accurate on who should be cast in the various roles (from those who tried out). He loved Theatre from the backstage to onstage, and he could not get enough of it. I know that the H-W Cast and Crew will put their hearts into this show. And, from the heavenly distant “Justin aka “Seaweed” our butterfly will be singing, dancing,acting, directing and soaring from above saying “THE SHOW MUST GO ON!” and KEEP SMILING FOR JUSTIN” because you know that is what he would want us to do. Good luck I can’t wait to see you all shine in ‘THE SHOW”



I can't make this stuff up!

Love, Justin's Mom aka (OTTO)

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Special Thanks

The Glendale Centre Theatre, Tom Slotten and the Occidental College Costume Shop, Iguana Clothing, The Costume House, Susan and Dorell Carr, Janice Richards, Brenda Simon, James Lent, Mark Hill, Kevin O'Malley, Allan Sasaki, Rodger Guerrero, Emily Kennedy, Pat Nolte, Cyndy Winter, Katie Lowry-Chong, Shawn Costantino, Ezra Pugh, Felipe Anguano, Sharon Cuseo, Beth Slatterly, and the HW Maintenance Team, Jim Crawford, Mark Geiger and CJL Security, The HW Computer Services Department

Thanks to the Upper School Hospitality Committee for the refreshments and the parents who donated items and their support.

THERE WILL BE NON-TOXIC THEATRICAL HAZE USED DURING THIS SHOW

VIDEO AND/OR AUDIO RECORDING OF THIS PRODUCTION IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.

**IN LOVING MEMORY
JUSTIN EUGENE CARR
1996-2013**

"I JUST THINK IT'S STUPID WE CAN'T ALL DANCE TOGETHER." - TRACY
JUSTINCARRWANTSWORLDPEACE.ORG