



## East Lansing Public Schools

February 28, 2019

Dear Parents,

We are very fortunate to have the opportunity to be included in a special musical experience. There is a waiting list for interested schools but we were lucky to be selected. I have attached information about **The Farm**, a theater presentation from MSU Theater Department (taken directly from their webpage). This is just for my class of students who will have a chance to participate in the program. I have a student that is at the middle school now (Joe DeRogatis-Frilingos) who participated in The Farm. His mom, Amy DeRogatis recommended it to me as an learning opportunity for my class!

You are invited to join us in the audience on Friday, March 15th, at 1:45 p.m. in the lunchroom for a 30-35 minute program. Please contact me if you have questions at [renee.olance@elps.us](mailto:renee.olance@elps.us).

Thank you,

Renee Olance

# FARM! A MUSICAL EXPERIENCE

## Project Background

***FARM! A Musical Experience*** is a devised performance piece created under the leadership of MSU Theatre Faculty Member, Dionne O'Dell with a team of MSU Theatre and Education students.

The show is created for neurodiverse students. The rehearsal process was based on the pioneering multi-sensory, participatory model developed by both Oily Cart Theatre (London) and Lincoln Center Education/Truist Sidekick Theatre Company (NYC). The team connects with their audience by utilizing techniques such as breaking the fourth wall, individual performer/audience member interaction and live music.

In Spring 2019, ***FARM! A Musical Experience*** will tour to local special education classrooms and families in the Greater Lansing Area. It was also recently featured at the Annual Friends of Theatre Gala on May 8, 2018.



---

## Collaboration with 4<sup>th</sup> Wall Theatre Company

MSU Department of Theatre has partnered with the [4<sup>th</sup> Wall Theatre Company](#), a group that works with special needs students throughout Michigan to provide workshops for students with autism for the past four years. Through a ten-week residency model, culminating in a final performance for family and friends, MSU theatre students have worked with local students on the autism spectrum, helping them gain confidence, and make strides both cognitively and socially. This partnership has been the building block for creating a theatrical production *specifically* for an audience of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and those with other diagnoses. While there have been many sensory friendly initiatives that alter existing work in order to make it accessible for students with special needs throughout the United States in recent years, there has been little work created specifically for audiences with special needs.

## Collaboration with 4<sup>th</sup> Wall Theatre Company

MSU Department of Theatre has partnered with the [4<sup>th</sup> Wall Theatre Company](#), a group that works with special needs students throughout Michigan to provide workshops for students with autism for the past four years. Through a ten-week residency model, culminating in a final performance for family and friends, MSU theatre students have worked with local students on the autism spectrum, helping them gain confidence, and make strides both cognitively and socially. This partnership has been the building block for creating a theatrical production *specifically for* an audience of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and those with other diagnoses. While there have been many sensory friendly initiatives that alter existing work in order to make it accessible for students with special needs throughout the United States in recent years, there has been little work created specifically for audiences with special needs.



## Project Sustainability

***FARM! A Musical Experience*** fits into the THR's continuing mission "to promote drama and theatre as civilizing agents within society, and to address the redefinitions of dramatic and theatrical styles, forms, and structures, as they emerge as artistic responses to the changing world." Department of Theatre faculty member, Dionne O'Dell, plans to continue to research and develop this theatrical model through workshops and training with Lincoln Center Education/Trusty Sidekick Theatre Company and the Oily Cart Theatre of London. Ms. O'Dell will also continue to teach THR 422, a Children's Theatre class that explores the model and works to devise theatrical productions specifically for neurodiverse students.

Website: <http://theatre.msu.edu/productions/tede-2/>