

“For Milo: Who Now Knows The Way...”

If only we had “known the way” from the beginning.... But I suppose that is the point. Just like Milo’s wild journey, this “Phantom Tollbooth” adaptation has been a grand experiment. Embracing the Avenues mission of taking risks, leaving our comfort zone, and being unafraid of mistakes, we embarked upon a ludicrous idea: have 6th grade students take a book and adapt it for the stage, and then perform it. Like Milo’s journey, our path has been a process of ups and downs, worlds of discovery, challenging choices, and exquisite joys. We wish that all of you will continue to take journeys, travel down unfamiliar paths, and always seek to “know the way.”

Here is a timeline of our process:

STAGE ONE: Adaptation of a Book into Dramatic Scenes: (Nov/Dec 2015)

In November/December, all 6th graders participated in an interdisciplinary class project called "Page to Stage." During an assembly, the 6th grade selected a book to adapt. After reading the book in English class, each student was tasked with adapting a certain section of "The Phantom Tollbooth" into a dramatic scene with original song lyrics. The result was over 100 pages of dramatic text, which was read out loud by Avenues faculty at an assembly.

STAGE TWO: Revision and Transformation of the Scenes into a Play: (Jan/Mar 2016)

A smaller group of 6th graders met weekly to edit, revise, and shorten the script and prepare it for production. They learned about collaboration, storytelling, editing, continuity, and musical theater conventions. The changes that we mere made to the original scenes were all made with the longterm goal of making our rehearsal and production (and audience) experience as enjoyable and successful as possible.

STAGE THREE: Rehearsals and Production: (Apr/May 2016)

With the input of a bevy of 5th and 6th grade imaginations, we created songs, developed characters, explored creative approaches to staging and scenic design, built ensemble, fostered patience, learned lines, incorporated technical elements, and created this brand new show. From PAGE to STAGE!