



ACTING AGAINST BULLYING

ANN MARIE GARDINIER HALSTEAD

by Macreena Doyle

Associate Professor of Performance and Communication Arts Ann Marie Gardinier Halstead has directed and acted in plays. Now she has written one, with children as the audience and overcoming bullying as the theme. *Have You Filled A Bucket Today?* is adapted from Carol McCloud's popular children's book of the same name, which delivers an anti-bullying message.

The organization Peaceful Schools has plans to perform the play at schools throughout central and northern New York this spring and during the 2013-2014 school year. The organization "seeks to lend support in creating caring and safe communities," by providing social-emotional learning and bullying prevention services and support nationwide.

Halstead says she was "thrilled" when McCloud gave permission to adapt the book into a play. In both, children learn about the Golden Rule. Set at a summer camp, the 45-minute play includes the Bucket Filling Fairy, or BFF, who speaks in rhyme, and Professor Smarty Pants III, a science professor "who loves to talk about himself." Her inspiration for that character? Halstead diplomatically says that he is a "composite."



Gifford Family Theatre, a professional youth theater company in Syracuse, presented a workshop production of the play in July 2011, with Halstead serving as playwright-in-residence, revising the script in rehearsal. In December 2011, Halstead directed St. Lawrence students in the updated version of the play in a performance for elementary school children in Canton.

"There was a huge response to both productions," Halstead told the *Watertown Daily Times*. "Schools, parents and others seem eager for creative ways to address bullying."

The play and the book are available for purchase on Halstead's website, Bucket-FillingPlay.com.

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