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Rehabilitation Through The Arts Sing Sing Correctional Facility

Bylaws and Membership Agreement

MISSION OF RTA

RTA believes in the profoundly rehabilitative effect that engaging in creative arts has on men and women behind bars. Through creative expression in theater, dance, voice, writing, and the visual arts, prisoners learn social and cognitive skills that act as a springboard to education, family reconciliation and, ultimately, successful reintegration into community life.

GOALS

The goal of RTA is to develop a platform for self-growth using creative arts as a teaching approach. The program offers its members the opportunity to improve literacy skills as well as build language skills, social and communication skills for better conflict resolution, and project management. RTA particularly emphasizes the skills that instill leadership abilities, enhances self-knowledge, self-confidence, self-discipline, self-esteem, and respect for others.

OBJECTIVES

Creative arts serve as a platform for building and increasing the critical motivation needed for learning and for the ability to sustain commitments.

AIMS

- a. To nurture creativity within members, encouraging them to connect with their inner selves and to appreciate the people they are.
- b. To provide members with tools to improve communication skills with peers, administration, family members, and others.
- c. To encourage self-confidence and self-esteem.
- d. To encourage healthy interpersonal relations, which foster trust, respect, and tolerance.
- e. Invite and encourage community guests to attend RTA functions with the hope of bridging the gap between prison society and mainstream society.
- f. To break down the stereotypes and misconceptions that surround prisoners by demonstrating creativity and humanity that exists within the RTA environment.

RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

- a. All RTA members, including volunteers, are part of the RTA community and must be treated with the utmost respect at all times.
- b. **No** threats or verbal, physical, emotional or psychological violence against any member, volunteer, or guests of RTA **will be tolerated!**
- c. Membership behavior must not endanger or in any way inconvenience other members or volunteers.
- d. It is strictly prohibited to invite acquaintances or friends who are non-RTA members to classes, workshops, rehearsals, etc., without prior consent of the Steering Committee.
- e. Members of RTA are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner during **ALL RTA functions**.
- f. All members of RTA will assist in restoring every classroom and/or rehearsals space to the same condition as they were found or better.
- g. Members of RTA are expected to participate in workshops and rehearsal activities unless **physically** unable to do so (ex. medical). No one sits around watching others. We all participate.
- h. Group meetings, workshops, and rehearsals are an essential part of the RTA program and **must be attended (NO UNEXCUSED ABSENCES)**. School schedules, counselor callouts, keep locks, and FRP visits will be taken into consideration. Please communicate any issues concerning these matters to the Steering Committee **in writing**. Failure to comply with this will result in a meeting with individuals appearing before the Steering Committee to discuss these issues. (Any questions concerning this please see a Steering Committee member).
- i. Members of RTA **will not** walk in and out of class, rehearsals, or productions. There is **NO** roaming in the halls/auditorium during RTA functions. It is disrespectful to your fellow members and to the RTA volunteer team. In addition, all members are requested to be in the classroom by 6:30pm by the time the volunteers arrive. We should not and will not go around looking for members.
- j. Members of RTA are expected to contribute to a positive working environment during workshops.
- k. The writing of personal letters to volunteers and the promoting of personal agendas are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.
- l. Members of RTA are expected to complete all classroom assignments and any program evaluation forms in a timely manner. Evaluation forms are very important to RTA because they tell us what is working well and what could be working better.
- m. Members of RTA are encouraged to speak freely and respectfully about their concerns to the RTA community or the Steering Committee. **All issues** must be presented to the Steering Committee.
- n. There will be absolutely **NO** heated or disrespectful arguments with other RTA member in front of volunteers. This includes any use of profanity.

- o. Members of RTA are expected to attend all general membership meetings and must attend at least two (2) workshops per year.
- p. Members of RTA are required to make every effort to abide by the rules and regulations of this facility. Members are further encouraged to maintain a good disciplinary record while participating in the RTA program.

VIOLATIONS

- a. Violations of any rule(s) may result in the suspension or termination of membership from the RTA program.
- b. Any reprimands enacted for the violation of RTA rules of expected behavior and conduct are enacted in consideration of the fact that RTA is about helping members to become production members of society. Please understand that reprimands are never personal. Therefore, the program reflects mercy and grace for those who are genuinely serious about being a part of RTA. RTA's main goal is to foster growth and development to those members who are genuinely interested in transforming their lives.
- c. All violations for which an RTA member is required to sit before the Steering Committee are violations of the rules and expectations listed in this document: "RTA Bylaws and Membership Agreement." The violation(s) will be explained to the member and pointed out in this document.

RTA COMMUNITY

RTA is a community that embraces the objectives of and moral commitment to rehabilitation. This community is dedicated to helping each member obtain life-skills and practical experiences that will make them a desirable asset to the community at large. With our rehabilitation programs, we aim to offer the members a forum for expressing themselves and finding solutions about what we, as individuals and as a community, should represent. We know that harsh, punitive policies have proven inefficient in helping prisoners change. Thus, we seek to give what is really due the prisoners: practical rehabilitation. We should not condemn prisoners, but rather help them by providing venues through which they can become useful individuals once they are released back to the mainstream community. The RTA community extends beyond the confines of prison walls, and community members are encouraged to assist whenever, and with whatever possible resources that are available to them upon reentry into society.