

2009 Enquirer/Acclaim Theatre Educator Nomination
Submitted by Lindsay Trucksis

Act one: Susan Jung came to my rescue. Trying to figure out the techniques to high school drama while feeling insecure about the current theatre director that had stepped in last minute left me disillusioned. My classmates were dropping drama as fast as the guidance office would allow and the school's once strong department was deteriorating. Those two years were long and arduous. Once the administration discovered her inequities, we found ourselves without a drama teacher and theater director, a nightmare for the theater students with big dreams and high hopes for their high school career. Act two: In stepped Susan Jung, our savior.

We were astounded at what landed (back) into our hands. It was not Susan's first time on the stage of Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy, since she had held the position of the theatre department's choreographer four years earlier and was loved by all who crossed her path. She can silence a crowd or make them keel over in laughter in a matter of seconds. Having the perfect amount of professionalism, ability to relate to students, and constant energy, she always has left us proud of the theatrical product we create.

With over 10 tens in the business, she taught musical dance theater and acting of the University of Cincinnati-Conservatory of Music in the preparatory department, has led or taught more than 10 musical theatre camps, and has directed several youth teams for the Friends of the Groom theatre company. In addition to those accolades, she maintains a professional acting career, demonstrating to her students how balances her passion while making a living from teaching. A day in the life of Susan Jung is a theatrical whirlwind.

There is not a day when I am not taking rapid mental notes thanks to this role model. The honest fears of financial stability, the capability to balance it all, and getting to "that point" that has always been desired in life, have been crushed in my mind and because of that I am so thankful that I have met Susan Jung. Having a teacher who gets up every morning to see her student succeed and watch them shine is something to never take for granted. As she prepares lesson plans and meets with her students one-on-one at school, she memorizes her lines for productions she is involved in, finalizes choreography she is creating in her mind for Cincinnati Musical Theatre's *Chicago*. In addition to this, she directs daily musical rehearsals for her students and then jets off to *her* rehearsal, later picking up one of three sons from soccer practice and runs home to whip up dinner for the family. The best way to describe Susan is a woman on the go well equip with motives, muscle memory, and caffeine-free Mondays (Susan has gone the past nine years without any source of caffeine!). This natural enthusiasm has landed her lead theatrical roles in big name companies as she is currently rehearsing the part of Louise for CMT's *Gypsy*. All this in mind, it is clear why a contagious smile is always seen residing on Susan's face.

In my last two plays with Susan at Cincinnati Hills, she has displayed the right balance of encouragement and yet empowers me to analyze and thoroughly develop my character myself. She understands the creative process of acting and sets a high standard for achieving success, as I personally have been stretched with very different role I have been cast as, not expecting an overenthusiastic amount of applause but an honest evaluation of my interpretation and nothing less.

As a graduating senior, I am given the opportunity to look back and prepare myself to stand tall and independent, alone with no strings attached. In my past two years I have had a blast in theatre, class, on stage and in Susan's office after a long day of practice. I have just recently realized how Susan is viewed as a friend over a teacher or director to me. Seeing her in the hallways is something I will greatly miss, not acknowledging her as a teacher but first and foremost as my best friend who wanted to take my "raw talent and see what kind of partnership we could have". As I now reminisce on the late night rehearsals of Susan still going strong, keeping us energized, focused, making us all laugh and never want to go home, I try to cram in the memories, not wanting to forget a single detail. Susan has led me in the direction of two Cappie nominations, helped me prepare for college auditions, and most importantly, has duplicated the confidence I have in my future and myself. I am thoroughly convinced I will come back to my high school campus discovering I that was not the only one.