

What people and press are saying about Headlines Theatre:

"There is a subtlety to the *THEATRE FOR LIVING* approach of exploring difficult realities that keeps people engaged in the inquiry, making quick conclusions about people, their motivations and their actions harder to reach. I believe that deeply imbedded patterns of behaviour, thoughts, beliefs, and ideals shifted towards finding more spaciousness – with impacts touching all participants and extending outwards to each person's sphere of influence. It was great to have the personal experience with Forum Theatre to know that indeed, the theatre pieces not only work on one's assumptions, beliefs, values and behaviours related to the content of the play, but that they also somehow nudge new insights and attitudes into being on more widespread interactions in society."

Christie Diamond, TFL Level 1 training participant, 2011

"(*Us and Them [the inquiry]*) What a trippy experience that all were to undertake. I say thanks to all in that room, it was so beautifully unfake. That's the way I want the world to be, humans helping humans heal from all of our tragedies."

Kim Coté, audience member, Vancouver BC, Nov. 28, 2010

"It was a fantastic experience to sit and enjoy the unraveling of people's stories from 'my' to 'ours.' in *Us and Them (the inquiry)*. I deeply enjoyed every bit which took me to experience a range of emotions from anger, frustration and sorrow to joy, happiness and most importantly togetherness, collaboration and peace. Thank you for being at Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House."

Blanca Salvatierra, Building Welcoming and Inclusive Neighbourhood Program,
Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House, Vancouver BC, Nov. 26 and 27, 2010

"I am someone with training and experience using theatre within communities (particularly those "at risk"). *Us and Them (the inquiry)* was one of the most insightful and inspiring performances I have been to and left me more aware of people around me, how we interact and the possible reasons for the ways we perceive each other (and The Other). It made me want to discuss these ideas and characteristics of human behaviour with the people around me, to share **Us and Them** with others."

Amy Bradney-George, audience member, Vancouver BC, Nov. 21, 2010

"Thank you for a life-changing, mind-expanding, soul-searching, transformative theatre experience at *Us and Them (the inquiry)*! I have never experienced anything even remotely like this, and am awestruck at the power and the possibilities suggested by this utterly fascinating experiment in community dialogue, risk-taking and shared story-telling. An incredible journey in so many ways, and I'm very excited about where this might lead now and down the road."

Mark LeBourdais, audience member, Vancouver BC, Nov. 19, 2010

"Being the person who's story was used in an *Us and Them (inquiry)*, it was at times uncomfortable to relive past injustices that still haunt me today, yet very liberating in sharing with others some of my life. Through David's thought-provoking and interactive model of inquiry, by the end, my story had transformed to "our story", because all of us present that evening were able to deconstruct it at a level that I myself still had not, and take home mental artifacts of that learning. Thank you! And by the way, my colleagues also raved about the experience."

Peter Wanyenya, audience member, Vancouver BC, Nov. 18, 2010

"*Us and Them (the inquiry)* is a great project to uncover social injustice and personal obstacles without finger pointing and it opens our minds to discover opportunities for change on personal, relationship and community levels."

Joachim Ostertag, audience member, Vancouver BC, Nov. 13, 2010

"*Us and Them (the inquiry)* was a very insightful and fun night. It definitely raised my awareness on things I've never thought of, and has had my mind going since then."

Kayla Cardinal, audience member, Vancouver BC, Nov. 13, 2010

"Had a fantastic time last night! *Us and Them (the inquiry)* made us think, laugh, question structures and roles."

Lindsay Marsh, audience member, Vancouver BC, Nov. 3, 2010

"I will never look at a blueberry field through the same eyes again."

an anonymous woman said this to David Diamond
after the Agricultural Workers'/United Church event in Langley, Oct, 29, 2010

"I attended *Us and Them (the inquiry)* and found it very moving and powerful. This has the potential to rank up there with any transformative public experience you've ever had. The boldness required to make the evening happen is equivalent to the boldness required to transform things in the world so that we can keep the planet going forever and have future generations living in peace and happiness."

Jim Edmondson, audience member, Vancouver BC, Oct. 27, 2010

"*Us and Them (the inquiry)* takes us to the place where we deeply feel the resonant truth that we are just one people on this planet. This is startling theatre that requires action."

Kim Hayashi, audience member in Surrey BC, Oct. 24, 2010

"*Us and Them (the inquiry)* has the power for both individual and societal transformation like no other theatre event I have ever witnessed. Be prepared to leave the venue viewing your relationships and interactions with others in a new light. There is no doubt in my mind that I will be talking and thinking about this event for a long time to come. "

Anna Vogt, audience member in Surrey BC, Oct. 24, 2010

"How amazing to see reparation and redemption happening right in front of us at *Us and Them (the inquiry)*. Our stories are, ultimately, all we have. Now we know that they are not fixed and they do not need to confine us. They can be changed."

Claire Robson, QUIRK-E co-sponsor and audience member, Vancouver BC Oct. 23, 2010 event

"I enjoyed *Us and Them (the inquiry)* very much. I learned a lot, was highly entertained and did some soul searching of my own regarding how I make "Them" and how I could more often make them "Us". I also gave thought to my fears and desires and how they rule me -- and how I would prefer to rule them more often."

Sheila, audience member in Mission, BC Oct. 9, 2010

"I found the *THEATRE FOR LIVING* workshop to be an amazing, active, insightful, thought-provoking day. David took our issues to heart and created a warm, safe, and supportive environment in which he facilitated an expressive workshop where we were able to express ourselves, take risks and work as a team. For me it led to great insights, feelings and emotions and greater compassion for myself and others."

Bonnie Taylor, PEERS Vancouver (Prostitutes Empowerment Education Resource Society)
Elements Program Coordinator/ Facilitator

"The workshop facilitated by David Diamond, and dealing with the issue of "setting healthy boundaries" was extremely valuable to our clients and facilitators. During the workshop the group took chances, learned in new ways, gained confidence and inspiration. We laughed, we cried, we left enriched in body, mind and spirit; feeling stronger as a group and as individuals."

Emily Bagnald, Support Worker, PEERS Vancouver (Prostitutes Empowerment Education Resource Society)

“Thank you so much for the powerful workshop you led with the Fine Arts Teachers. It was a provocative and stimulating day for us all on many levels, and I know the process we engaged with will generate lots of discussion and (I hope) some more explorations in classrooms. “

Alison Davies, Simon Fraser University

“What inspired me most was David’s ability to integrate art and social issues in a natural and obvious way.....often these are a part from each other.”

Thomas Storm, *THEATRE FOR LIVING* trainee

“I feel like I have been saturated in the best possible way by the language of Theatre. This *THEATRE FOR LIVING* training workshop has given me many real life skills, some of which resonate on an emotional level, and others on more of a practical level. I can't wait to begin applying them to my community.”

Krista Lynch, *THEATRE FOR LIVING* trainee

“I lived on the porch of Rectory/Holy Trinity Cathedral for almost 5 months. *After homelessness...* really hit home, so to speak. I thought it was very well done! It has inspired me to try to help the Street People I met while I was outside. I was never homeless while at Trinity. Many thanx for an excellent play.”

Lawrence, audience member

“*After homelessness...* may be the most important show you can seen this year.”

Jerry Wasserman, Vancouverplays.com

I attended the *after homelessness...* performance last night. I am blown away by the creativity of this project & integrity it gives all in allowing us to truly empathize and take responsibility for the tragedy that this city has been riding through for years. Bravo for all your hard work, you should be highly commended for this important piece.

Lisa Fox Valdes, audience member

“*After homelessness...* is unlike any other theatrical experience I had ever seen. It felt like we were watching real people facing real issues. In a conventional play, no matter how much I suspend my disbelief I know that I’m watching actors playing roles. Here, while I knew that these actors were playing fictional roles, the experiences were real and their performances were coming from a very real place. It wasn’t just acting, it was re-acting, and, quite possibly, re-living. Knowing the context of the source of the material made the play more visceral...the actors were completely believable.

Even more powerful than the initial performance of *after homelessness...* were the performances of the (audience members) who took on the re-imagining of roles. With the performance pushing just over two hours with no intermission, it actually felt too short. Even thinking back about it now makes me emotional. This play was a gift to people who needed a way to speak, because by speaking truthfully they can become strong and heal. I am immensely grateful to have experienced those moments. Remember, it’s not about you and me or them, *it’s about us.*

Glen Gaetz, audience member (from Glen’s blog)

“Some of the most profound moments I have ever experienced in theatre occurred during this performance (*after homelessness...*). Don't go if you want to feel comfortable and secure in your life. It is only for those who want to feel hopeful, uncertain, aware, responsible, angry - in other words, connected.”

Jennifer Brooks, audience member

“I participated in Headlines Theatre’s *after homelessness...* last night and it was an awesome experience! Totally engaging and thought-provoking. No easy answers of course but there were intriguing

contributions from the audience, many of whom had had personal experience with homelessness or could relate to some of the feelings and experiences depicted. (It is) an experience like no other you have had. It is significant to our lives as people in this community who are engaged citizens; people who together can take actions to effect positive change.”

Melinda Suto, audience member

“I have just been to see *after homelessness*.... This was the first time I have been "in" an SRO, although I have heard the term many times, and the first time I really grasped the horror of living there. Now I can understand the need to create and enforce legislation dealing with SROs.

This was the first time I really understood the depth of attachment a street person can have to their shelter (a tarp in the play). Now I understand why people are calling for "tent cities" here on the west coast. I understand why it's important to have safe, humane policies for moving the homeless and their improvised shelters. The play's director, David Diamond, explained to us (the audience) that one of the purposes of theatre is to create an image of reality and place it before the eyes of the audience. He and his theatre company accomplished this around the issue of homelessness and a whole roomful of people were the wiser for it.”

Michael Duff, audience member, excerpted from a letter to the Premier of BC, Finance and Culture Ministers.

“*after homelessness*... is phenomenal. Giant congratulations to all of you. I have passed the following along to all my local friends: Please see this life changing show! We've all driven by the homeless and wondered what to do. You can be part of this dialogue with your fellow humans who have struggled with homelessness.”

Kim Hayashi, audience member

“*after homelessness*... is a remarkable piece of theatre. Images of the play have stuck with me. It was sold out Saturday night, I think (or very close to it) and it certainly deserves to be sold out every night.”

Jennifer Gray-Grant, audience member

“Your insightful production (*after homelessness*...) gave me food for thought. Law makers need to get rid of having to chase soft drug dealers, instead, government should be making money in the marijuana industry. Then use this money in the health care industry beginning with mental health. What the hell, we claim to love our children. We have telethons for them we do wonderful things - then what happens after they are no longer cute little kids; or the kids that slip through the cracks.

I have lived in horror watching my children crumble from substance abuse. No one is watching, no one is there. Any how loved your play. Please continue the good work.”

Elinor Stock, audience member

“I attended a performance of *after homelessness*. I would just like you all to know, cast, crew and anyone who helped. YOU ARE TRULY DOING SOMETHING!!!! Words cannot express the enjoyment and the thought-process that the play gave to me. I myself was left with an urge to become more involved in my city's crisis. This is theatre at its most genuine form, thank you very much for this great experience.”

Alec J Ross, audience member

“Congrats on *after homelessness*... - a superb community engagement project . I can't wait to see the report that comes out of this. I was only able to see one community dialogue and one evening play, it was wonderfully authentic and generous.

We were also able to project the webcast at the Squamish Helping Hands Society, so about 10 homeless adults here were able to see it too. From reports I heard of the evening, their eyes were glued to the

screen. It was a miracle that the community here got together and made it happen but it was sure easier than getting people to Vancouver to see it. Not the same as being there live, but the webcast is such a great mechanism for getting people connected. Thank you so much.”

Nicole McRae, audience and Headlines’ Board Member

“*After Homelessness...* was gripping, while excruciating. One couldn't help but think, “How can I know this and not act to help?” The acting was intense, as most of these performers had intimate experience of homelessness in some respect. The humanity of the homeless characters was authentic. This theatre piece did not just entertain. It sent the audience out with a mission: to engage others in dialogue about homelessness, to advocate for homeless people, and to demand government action on homelessness.

There is no more noble goal for theatre than that it change people's lives. In the case of *after Homelessness...*, change occurred, not only in the lives of the audience, but, hopefully, in the lives of many homeless people.”

Faune Johnson, audience member

“*After homelessness...*” is a compelling production, guaranteed to rip away the don't-get-involved complacency of any middle-class viewer. The play features six main characters, performed by actors who have all known homelessness in their own lives. These range from Nico (Justine Goulet), a young, dreadlocked rebel with a punk attitude and a desire to remain drug-free, and Shawna (Sandra Pronteau), a crack-addicted thief, to Bob (Kevin Conway), a near-broke man on lithium who finds solace in alcohol after eviction from his condo. In another play, these characters could well appear as crusty stereotypes, eliciting pity or even dismissal from a contemptuous audience. (*After homelessness...*) invites audience-members to think beyond knee-jerk responses and bureaucratic models that degrade people and their situations. Instead, it offers viewers the chance to respond immediately, from their guts.”

Heather Conn, audience member

“*After Homelessness...* was my first ‘theatre making policy’ show ever. I very much appreciated the way you facilitated audience participation and conversation. Your questions for the actors and participants drew out responses that were helpful in really connecting with the ‘dialogue behind the rhetoric’ and deeper thoughts and feelings. Thanks for helping us to better see and understand.”

Lisl Baker, audience member

“I was at *after homelessness...* last night. Congratulations on a remarkable production....the most powerful to date.”

Beryl Wilson, audience member

“I just wanted to thank you for our clients to be able to go and see *after homelessness...* I only got positive feedback from clients who attended. Our clients sometimes experience homelessness and poverty first hand, and they were able to emotionally connect to the production for sure.”

Kathy Bencsik, Burnaby Family Life/Life Skills Services

“I attended *after homelessness...* and was amazed at the style and grace that came from the players and the direction of the show. The play was so well written, acted and kept me on the edge of sanity. I was in that place in one time in my life and was brought back to that way of life very quickly. The intervention aspect was invigorating. I was immediately up and acting in the production. I really hope that this gets some well deserved credit.”

David G, audience member

“Magnificent show!”

Judy Graves, Coordinator, Tenant Assistance Program, City of Vancouver

“I really enjoyed *after homelessness...* My husband works for Project Comeback out of Newton Advocacy and I work as a nurse in Surrey in the community so am not a stranger to the homeless population. I think

the actors did an amazing job, especially if it was an emotional experience for them. It was well presented, the content was great, and it gave me a greater understanding of the need for proper housing. I hadn't realized before what a toxic environment these people are faced with every day. Thanks so much for a very enjoyable evening."

Cathy Anderson, audience member

"I found the whole experience of *after homelessness...* quite gripping. The participation of the audience in the scenes was very educational for me. I left the performance feeling like I knew more than I did when I came in...and that for me was gold."

Mark Cseszko, audience member

"I found myself learning about something I thought I "knew" in *after homelessness...* It is a hard topic to deal with and to make it work because the media is always talking about it on the news. The fact that the actors have experienced the hardships of homelessness/poverty/drug addiction/alcoholism leaves a strong mark as spectator. The idea of the director encouraging the audience to participate and put themselves in the shoes of the characters is excellent. Real, Wonderful and touching! Thanks and hope to see more of it."

Carolina G., audience member

"This Friday I had an experience that helped me to understand the power of theater as a tool to not only tell stories, but to retell them in new ways until the injustices within them are healed, and how acting can be used as a tool for empowerment, community building, and as a way to reclaim dignity. I went to see Headlines Theatre's production *After Homelessness*. Right away, the set got to me. I chose to sit in the first row and the bare light bulbs in rooms smaller than prison cells, the stained couch with dirty rigs hiding in the cushions and the walls thick with scum, made my Kitsilano born and raised self uncomfortable. When the play started, I didn't feel like I was watching a play, the characters were so real and I was so close that I felt like I was halfway in that "hotel". The characters were that real partly because most of the actors have lived or are living the stories they were telling. The specifics were fictional, but by reading the bios in the program and by seeing their integrity on stage, I got the impression that they were telling a story that they felt in their bones and they believed really needed to be told. They brought humanity to the oppressive and inhuman conditions of the SRO hotel and sent a clear message to the audience that no person on this earth deserves to live in such a hostile space.

One of the most powerful moments in *After Homelessness* was when a well-dressed woman in her 50s replaced the character of a crack addict. She was able to improvise a few lines, but then she began to weep uncontrollably. I didn't get the impression that it was her pity that was making her cry. I identified with her privilege and maybe I'm projecting, but what I thought made her break down was something that I was also experiencing: getting it, for the first time, an understanding of the indignity and inhumanity that homeless people face everyday and that we, the audience, share our common humanity with the characters on stage."

member

David Q., audience

"I saw *After Homelessness* at Holy Trinity Anglican Church in New Westminster. The play was very impressively done. I thought the cast did an excellent job. Diamond's effort to find answers had some very effective moments. The result is an audience that becomes seriously connected to the issues bringing their own experience and values onstage."

John Klassen, PhD, audience member

"It obvious that complaining about our citywide (homelessness) problem is not the answer. There needs to be more of an attempt to come up with solutions. One man, along with a team of upstanding individuals, is our best bet. His name is David Diamond, and he has created the forum theatre-based production, *after Homelessness...* In Diamond's words "The theatre can take statistics and transform them into personal stories; the theatre can be a true voice of people who are struggling with various

aspects of the homelessness issue; the theatre can open up the irony of the creation of 'the other' in a world where in fact there is only 'us' and in doing so, re-personalize 'the other'."

"After viewing Headlines Theatre's performance (*after homelessness...*) on November 28, I can honestly admit that no one is doing what this production is doing. With a cast that has either experienced some, or all of the issues of homelessness, addiction and mental illness, the audience is given the gift of a genuine production. "

Alec J. Ross, audience member

"I was extremely impressed with the fact that the people were able to interact with the play (*after homelessness...*), as it gave some interesting solutions to the parts in the play. It goes to show how important it is to go to the people who are struggling to find answers that will work, instead of someone who learns something through video, and classes. The people who actually live these problems seem to have a better idea as to what will work and for the most part came to solutions that would not cost millions of dollars to do the research necessary to put plans into action. This play was extremely informative and gave a very reality like impression. I hope that I could attend something similar in the near future."

Alec Athey, audience member

"I attended *after homelessness...* with my 16 year old daughter who like many of us is increasingly concerned about homelessness in Vancouver. I was very happy we came, the evening was both educational and inspiring. I surprised myself by stopping the action and jumping into attempt to change the situation. It was a lot more difficult than I had anticipated and although my intervention was unsuccessful, being part of the process provided a greater appreciation for the complexity of the problems.

The authenticity of the actors impressed me as did their ability to improvise through all of the changes that the play took. There were times however that it felt uncomfortable to be a spectator of people's misfortune. Perhaps that is not such a bad thing to feel uncomfortable about. Again the process of forum theatre provides one with an opportunity to not just be a passive spectator out for an evenings entertainment. Thank you to all who created the play."

Teresa McDowell, audience member

"*After homelessness...*, is not traditional theatre. The play allows for the complex theme(s) of the play to transcend into an authentic theatre experience for the audience, who are not permitted to be 'merely an observer'; but rather an active participant either in thought or action or both.

After homelessness... goes well beyond a theatrical experience, the collective talents of those associated with this play can be very proud of the fact that their contribution has illustrated the reality without sensationalizing it. A profound desire in humanity, has come to be within this exploration, likely as a result of all of us being asked to look within for the solution. Unlike Traditional Theatre, Forum Theatre leaves its characters in our hearts and souls, well reliving their stories in our thoughts."

Don Rock, audience member

"I have not been able to stop thinking (or talking) about *after homelessness...* and the issues that were discussed there. Thank you for involving multiple communities in this discussion- poverty, addiction and homelessness are not the problems for only the poor, addicted and homeless to deal with. It's something that all of us as members of our community need to demand answers and solutions from our government. Your play has helped me move from a state of paralysis where I was unable to move when faced with the topic of affordable housing to a place where I feel like my voice has a place in the housing crisis debate. And you can be sure that I will loudly be adding my voice to the debate. Thanks for the food for thought - I will be chewing for a long time into the future."

Melinda Mennie, audience member

“Just wanted you to know what a wonderful experience it was to see *after homelessness...* the other night. I found it to be a powerful experience. Bringing the audience into the equation made it all the more dynamic and personal. I often feel that the problem of homelessness and the myriad of issues faced by homeless people are overwhelming. This play presents these issues through real person’s stories which makes it a very personal piece. Because the audience is challenged to involve themselves by replacing a character in the play it engages audience members to think about the issues from start to finish. This format is a powerful tool to fight the frustration, fatigue and resulting resignation most people feel in regard to difficult social issues. Thanks for my favourite theatre experience ever.”

Mindy Francis, audience member

We felt the whole event (*after homelessness...*) was brilliantly done – the play had an edgy humour that portrayed the harsh realities of the downtown eastside while putting a human face on it. The re-run with the interactive component was equally as gripping, and David’s moderating work to oversee it, to education, the question, and the challenge was exquisite towards finding seams of redemptive hope.

Gordie Lagore, audience member

“I found the play *after homelessness...* be a very accurate account of what it is like to be homeless. The issues that the play touched on from mental illness to addiction, the barriers once living in the DTES preventing many from finding a way out even if they want to.”

Heather Saunders, audience member

In *after homelessness...* we are to yell “stop,” and offer viable solutions for the problem. Our suggestions will be sent to policy makers, who struggle to come up with the solutions themselves. It is a brilliant suggestion. Few of us have ever considered ourselves policy makers. The audience is charged with power. We are given a voice in all of this, and as the night progresses, we begin to bridge the gap between “us” and “them.”

Homelessness is a problem we all care about, but very few ever feel they have the power to help make a change. This innovative piece of theatre helps give us all a voice, and begin to reconcile the feelings of helplessness we have surrounding homelessness.

Headlines Theatre is unique. It is a theatre of change. It is a theatre of the mind, and the heart – theatre that is actively helping to change policies, and the opinion that nothing can be done by the “average Joe” without the money or power to help make a real difference. I greatly admire the work of the strong and dedicated people involved in this production, and thank them for allowing the issues to be voiced, by anyone who cares enough to voice them. To all of them, I say Bravo.”

Michele Venetz, audience member

“I very much appreciated how *after homelessness...* highlighted the many difficulties that homeless persons may be experiencing, such as mental illness and drug and alcohol addictions. The play makes it obvious that there is a greater need for access to drug and alcohol programs, counselors, mental health after hours services for those in crisis and for easier access to housing. And, the interaction with the audience let each of us realize that this problem is not just for the homeless population to solve, it is really up to all of us in society to help solve. Wonderful project which I'm sure will contribute to some interesting suggestions for this social problem.”

Kimberly Fraser, audience member and Registered Psychiatric Nurse

“I was very impressed with *after homelessness...* and was struck by the gritty reality it portrayed. I had never been to a Forum Theatre production before, so had no idea what to expect. I'm really excited about the passion expressed and the potential for effecting social change.”

Sandie Seymour, audience member

"after homelessness... was an incredible production that burst beyond the boundaries of ordinary theatre to address serious issues of homelessness in the community of Vancouver. Not only were thought-provoking questions asked, but solutions were brainstormed and recorded to bring about change. Thank you for such an enlightening, uplifting evening!"

Meghan Mast, audience member

*"I attended *after homelessness...* in New West and was thoroughly captivated by the whole process. I am a university professor who has worked with street-entrenched youth on literacy projects so I had a special interest in the topic. I was particularly impressed with the decision to present a more nuanced representation of the issue of moving away from homelessness -- It is my experience that many street youth do not necessarily wish to stay on the streets and so need a variety of support systems in place to transition into whatever lifestyle they aspire to. This play was both dramatic -- and the interaction with audience doubly dramatic with the inherent tension of waiting for participation, and thoughtful in terms of social action -- posing possible solutions in all their complexity while also reaching toward policymakers."*

Theresa Rogers, Professor, Department of Language and Literacy Education, UBC

*"As a person who lives and works in the Theatre and in Education, I found my experience at the THEATRE FOR LIVING trainings (in Vancouver) this summer was surprisingly profound. Not only that but it was also practically applicable to all areas of my life and work -- professionally, philosophically and personally. It truly is "...a way of seeing..." and I am so grateful to David and to the staff at Headlines Theatre for having the courage to create and facilitate such meaningful experiences for people from all over the world. If you live with a sense of tension between how the world *is* and how it *could* be, than this experience is for you."*

Erin Hammond, Arts Educator/Actor/Playwright, August 2009

"I found the three day THEATRE FOR LIVING training workshop in Winnipeg challenging, empowering and creative. David is a wonderful facilitator with a tremendous depth of knowledge and skill. I went with the goal of finding and learning new exercises and techniques for my own classes and rehearsals as well as to recharge my own creative juices. I achieved all of that plus the communal journey that all of us took into our relationship with the struggle for social justice. I would recommend the class to my peers."

Jim Forsythe, Professor, Drama, Brandon University, June 2009

*"The unique dimension added by David Diamond's **Banquet of Fear and Desire** to the University of Alberta's 2009 International Week cannot be understated. It is one thing to be intellectually convinced to make change, it is another to be empowered to do it by understanding what it is that limits our ability to take those actions, and then to face those fears and limitations, and grow as global citizens and unique people within families and societies. The material is also very practical to employ in circumstances where deeper understanding of our relationship to such issues is unclear, blocked or limited. Thank you for this profound experience."*

Anon feedback, quoted from a letter from
Eilis Pourbaix, Coordinator, Global Education, U of A, February, 2009

*"I had the opportunity to participate in the **Shattering** project in La Ronge (in 2008). I thoroughly enjoyed the play, the way you facilitated the audience participation, and the opportunity to stop the action. After many years of addiction, recovery and healing the event strengthened my resolve to continue breaking the old patterns, trying something different to get different results, and remembering "It ain't nothin' till you call it!" I certainly hope to get another opportunity to experience your theatre and my accolades to the actors -- they certainly expose themselves to lots of triggers while they are performing and getting out of the old and into the new must take lots of courage and hard work."*

Alison Ballentyne, audience member, January, 2009

“Hello Headlines, here’s a piece of feedback I just got about **Shattering**:

Thank you to Heather Gordon and the Substance Abuse Task Force for bringing **Shattering** to the Sunshine Coast (Sechelt). The presentation wasn’t just an insight, but a jolt awake about the problems within our and every community and the ripple effect addiction has. This production forced me to address an issue with addiction in my own family. A close family friend has been battling a frightening addiction to crack cocaine for close to 10 years. After the presentation I sat down with my family and talked openly about an addiction that we have been facing for about 6 years - one that we have over looked or been scared to talk about because of someone else’s addiction. Since then my sister has entered a treatment program for eating disorders. Thank you for telling where to find help, thank you for helping my community, thank you for being real!”

Sent by **Heather Gordon**, Sunshine Coast Substance Abuse Task Force, December 2008

“In the van on the ride home to Squamish from the performance of **Shattering** in Whistler, there was discussion among the group of ‘at risk youth’, there was tears, promises of, ‘I’ll never drink/smoke pot/do drugs again’, other solutions offered up, comparisons of other things that had happened in their lives recently etc. It touched every one of them. I heard from one of my coworkers today that one of the youth who has had a really rough life as her alcoholic mother is often very brutal with her. Mostly this youth just ends up yelling at or running from her mom. Last night however, they apparently had an incredibly open conversation, and both ended up in each other’s arms in tears, supporting each other, rather than hating each other...as a result of what the play stirred up.”

Nicole McRae, Sea to Sky Community Services Society, December 2008

“The **Shattering** event in our community was an engaging and powerful night of adventure learning. As executive Director of the WCSS, I have had several personal phone calls from community members who were moved by this production, the cast and most notably the teachable outcomes for them. Thanks once again for your dedication to this type of learning.

Greg McDonnell, Executive Director, Whistler Community Services Society, December 2008

“After **Shattering** in Canim Lake we sat down with a portion of the group that attended and asked for their reactions. They advised that the performance was outstanding and one of the best things they had ever been involved with. I was blown away by the quality of the theatre group and very surprised as to the involvement of this community on stage. I believe it was a "hit" in this very small community and thank you from the bottom of my heart.”

Ken Tassell, Canim Lake Band, Restorative Justice, December, 2008

“**Shattering** was such an amazing performance for Golden. It arrived at a time when parts of our town are just waking up to the issues and has added to the momentum of community dialog and support for a community coalition. The performance was real, it was raw, it raised huge amounts of awareness.”

Justin Telfer, Youth Addictions Counsellor, East Kootenay Addiction Services, December, 2008

“I think **Shattering** was effective in bringing out the fact that everyone has secrets, addictions, and dilemmas of one sort or another. I think inwardly we try to overcompensate by trying to solve things in the lives of others the way we wish someone else would help with them in relation to ourselves or our loved ones. I think also that I learned that sometimes "Silence" is our way of keeping our secrets safe. If no one knows, then we can't be perceived as 'weak' or 'worthless', or any other number of labels that society places on our "differentness." I walked away from the performance with a new level of compassion and respect for all kinds and levels of addiction – even that of silence. I found the play to be very insightful and thought provoking, and I think it made the viewer realize that no matter how desperate the situation or circumstance - we really do have choice - maybe not always in the outcome, or events, but definitely in our own actions or reactions. Every day we consciously and unconsciously choose

the pattern of our lives and to some degree the lives of those around us...in that regard the play inspired hope. Just like in the play, we can choose to be silent, or we can be willing participants for change; once again CHOICE.”

Deb, audience member, western Canada tour, November 2008

“**Shattering** was great and it had a real impact on the audience. People especially liked the (Forum Theatre) format. There was so much going on with each character that most people could personalize the issues. I was impressed by the realistic portrayal of addiction by the actors. Your work is really helping to bring social issues to the forefront.”

Diane Purdy, Medicine Hat Community Drug Council, November, 2008

“**Shattering** was a huge success here. In all the years that I have been involved with Weyburn and Area Supportive Employment Services we have never had such a good turnout. The support provided by Headlines was tremendous.”

Tania Grams, Weyburn and Area Supportive Employment Services, November, 2008

“What a fabulous performance the actors gave when presenting **Shattering**. The comments we heard all said how life like the play was. For all the hard work that went into getting this performance here, it was worth it!”

Renae J. Friesen, Saskatoon Health Region, Addiction Services – Humboldt, November, 2008

“**Shattering** was an emotional, insightful event. It was such a good play. It really got everybody thinking about addictions and the dynamics and issues and how complex they are. “

Jacquie Bergerman, the Humboldt Journal, November 19, 2008

“**Shattering** is the kind of performance that causes one, no matter what their own situation, to reflect inward. For some people this is a scary place because it's a place many work hard to avoid. It seems to me to be that necessary first place of reflection - the inner self, in order to find a way to articulate outside of ourselves to the world around us the thinking and emotion that exists there. I attended the play (in Regina) and talked with several audience members after who remarked at how real the story and the characters were. The stories they shared seemed to reflect aspects of each of our own experiences in some way and this prompted us to continue talking about what we saw, and how our own stories connected... through this sharing we discovered further connections between our stories. Thanks for bringing this Theatre for Living production to our community; it provided a powerful means to get people thinking deeply about the issues our own place.”

Lori Whiteman, First Nations and Métis Education Branch, Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, November 2008

“**Shattering** was a very scary show but it was an eye opener. I wish that more people could have been there to take in this event. I had to go each night in La Ronge just to get the awareness. I took my grandchildren and they enjoyed it to the fullest. I sure hope it will help them out in their choices when they become teens.”

Arleen Windigo, audience member, November 2008

“Participating in the play **Shattering** was nothing short of amazing. The play certainly gave me food for thought; it's haunted me all week. I saw myself in several of the characters at various times in my life and while my solutions were a bit different, I recognized the behaviours. Addictions are symptoms of something deeper going on – root causes – the main emphasis of the play. I've certainly been moved to explore some of my life experiences and how they have influenced my life, my behaviours. I've also had some revelations, some I know at one level and others startling, over the past few days as a result of the play. **Shattering** is an experience that, like the advertisement for something I don't recall, 'keeps on giving'.”

Valerie G. Barnes-Connell, in The Northerner, La Ronge, SK, November 13, 2008

“**Shattering** was extremely powerful and thought provoking, providing our audience with an intense window into the world of addiction. The play generated such an intense impact that we spent most of the next day discussing and sharing thoughts, feelings, and exploring different outcomes. I cannot thank you enough for bringing Forum Theatre to our community.”

Wayne Barkhouse, Bonnyville Indian Métis Rehabilitation Centre, November, 2008

“It (making an intervention in **Shattering**) was terrifying. There’s a lot of emotion. I learned two new things: One is we have to be prepared to recognize the elephants in the room – the secrets in families and individuals. The other one insight that really touched me was the point the director made that it is so easy sometimes to treat the symptom without thinking about the whole idea of root causes.”

Brian Daley, audience intervener, quoted in the Alaska Highway News, October, 2008

“I had the opportunity to watch the **Shattering** performance in Kispiox B.C. I was thrilled in watching the portrayal of the effects of Meth or any other substance abuse within communities. I feel that the left brain lesson in teaching people that voicing a wrong within a family clan is awesome. I highly recommend any person to watch this play !!”

Mark Louis, audience member, October, 2008

“**Shattering** is a must see experience for anyone who has lived with or some how experienced some sort of addiction. It offers a perspective of hope in an environment where none exists. The play taught me a lot about meth addiction and the fear that people experience when things seem out of control. It also taught me that people are compassionate and want to help, if they only knew how.”

Deb Little, Transitional Life Coach, audience member, October, 2008

“Thanks for a brilliant evening at **Shattering**. As a man in treatment 7 months clean, this play is vital for breaking down stereotypes around addiction.”

Darrin (last name removed for confidentiality), Vancouver audience member, October 2008

“I was so impressed with the play **Shattering**. I arrived 30 minutes early and sitting around me were folks who were in recovery. I also heard comments from this group as the interactive portion of the evening was taking place. Listening to them, I could hear that this play was right on. During the interactive portion of the play it was easy to see how an intervention, no matter how small, can make a difference.”

Lois Brassart, Vancouver audience member, October 2008

“**Shattering** is a brilliant piece of art and I think that it speaks very well to the underlying issues of addiction, and in general, to what it's like being a human being.”

Michelle Richard, Vancouver audience member, October 2008

“I was thoroughly entertained, (by **Shattering**) the actors were engaging, the script was believable and unpretentious, and the director fostered raw talent into budding thespians. I was truly in awe: this is an innovative intervention that blends, art, education, community participation, while also operating as a mechanism for recovery in building self esteem and a better understanding of addiction. While one can read about the issue, attend support groups, and discuss addiction with the afflicted – there are certain ‘deep’. and ‘hidden’ dimensions of addiction that are difficult to have surface – this is what **Shattering** accomplishes.”

Katia Mohindra, Vancouver audience member, October 2008

“**Shattering** is a must see production. It is REAL LIFE reality and truly portrays what people are up against. Addiction does not differentiate between poverty or wealth. I'm very happy that I took the time to see it. Thank you for taking the time to create such a production.”

Rowena Marko, Vancouver audience member, October 2008

“**Shattering** is truly an unparalleled opportunity to witness people practicing dealing with addiction, and to practice yourself. You leave the event with fodder for initiating a conversation about addiction which is much less likely to generate a defensive reaction. Thank you for giving such a generous gift.”
Jennifer Brooks, Vancouver audience member, October 2008

“I would like to thank you on behalf of our team for your stimulating and gritty performance of **Shattering**. I would like to thank everyone involved in this production, from the funders to the stagehands to the director and actors. I would particularly like to thank Cody for his courageous work, playing a role so close to his experience. This play empowers and enlightens its audience in a way no conventional play ever could. Bravo!”

Paul Slakov, MA Alcohol and Drug Counsellor, Family Services of Greater Vancouver, Oct. 3, 2008

“(Shattering) doesn’t feel like an After School Special, and is just as riveting for adults as it is for teens. Though the performances are truly gripping (Cody Gray and Kayla Cardinal stand out with their exceptionally honest portrayals of young teens discovering the dark world of meth), the creators of this production want to do more than simply entertain. They want to get the audience thinking, talking, and acknowledging its collective complacency toward addiction. Shattering offers a solid theatrical experience.”

Jean Nicolai, WestEnder Newspaper, October 2, 2008

“(Shattering is) political theatre at its most immediate.”

Jerry Wasserman, Vancouver Province, October 2, 2008

“Reality TV? Forget it. The real deal is happening down at the Japanese Hall. **Shattering** is brave, raw theatre. Diamond has a gift for taking an often completely intuitive intervention and articulating and clarifying it. All of us have some addiction or other. His are clearly making theatre and helping others get through tough times.”

Jo Ledingham, Vancouver Courier, October 1, 2008

“Not only do the **Shattering** actors know the reality of the world(s) they are inhabiting, they also seem to know rather deeply that they can individually and collectively handle complex audience interventions. Part of what is so deep about the show for me is their understated confidence as Forum Theatre actors. All of which, for me, made the invitation to intervene a rich, complicated and very powerful affair.”

Adam Ward, Vancouver audience member, September, 2008

“I believe that the *Seniors Speak Out* workshop and experience was truly worthwhile and will benefit the whole community. Personally, it was life altering. It was fun...it was scary...it was exhilarating and a reminder of the amazing complexities of the family. I would recommend the THEATRE FOR LIVING workshop or a Forum play to anyone and have already shared with many who are interested.”

Cynthia Pincombe, workshop participant, performer, August 2008

“I am writing to thank you for the experience to participate in the *Seniors Speak Out* workshop. My gratefulness and appreciation goes to David Diamond, through whose firm but kind guidance, we were encouraged to submerge deep into our stories, fears and souls. Because he encouraged us to speak from that place of true knowing, that joined a group of strangers into companions on the same journey – one of understanding abuse. David Diamond’s expertise in understanding the human soul made it possible to be sincerely working toward the best outcome of performance. I am grateful and amazed by the possibilities THEATRE FOR LIVING can provide.”

Monika Koernig, workshop participant, performer, August 2008

“Thank you for the *Seniors Speak Out* program on Elder abuse. Headlines Theatre is doing what it can in a very unique way to help all people calling out for assistance. Through the theatre you are presenting all

those with social problems with ways and means to solve those problems and become part of the solution rather than remain part of the problem.”

Margaret McAdam, workshop participant, performer, August 2008

“One of the people I tipped off about the *Seniors Speak Out* performance on Elder Abuse contacted me on Wednesday and told me that after attending, he and his mother (who has relied on him as a primary caregiver for a number of years) had talked through a number of difficult issues and had reached a number of very clear agreements designed to (1) increase the personal safety of each party (both have health issues) and (2) enrich the quality of life of each party. My friend was much less fatalistic than he had been in recent months.”

Adam Ward, audience member, August 2008

“I thoroughly enjoyed this *Seniors Speak Out* evening. It was dynamic as hell for the audience. I haven’t participated in a forum for a very long time, but tonight was all about my issue — along with everybody else in the crowd. You could run this particular forum forever and still not run out of audience. It was great.”

Nettie Wild, audience member, August 2008

“Once again a typically insightful Headlines Theatre production. The Elder abuse issue is universal and has a huge audience. I hope you get more opportunities to workshop and present *Seniors Speak Out*. The two plays tonight were right on. They need to be seen and heard many more times.”

Barry Trutter, audience member, 2008

“I am too tired to get a full perspective on what I have learned in the THEATRE FOR LIVING Level 1 and 2 trainings, but know that for me this has been a powerful learning experience. What I am clear about is that I will be dealing with the *Cops in my Head* in a new way and am excited about sharing this particular learning with others. Also I am mulling over how I might get to use *Wildest Dream*.

Your playfulness, David, is wonderful and liberating, your capacity to include all is fantastic, your generosity with what you know is amazing and all in all I am quite awe inspired. Thank you, thank you, thank you to you and the Headlines team.”

Jill Parris, August, 2008

The THEATRE FOR LIVING training gave me the fire I was missing and was searching for.”

Kelly McKinnon, 2008 TFL trainee

“The Theatre for Living process is unique in the way it allows safe opportunities for dialogue within communities fractured by seemingly intractable issues, and creates opportunities for those communities to develop creative solutions, which may also lead to a sense of community ownership over both the issues and the potential solutions.”

Carrie Gallant, participant, performer in “Women and the Law”, August 2008

“What was really remarkable for me (about the Rainbow of Desire workshop at the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres Conference) as a somewhat seasoned negotiator was the realization that it is very easy to forget that the person on the other side of the table is not just an automaton looking to get the best deal. The creation of shapes especially, made me aware of how profoundly the people involved were being affected by the negotiation. It underlined that sometimes getting the best deal can simply cost too much.”

Jerry Doiron, Shaw Festival, August 2008

“The biggest lesson I felt I learned from the Rainbow of Desire workshop at the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres Conference was getting to watch David Diamond be so incredibly clear, non-judgmental, open, and businesslike. It was actually his clarity of communication that allowed us to see, and represent to whatever degree, the situation described.”

Anthony Black , 2B Theatre, August 2008

“I thoroughly enjoyed **2° of Fear and Desire** and found the interactive concept not only enlightening but it deepened my understanding that we ‘all’ face incredible struggles in taking steps to make significant changes in our lives towards the prevention of global warming. This in turn results in improvements to our environment in not only our Community, City, Province, Country but inevitably, the Universe.”

Heather Fairhead, Vancouver BC (March, 2008)

“People really liked that through the experience of **2° of Fear and Desire**, the most important sources of our wasteful life-style were identified. We wouldn't have expected that both the personal and global level could come so nicely together.”

Livia Bizikova, organizer, Research and Practitioner Partnerships for Action on Climate Change: Developing Guidance for Communities, Richmond, BC (March, 2008)

“**2° of Fear and Desire** was the most profound activism I have ever witnessed.”

Molly Caron, Vancouver BC (March, 2008)

“I had a great time at **2° of Fear and Desire**. It takes honesty and sacrifice to change profoundly. I understood that while at **2°**. Thank you very much for the courage and determination to face reality in a very interesting way and inviting us to do the same.

Oliver Lane, Vancouver BC (March, 2008)

“I was at Thursday’s performance and had great follow up conversations with the friends that came with me. A few people from the audience also came over to talk after the show – they had a couple questions on global warming and what they could do, but mostly they wanted to chat about what they are doing for the environment. I see a lot of value in that – confirmation that each of us isn’t acting alone.

The ending on Thursday night hit home for me when the main character moved all the voices and herself off of the stage and into the middle of the audience, with each of them seated and facing each other for a chat. David pointed out at the time that this brought the story into the community, which I think is often a big challenge and a real benefit of Headlines work.”

Alison Bailie, Sustainable Communities Group, Pembina Institute (February, 2008)

“Just a quickie to say I thoroughly enjoyed the session at the Wired Monk (Thurs), on a professional and personal level. It was very inspiring and therapeutic at the same time, and judging from the vibe of the room had the same impact on everyone else too.”

Abigail Barragry, audience member (February, 2008)

“Ever since attending **2° of Fear and Desire** at The Rhizome Cafe, my experience of the climate change issue has shifted. It is no longer such an abstract thing that I THINK about; now, when I read articles in the newspaper or see images in print or on the web I find myself FEELING the issue as I read and take in the images: I am now (re)connected to the issue. The range of emotions are similar to those I've experienced when a close friend has wrestled with what is said to be a terminal illness. Grief...the kind that contracts your breathing and tightens your breath...is the chief emotion. Carpooling up to Bellingham from Seattle with a friend of mine, I could see and feel many (previously) hidden connections. And, as I move amongst these hidden connections I find myself reminded of fragments from the literature on the fear of death, the fear of annihilation. In light of these emotions and this expanded way of seeing and thinking about these previously hidden connections, I begin to get a better sense (though still not an understanding) of the human, all too human, resistance to opening one's heart and one's eyes to the human face of climate change.”

Adam Ward, Bellingham WA, (Dec, 2007)

"I attended **2^o of Fear and Desire** last Saturday and was completely blown away by the experience. As a sustainability educator, I have been attending numerous conferences and meetings to gather a reading on what people are actually doing to make effective action and changes regarding climate change. I always leave such events saddened because they usually simply add to the ever-growing grave database about the severity of the matter, but fall short of analyzing why our society has become the way it is in order to break free from it and create the drive and motivation to change.

Experiencing 2^o was so refreshing because it went straight to the source, the human psyche, and examined it with honesty, respect, and witty humour. Furthermore, the performance was strikingly tangible and personal to the audience members and participants. The show helped each of us understand our mental processes a bit better, and develop a sort of solidarity with each other in recognizing and processing through our common struggles. Thank you so much for the wonderfully deep work you have done. "

Elisa Lee, Vancouver BC (Nov, 2007)

This is just a brief note to express my gratitude for your continued contribution to making our community (both the local, geographic one and the greater 'human' one) imminently more liveable. I attended **2^o of Fear and Desire** on Nov 9, which not only has inspired me to critically explore my own 'internal monologue' with respect to climate change, but has impressed upon me the power of Theatre for Living to coalesce the individual creative energy in our communities into constructive dialogue out of which substantive change emerges. The key, as you are clearly aware, is that this energy emerges organically from the community which is engaged by Headlines, as opposed to the more traditional activist model of hierarchical, ideological direction from above.

Grant Jamieson, Vancouver BC (Nov, 2007)

"Thank you so much for **2^o of Fear and Desire** this evening on climate change. I left with a feeling of hope that I haven't had for some time now. It is precisely this kind of courageous self-exploration and community-building that needs to happen in order to effect real change on this most complex and global of issues."

Marian Rose, Vancouver BC (Nov, 2007)

"I just wanted to take some time to express how **2^o of Fear and Desire** experience created such a buzz in the room throughout the entire evening. It was a challenging piece for me, but essential to any efforts we can put forth in reducing the negative impacts of climate change, because it forced me to humanize the 'other' that is normally so easy to demonize...in this case a corporate other. I obviously tell people I care about everyone, but I also slip easily into blaming a certain type of person for the problem of climate change, usually economists, business people and politicians. This particular way of engaging the issue used by Headlines Theatre struck a deep chord in me that to actually overcome this problem, we absolutely cannot dehumanize anybody in this. As cliché as it sounds, we all truly are in it together...but I think we best realize that when we discuss the issue in terms of fear and desire, as we did on Friday, because we all identify with fears and desires around climate change."

Andrew Rushmere, Vancouver, BC (Nov, 2007)

"My name is Ashley Liu. I was born, raised, and educated in Canada, I am Canadian. I recently attended **2^o of Fear and Desire** on the evenings of Nov 8th and 10th. It allowed me to participate in the exploration of the issue of climate change, an issue which I admittedly ignore or disregard on a day to day basis. I have discovered that I am not alone in finding the issue to be at times overwhelming and all encompassing. However, through this theatre process, I discovered that I am not alone. I am not alone in my fears, my complacency, my daily dilemmas, my periodic feelings of helplessness, nor my desire to change things. For myself, this forum was not about finding answers, it was about getting together to discuss, to think, to explore, and to share common ground. And I believe this is the first step towards finding an answer, or answers. And this is crucial. As a Canadian, a son, a future husband and father, and as a human being, I'd

like to thank you and hope you continue this work.”
(Nov, 2007)

Ashley Liu, Vancouver BC

“I attended the **2^o of Fear and Desire** session at the Rhizome Café on Saturday. Your approach with Headline Theatre is so important and it is especially needed to move us forward in dealing with climate change. Climate change far too often is seen as an issue or problem that is out there and far in the distance. I think the opposite is true: it is happening right here and now. Therefore it is important to start changing our core behaviours and increase our awareness of why we are making certain decisions. Headline Theatre brings a refreshing approach to the room and helps us connect with our humanity and move beyond the frustration. In my work as a life coach I am helping individuals make choices in line with their values. Headline Theatre helps us make choices in line with our values through dialogue, play and community. We need more of that!”

Julia James, Vancouver BC (Nov, 2007)

“I'm just writing to let you know how much I appreciated your **2^o of Fear and Desire** events at the Rhizome Cafe. The theatrical tools and the audience's ideas were so intriguing that I returned the next night. I related deeply to the struggles people shared about how to make responsible, realistic choices, and I feel excited and relieved to have learned how to deconstruct those moments of decision-making in my own head!

After attending and participating in **2^o of Fear and Desire** on Friday night, I was inspired to invite others to join me for Saturday's adventure. One friend who came with me whispered into my ear, shortly after the evening began, "Where the hell have you brought me this time???" and at the end of the evening she was thanking me and every participant in sight. The events gave me the clarity and the guts to look at the issue, and my relationship to it, anew.

Jane Henderson, Vancouver BC (Nov, 2007)

“It is wonderful to be in the presence of a teacher who has worked with the same set of techniques for decades, and honed them sharper and sharper. David's work is inspiring because it is both great theatre and great activism, and comes from a deeply thought out philosophical position.”

Robin Davidson, workshop participant, Brisbane, Australia (Sept, 2007)

"David's workshops are a great place to play and learn at the same time. I found the process challenging and yet gentle. There was space and opportunity for a diverse spectrum of people with a range of experience and skills in performance."

Neil Simmons, workshop participant, Brisbane, Australia (Sept, 2007)

“My son was addicted to Meth for about three years. We attended the **Meth** production together. It was hugely emotional for us. My son was very jumpy and jittery, wanted to be there, but was afraid to be there at the same time. He'd been drinking, was pretty high. We sat beside each other and watched the show. I could feel his tension, every muscle in his body was tense. At one point, I forget where in the play it was now, he started to cry. He sat there quietly sobbing. Of course my heart just broke and I sobbed too. We had both pulled it together by the time the lights went up and we ran for the door. I asked him what had made him cry, and he said "Mom, I feel so sad about what I put you through." Sheesh, we cried and cried. My son and I have always talked, always been close, have attended tons of counselling together, shared our hearts many times. Thank you for giving us another opportunity, another moment, another place to come together, where all we do is love each other. We don't do anything, solve anything, or fix anything. We do get to that pure place of love, and it keeps us going through all the rest.”

In e-mail, from a woman who asked to remain anonymous (Jan, 2007)

"I have had several counselors in the community comment to me how much their clients had appreciated **Meth** (in Kelowna) and that they were still talking about it. They felt that it really helped them to see that there are options and so many different ways of thinking and acting at any given time.

Lynn Murovec, Crossroads Treatment Centre (Feb, 2007)

"I thought the **Meth** production was excellent. I appreciated the "realness" of it. I also appreciated how the facilitator challenged simplistic solutions during the interactive component. Staff and clients from Kelowna who attended felt it was very worthwhile. Definitely a job well done."

Lesley Coates, Prevention Coordinator, Kelowna Alcohol and Drug Services

"I was just talking with the Head of Instruction with our School District (in Grand Forks, BC). She said that the Ministry of Education has just created a curriculum on Meth and marijuana. Because of all the publicity and conversation that happened as a result of the **Meth** play being here, there is a readiness to bring the curriculum here...so, that's a good thing."

Linda Manzon, Public Health Nurse, Grand Forks Public Health Nursing & Dental Health Services (Feb, 2007)

"Feedback on **Meth** was awesome. We had recovering Meth addicts attend the performance who were very appreciative for bringing the production to Cranbrook. I know of one family that attended together and the same family attended our Follow Up Dinner and Discussion.

There were lots of partnerships built between the St. Mary's Band and outside agencies. Many people who attended our Follow Up Dinner on Feb 12, as a result of the **Meth** play, had a chance to meet new people and resource people that may be able to assist them in their recovery. We had 50 participants. Our Chief and a band counselor were in attendance. The room was filled with young people and older people. It was awesome to have people talk about what they thought about the play and to talk about their feelings as well."

Bonnie Eugene, aqam Community Governance Facilitator, Cranbrook (Feb, 2007)

"The criterion my wife and I have come to use in determining the worth of any arts experience is whether we find ourselves talking about it the next morning. By that standard **Meth** did very well – it occupied us on the hour's drive home afterwards, from the performance in Williams Lake, and for a good deal of the next morning's drive into town."

Graham Kelsey, Williams Lake audience member, and Member of the BC Arts Council (Feb, 2007)

"My wife and I really enjoyed the format and content of your **Meth** presentation in Fort St. James. You all certainly were able to send a strong message on the dangers of drug addiction, and it was good to see that you went beyond just showing drug addiction in your play, but also showed the dangerous of other addictions as well and how they often become interdependent. Perhaps the best testimonial I heard came from my own wife, who was so impressed and excited with your presentation, that she was seriously considering driving 45 minutes on icy roads to attend your Vanderhoof presentation the next night, so that she could get up on stage and help the characters resolve their situations. GREAT JOB!"

Barry Huhn BSc MA Ft. St. James audience member (Feb, 2007)

"I have been working with a young First Nations boy who has been diagnosed with FAS and has been ordered into counseling due to several charges ranging from assault to car theft all while he was under the influence of Alcohol or Meth. He has been a very challenging client for me to engage, until I happened to see him at your production.

At our next session I casually asked him what he thought of the **Meth** play he immediately lit up and started to talk about how real it was and how much it reflected his own situation. It was the most talking that he had done up to that point and we have continued to return to it on many occasions. I wanted to let you know how your play impacted both myself and my client and thank you."

Stewart Johnston, Counsellor /Program Director, Vanderhoof Alcohol & Drug Services (Feb, 2007)

"I really appreciated the **Meth** production and the skill of the facilitator who helped people to play out their ideas and make sense of the results. This is a powerful format, where real life can be put into a context of experimentation and people can see that their choices have a powerful effect on their own life, as well as the lives of others around them. I think that it is a very effective way of helping people to understand the issues as well as ways to begin to heal the wounds that are at the base of the problems.

Todd Blattner, audience member, Vanderhoof

"**Meth** has had a profound affect on the 120 audience members and has resulted in a significant increase in self referrals to our mental health services. This is a good thing! We are moving forward with facilitated discussion groups and would really like to use a live theatre performance as part of our follow up. On behalf of Kitimaat Village and all those who attended. Thank you all for the work, the performance, the energy that you bring."

Lorna Morrison, Director of Health Kitimaat Village (Feb, 2007)

"Congratulations on the successful presentation (in Cumberland) last week. I was very impressed by **Meth**. There were many opportunities for us to think about how things can be done in many different ways to deal with addictions. I thought one of the best parts of the whole play was how they dealt with many different addictions. Although Meth may be the catalyst for the play they did a good job of pointing out how addictive our society is (and not just to "substances")!

Karen Rushton, audience member, Cumberland, BC (Feb, 2007)

"The Headlines Theatre production of **Meth** more than lived up to its billing on Wednesday night. Cast members served up an intense, in-your-face look at the reality of addiction, using crystal methamphetamine as the vehicle."

Shayne Morrow, Alberni Valley Times

Meth really opened my eyes as to behaviors not only at home, but with the kids' friends who come over. I cannot ignore it any more."

anonymous audience member, forwarded in e-mail by Marla Sampson, Chemainus organizer (Feb, 2007)

"As a physician who works in the Downtown Eastside with substance-dependent patients, I found the Headlines Theatre production of **Meth** a riveting depiction of people's inner conflicts around drug addiction and, too, of the conflicts addiction creates in their social world. The play was a realistic representation of some of the physical and psychological risks incurred when young people become hooked on crystal meth. The powerful lesson this dramatically conceived and executed production conveyed was that even a few words, if offered with compassionate presence and attention, can alter the self-destructive trajectory of another human being's life."

E-mail from Gabor Maté M.D., audience member, November 30, 2006

"(**Meth** is an) in-your-face public broadcasting of THE REAL DANGERS of Meth addiction. I froze time and stepped into the body on stage and vied for a different outcome than the previous one shown. I say Fuck YEA! this is what this shit can really do to you. NOW what are you going to do to help the situation out?"

CERO, audience member, November 30, 2006 (from his blog)

"I found **Meth** to be one of the most helpful sessions around addiction – on a grass roots personal action level – I've ever attended. I really appreciated its gentleness and compassion, within the harsh material with which you are dealing. And a special congratulations for the performers. It takes so much courage and generosity to go to these places they are sharing with us."

E-mail from Savannah Walling, audience member, Dec. 1, 2006

"(Headlines' **Meth**) leads to an immediacy of understanding that no amount of well-intentioned discussion can achieve. Many of the (audience) interventions demonstrated that when people attempt to make meaningful connections, it can go a long way toward filling the hole that addiction—whether to drugs, alcohol, or work—keeps trying to fill. ...director Diamond skillfully brings home the point that even the smallest gesture can open the door to positive change."

Kathleen Oliver, Georgia Straight, December 7, 2006

"I really liked the "sketchiness" of the play. That's what Meth does to you. Every time I have gone to a forum being put on by the Government on Crystal Meth, they never let me in. But I loved that I could call "STOP" and be a part of this thing".

Phone message from Charles Stanfield, audience member, December 7, 2006

"I greatly admire the achievements of David Diamond and his Headlines Theatre. He is following his own path, doing extraordinary and groundbreaking work in several fields, like his work with many First Nations communities in Canada and the US, and his adaptation of Forum Theatre on TV and on the Internet. For what he has already done, is doing, and certainly will do, David Diamond deserves all our support."

Augusto Boal, Brazilian Theatre Director and founder of the Theatre of the Oppressed, May 2006

"I've had a lot of thoughts and feelings going through me over the past few days, and one word that keeps popping up is: **privileged**. I feel so privileged to have been part of this experience. I can honestly say that this was a transformative experience for me. That is something I rarely say. But in this case it's really true. As another cast member said last night, there are things you know intellectually, but you don't fully understand until you feel them in your gut. I had moments during our plays when that flash of gut understanding came to me, and I know that those insights will stay with me and change how I see and do things. That is a true gift."

Avril Orloff, participant and cast member in "Palestine, Israel and Me" May, 2006

"(**Here and Now** is) a genuinely gripping piece, which is powerful enough to prompt heartfelt responses that can only help deal with the problem."

Peter Birnie, Critic's Picks, Vancouver Sun, November 24, 2005

"Tremendously important...I found myself talking about nothing but this play (**Here and Now**) the next morning."

Jerry Wasserman, The Province November, 2006

"Few plays (**Here and Now**) offer such an opportunity for collective understanding, and such a powerful catalyst for change."

Kathleen Oliver, Georgia Straight, November 24, 2005

"I saw **Here and Now** on Thursday night and stepped in for a character. It was an amazing experience. This was my first exposure to forum theatre and it is incredibly powerful. It really gave me a greater perspective on the issue of gangs and the individual struggles that encompass it. And what is so cool, is that this form allows, and even forces, the audience to think about it, struggle with it and explore problem solving. It is very empowering to be reminded that we all have choices."

Shana Orlowsky, December 10, 2005

"What an original and great idea to make **Here and Now** so broadly interactive, to embrace the world. People who otherwise would not have been present at the theatre, were there too, by the magic of technology. I was impressed by the interventions and the perplexities of the courageous people that stepped up to find out that it is not that easy to get out, to face threatening individuals, to deal with reality. I loved how at the end you pointed at the humanity of Kam and Sunny and their predicament. At the end of the day, we are all humans, sometimes trapped in our own stories, disconcerted, not knowing how to undo the knot."

Estela Torres, December 21, 2005

"I thought **Here and Now** was extremely effective in telling a story and revealing an issue that needed to be heard. It was amazing to see people, who were not actors, engage in a process that allowed them to change the outcome of such a huge societal issue. This type of theatre needs to continue, because it involves our audiences, and gives them an outlet to express their feelings and much needed opinions. It brought awareness around an issue that I had only seen through the newspaper, or the news, that I felt distant from. It also allowed me to see that there is hope for all people."

Barbara Tomasic, December 21, 2005

"The **Here and Now** project holds a great deal of value within our local community and within our larger global community. As a member of the local Indo-Canadian community, to introduce this production with a discussion on the politics of race was valuable. By illustrating this point with an example of the non-racial identification of a 'white'/'Caucasian' gang like the Hell's Angels - it does hit home with individuals that have never considered the racial profiling conducted by the media. And the exercise of interrupting the play and re-placing one of the performers and performing the "choice" was extremely useful. Many of us can sit back and judge what needs to be done but by performing the actions - you become involved in not only critical evaluation but the common sense factor. I think this project was highly effective and positive on multiple levels.

I came with my mother, brother and partner. Sitting within the family context was important to me as many of the issues were mirrored in our lives. As much as that exact story doesn't live out in my reality - it is far too close of a possibility in my world. I think it is important to see how something may play out. Personally, I found mirrors for all of us - and perhaps not embedded within one specific character but with certain mental constructions or characteristics. It is so easy for many of us to stand back and say call the cops - but it isn't as easy as that. There are so many strings that are interwoven and if you tug one - it impacts all of the rest - there isn't one all mighty fix all. Thank you for allowing us, as a family, to view this."

Bindy Kang, December 22, 2005

"I was a workshop participant for the Headlines Theatre production of **Here and Now**. I was amazed at how all of the material that was covered in this play was a vital mirror of my own personal experiences inside my home, and the South Asian community abroad. I think that the content of the performance was very timely. It was exquisitely displayed on-stage."

Shyam Wazir, December 27, 2005

"**Here and Now** was very worthwhile, exciting, timely, important, necessary for breaking stereotypes, and developing awareness. Extremely educational and bold. A daring process that is safe in its structure - one that illuminates not only when it succeeds, but, even more so when failure is allowed to be witnessed. I was educated about gangs - indoctrination and exiting gangs - I'd never been aware of some of the issues that your cast presented."

Drue Robinson Hagan, December 28, 2005

"**Here and Now** is a compelling ripped-from-the-streets drama about gangs and violence. It is, as always with Headlines, phenomenal theatre created by community workshops that make the resulting performance almost unbearably authentic. We are losing a whole generation of kids to gangs and violence, and this play asks fierce questions about what we are going to do about that heart scouring loss."

Tom Sandborn, list-serve, December 2005

"**Here and Now** was significant, poignant, powerful and thought provoking. I was very impressed at the way it worked to stimulate such interesting conversation and interventions. I left that production really thinking -- and very much realizing that there are no easy solutions. As an Anglo-Canadian, the production gave me a rare opportunity to see inside and hear from an Indo-Canadian family and that for me was hugely valuable. Furthermore, to hear from other members of the Indo-Canadian community in such a frank and intimate setting was eye opening."

Heather Frost, January 3, 2006

“Sometimes the interventions (in **Here and Now**) succeeded and other times they failed, but throughout the interventions four things were constant: meaningful learning, deep pleasure, and the celebration of public courage and civic intelligence. In short, riveting theatre.”

Adam Ward, Organic Press, (State of Washington, USA) Volume 2, Issue 5

“I want to thank Headlines Theatre for the life changing experience that I had in the Theatre for Living trainings in August, 2005. It was a very powerful and enlightening experience that made me stop and think about my role in different aspects of society and life.”

Daria Bondavalli, training workshop participant, 2005

“I attended the Headlines performance event in Melbourne in June of this year, where the topic was body image. My first experience of 'Forum Theatre', I was overcome and amazed at how a technique could allow for the revealing of such sensitive issues. With strength and authenticity, the actors relayed vulnerable issues and posed raw questions in their performances. The audience responded and engaged.”

Mandy Field, Artistic Director, The Silent Landscape Project 2005

“I am sitting here still thinking about the **Gimme the Keys** presentation (in Windsor) last night. What a powerful evening it was! I have seen lots of interesting theatre in my time, but this was one of the most eloquent and life-changing presentations I have ever been a part of. Your cast was wonderful.”

Janis Nickleson, Windsor audience member, 2005

“The realism of the plays helped bring out the truth about how students really feel in these situations. In exposing the truth, we can start to reveal some answers. My own personal feelings about drinking and drugs have changed immensely. We in **Gimme the Keys** all hope that it can do the same for our audiences.”

Troy McLain, Vanderhoof workshop participant, 2005

“I attended a performance of **Gimme the Keys** on November 6th. I brought with me my husband, my nephew who is 17 and my niece who is 13. I want to let you know that although each of our experiences was unique, words that were used to discuss the evening were: emotional, interesting, thought provoking, impacting, upsetting, shocking, educational, and in a different kind of way – fun.

Adults were given a better perspective on youth – their issues and their way of dealing with things. The youth had the opportunity to see real experiences that may or may not relate to them. It was fascinating to see (in **Gimme the Keys**) the ways that we can change the outcome by the choices that we make, and the way we handle various situations.”

Charlane Thornton-Joe, Victoria audience member, 2005

“I learned more on the ride home from **Gimme the Keys** about where my teenage son and his friends were, about drugs and alcohol, than I ever could any other way. The three powerful plays opened them up and I, as a parent, am very grateful.”

Mary Wilkie, Victoria Psychotherapist and audience member, 2005

“Headlines Theatre’s **Practicing Democracy** makes for riveting theatre.”

Paul Grant, CBC Radio, March 21/04

“**Practicing Democracy** provided its audiences and workshop participants with lived experience of democratic process linked to fierce, compassionate art practice, and that's the sort of experience that can be habit forming. Once again this courageous theatre company has expanded the boundaries of what we

can expect from theatre and from our political masters. Headlines Theatre continues to be one of the nation's hidden cultural treasures."

Tom Sandborn, Columbia Journal, April/04

"...one of the most effective performances I've seen Headlines do, purposeful, graceful and making it all *look* easy. The cast was moving, their work honest and real. It is efforts like yours – often in the face of ignorance and indifference – that makes this sorry human world a better place."

Lionel Johnston, Melusine Foundation, March 15/04

"...the benefits of using actors who really do know a thing or two about living in poverty become strikingly clear. These are simple truths, bluntly told, but grippingly poignant. While the reasons behind **Practicing Democracy** are deeply political, the project still manages to maintain a very high entertainment value."

Alexandra Gill, Globe and Mail, March 4/04

"Thank you, Headlines Theatre, for a thought provoking, engaging performance. **Practicing Democracy** is theatre one does not walk away from but propels one to think about what I can do to help make our community inclusive and friendly."

Elsie Dean, audience member, from e-mail, March 22/04

"...what **Practicing Democracy** lacks in theatrical dazzle it more than makes up for in relevance and urgency. At a time when so many in our community live in danger, the act of coming together to try to create solutions and to offer those ideas to the people who have the power to legislate change may be the only safety net we have left." **Kathleen Oliver, Georgia Straight, March 11/04**

"I deeply enjoyed and learned from your way of being with people: respect, practical democracy, energy, an intense quality of attention on your part to the individual and the group. The **THEATRE FOR LIVING** training workshop itself was both deeply thought-provoking and admirably clear. It was interesting to me to observe how you have developed an approach which draws from Boal but strikes out in new directions. For me, the analysis of games, images and forum theatre embryos was extremely useful, and the sessions in which you functioned as director were a joy in that they often unclogged the work and allowed the participants to explore their stories in more depth."

Beth Chatten, President, All Nations Theatre Society, Jan. 2004

"David Diamond, with his great expertise, thoughtfulness and leadership, created such a safe environment for deep learning and walked the group through the collective and personal journeys of critical, reflective thinking and skill development. The participants were passionate about their new learning and clearly communicated their enthusiasm to share their learning with others and to apply their newly developed skills into their work in the community."

"Personally, I have tremendously benefited from the training. I have gained great insight into the essence of our work as a "theatre for social change" agent. As a community advocate, I have developed practical, empowering community development techniques to facilitate reflection and strategizing to deal with complex social issues in our community."

Hieu Van Ngo, Board Member, All Nations Theatre, Jan. 2004

"All Nations Theatre Society's recent **THEATRE FOR LIVING** training with veteran forum theatre director David Diamond was a marvelous gift to Calgary's theatre and 'social justice' communities. It was one of the most useful and enlightening professional development events that I've experienced, either here in

Canada or during my twenty years of involvement in professional theatre in the UK.”

Trevor Allan Davies, Dec. 2003

“**THEATRE FOR LIVING** gets to the heart of what is real. It humbles the proud and it lifts up the defeated. It provides real solutions to communities in crisis. It is a model for preventing social crises, and I can't think of anything more important than that. I feel this work should be mandatory in every recovery, anti-racist, anti-violence program across the country.”

Doug Curtis, Artistic Director, Ghost River Theatre, Dec. 2003

“The THEATRE FOR LIVING training was exceptional. I felt incredibly affirmed in my belief that the education process should always include the student. Teaching and learning is a dance -- not a walk -- that should be sensitive to the needs of both the teacher and the student. Once the participant feels they belong, they will be willing to engage in dialogue and it is by allowing ourselves to be with each other and begin dialogue that we begin to teach each other and learn from each other. This is truly crossing the boundaries of our differences and moving toward a dance which celebrates and honors our diversity. Allowing students to learn this tool takes us to another level where empowerment can occur....student becomes teacher, teacher becomes student, and so on and so on. “

Lori Aitcheson, Consultant, Education Equity, Regina Public Schools, Sept. 2003

“Thousands of kilometers and 9 time zones! I'd like to thank everybody at Headlines Theatre and around them who made these THEATRE FOR LIVING Training Workshops possible. Their work and how they share it is overwhelming. It is not only admirable what they do in community work but also an outstanding skill how they teach their methods and ideas. Go on and spread it all over the world!”

Armin Staffler, Innsbruck, Austria, Sept. 2003

“The THEATRE FOR LIVING Training rejuvenated my passion for using Forum Theatre as a means to explore issues of Racism and Violence with youth. I am also currently in the process of using my newly acquired tools to create a new play of my own. Your faith in people and ability to "Create Space" is beautiful and rare. Thank You for so generously sharing what has taken you a lifetime to develop.”

Nate Pronyshyn, Sept. 2003

"I was impressed with the way **Don't Say a Word** created a space for people to grapple with issues of violence in very real and meaningful ways. It was fabulous to see the engagement of the audience, particularly the youth, in creating new possibilities. I was struck by the multitude of openings for change highlighted in the production, and it prompted me to consider the opportunities I have in my life to make 'insightful interventions'. I left the production feeling very hopeful and inspired."

Desiree Sattler, audience member, Feb. 28, 2003

“We showed the video of **Don't Say a Word** to our young men's group yesterday and their eyes were all glued to the screen as the video was being played. The video also prompted a lively discussion afterward. I think that I can honestly say that that the young men have a new awareness around the issue of bullying and violence in schools as a result of watching the video.”

Ronnie Toumayan, Production Team Manager, Young Men's Sunday, Oct 19, 2004

"**Don't Say a Word** was awesome! I had to leave as soon as it finished otherwise I was going to cry there. I was a very bullied kid - at home and at school - and contemplated suicide a lot -- especially in high school. The setting really worked and the actors did a fantastic job. I also slowly appreciated the genius of the story itself - it's archetypal nature - as the forum unfolded and I got to see the significance of each character and the events that were depicted. Thank you."

E-mail from anonymous audience member

"I thoroughly enjoyed the performance of **Don't Say a Word** last night. The high school students were wonderful. They were so confident in dealing with the interventions and improvised brilliantly."

Dan Blake, BC Teacher's Federation, Feb 17, 2003

"On Feb. 21, 2003 I saw a powerful and very familiar portrayal of bullying and the effects it has on people involved. **Don't Say a Word** was an excellent tool that used youth involvement to create a powerful and very impacting message about real and important issues, while ensuring the participation and recognition of culturally and socially diverse voices that individual youth represent."

Monica Lee, Asian Society for the Intervention of AIDS (ASIA), April 3, 2003

"What a compelling, moving and inspiring evening. I couldn't say enough about **Don't Say a Word**. I know that four more team members went on Friday and were also very moved. What your team is doing is incredible and so very important. You are such an inspiration. THANK YOU!"

Nadine Marshall, KindActs, Feb 17, 2003

"The webcast of **Don't Say a Word** was fantastic. What a powerful play! We had 16 people join us for the afternoon. 6 high school students (Gr 9-11), 4 university students (Fine Arts, Education), 2 parents and 4 Facilitators of our ACT program. We were able to take part in some interventions. The discussions which took place before and after the play were tremendous."

Lori Aitcheson, Consultant, Education Equity, Regina Public Schools

"Students who participated in the Anti-Bullying Forum Theatre events were significantly more likely to feel that they "know what they can do to stop harassment" than students who did not participate. Students who participated reported more willingness to respond and be responsible than did students who did not participate.

Given that these data were collected only a short time after the Headlines Theatre presentation, these effects are actually most encouraging. In just a few short weeks, this unique theatre effort planted seeds that have already begun to grow in the minds of those students who participated. Over time, the increased awareness that is evident among participants should continue to affect how students think and behave, as students apply what they have learned to their own real-life situations."

Excerpted from the quantitative report: "Impact of Headlines Theatre's Anti-Bullying Forum on Secondary Schools" April 4, 2003, by **Shelley Hymel, Ph.D., UBC Faculty of Education**. The full report is available on our web site at: [□ HYPERLINK http://www.headlinestheatre.com □](http://www.headlinestheatre.com)
[□www.headlinestheatre.com□](http://www.headlinestheatre.com)

"The **(THEATRE FOR LIVING)** workshops and performances have strengthened our sense of community at Gladstone. Staff and students are focussed on a common goal, and that is to make our school a safer place for all. This has enhanced the sense of belonging and personal responsibility for what happens in our school."

Mr. D. Odegaard, Vice Principal, Gladstone Secondary School, 2002

"Being trained in the **THEATRE FOR LIVING** work has opened the world to me. As a Child and Youth Programmer and a group facilitator, with TFL Training I have been able to work with youth and use these techniques to help youth explore their own struggles and find ways of defeating them. TFL techniques empower youth to see how they can achieve success or simply stand their ground. I have seen youth come together to brainstorm, find solutions and even just better understand their surroundings. All of which are important to the growth and development of any teen."

Nicole McRae, Youth Worker, Little Mountain Neighbourhood House, 2002

"I learned more about theatre in one week from my **THEATRE FOR LIVING** training with David than I have in many years of other theatre experience. The training was tremendous."

Tim Ossa McLeod, TFL Training participant, 2002

"The August **THEATRE FOR LIVING** training was an amazing experience for me. I felt as though it reconnected me with the possibility of bringing creativity back into my social justice work. And, perhaps most importantly it reconnected me with the joy of taking risks and with the theatre of being engaged and present in life -- and it gave me a sense of community with others who share the goal of bringing creativity, joy and connection back into whatever work we do."

Robin Cox, TFL Training participant, 2002

"Life is theatre and the **THEATRE FOR LIVING** process is a very powerful means to capturing and dealing with a community's thorny issues in a safe environment. It is also personally empowering and very fulfilling."

Jenny Ferris, TFL Training participant, 2002

"In a nicely stylized piece of speech and movement flowing with watery images, the ever-contentious David Diamond and his Headlines Theatre manage to expose what's most outrageous about the premise that the world's supply of fresh water is going down the drain -- it's true, it's happening right now and Canada is in complicity in preparing to sell our supply down the river.

Diamond worked with choreographer Kathryn Ricketts to turn a deliciously loquacious script into something more than a harangue, and they are largely successful in finding ways to make this agit-prop (**THIR\$TY**) fast, funny, and furiously angry." **Peter Birnie, Vancouver Sun, March 2002**

"....moments (in **THIR\$TY**) are intensely physical, and the seven tons of water that make up the set distill a complex range of emotions, enhanced by Noah Drew's seductive sound design. In the play's haunting final image (the actors) waltz in water littered with corpses, while the empty bottles float on the surface, providing a whispered percussion. moments of visual, visceral poetry have enough resonance to make you think differently next time you turn on the tap."

Kathleen Oliver, Georgia Straight, March 2002

"Todd Thomson and writer/choreographer/dancer Kathryn Ricketts are brilliant as the bewildered salmon Sammy and Sally. The dance elements of the performance are powerful throughout, and often add a charge of erotic energy and dark menace to the texture of the piece.

THIR\$TY (is) one of the most interesting and compelling nights of Vancouver theatre this year; it is also a rich and sophisticated addition to our public conversations about water, democracy and art. It is typical of the courage and vision that has characterized Headlines' work for decades that the company had celebrated its anniversary by taking new risks and bringing yet another provocative and inspired challenge to the complacent. This show, and the events that surround it, should be on everyone's must-see list this season." **Tom Sandborn, Columbia Journal, March 2002**

"Being born and raised in deep "communism with a human face" in former Czechoslovakia, I never cared about politics. It was always for me something I cannot involve, something evil and nasty that happens somewhere else above me and I just have to find the restricted, but hopefully some, free gaps between the restrictions, where I can live my little "innocent" life with my little personal dreams, which won't interfere with the political stuff. I do not want to be an ignorant anymore. I still do not believe you can change the world with theatre, but you can change people's perception of the world. Your work changed mine. Thank you again, for your awareness, generosity and gift to make these revolutions in people's heart happen."

Marketa Nykl THIR\$TY audience member, April 2002

"Working with David Diamond on the preparation and rehearsal of a number of short Forum plays, was an invaluable insight into the intricacy of the Forum Theatre making process. David's careful exposition of the plays dramaturgy, what is and isn't known about the world of the play by the actors; the place of grounded social research in the development of Forum plays; the crucial process of rehearsing possible Forum interventions prior to a public performance - was a real revelation. This learning was gained, not

only through watching or participating in a week of on the floor rehearsals, but complimented by David's stories from over a decade of Forum Theatre making with scores of communities across Canada and internationally ."

**Michael McLaughlin , Centre for Popular Education, U. of Technology, Sydney , Australia
TFL Training, Aug. 2001**

"The Art of the Joker class was amazing! I was surrounded by astounding people from all over the world who use these techniques. We learned a great deal from each other and especially from the facilitators who are knowledgeable, passionate and skilled teachers. I have so much information to take back to the work I do with my organization. I don't know where else I could have taken a class that so fully met my needs - I wish I left all workshops feeling this jazzed and prepared to continue my work!"

Jeannie LaFrance, TFL Training, Aug. 2001

"I became more aware of the many possibilities for adapting T.O. techniques with different populations and communities. I feel more comfortable with experimenting with the integration of cops in the head, rainbow, etc. during actual forum performance. I took home many new ideas, games, and friendships."

Tamiko Rothhorn, TFL Training, Aug. 2001

"It was wonderful to be able to have such an event as **Corporate U** broadcast on the web, thus enabling the vast audience to participate. You are doing the job of David Diamond in Vancouver - but with such an event you are doing job of David Diamond on the planet Earth. Forum Theatre is such a powerful media to promote critical thinking and to help people become liberated and transformed, not only entertained and informed. Corporations are really in our heads, and **Corporate U** can help us to proceed further in our search for our authentic self without different labels which society puts on/in Our Heads. We very much appreciate that you are adjusting Theatre of the Oppressed techniques for the persons and not vice versa. Thank you."

Sasa Janiska, Croatia, the first ever Forum web cast intervener, Dec. 22, 2000

"Emme Lee delivers the night's most stunning performance, reminding the audience, in a single, heart-scorching monologue, just what live theatre is for. The superb company of actors on stage with her (Valerie Laub, Kevin Millsip, Charlene Wee and director David Diamond) all work well within the play's experimental structure. (Diamond) knows that there are, always, more questions than answers, and that real life drama is long on pain and short on simple heroes or villains. Headlines makes their difficult material dance. **Corporate U** offers an advanced course for the educated heart and an intelligent seminar on globalization in a single evening."

Tom Sandborn, The Globe and Mail, Dec. 11, 2000

"We conducted week-end workshops with (in all) a couple of hundred Vancouver-area high school students. Many of these were led by David Diamond, a brilliant proponent of THEATRE FOR LIVING, which proved an indispensable method for helping our participants show their lives to us in safety. I want to thank all those kids.....(and) David for his sensitive and powerful workshops."

John Lazarus, Playwright, ICE: Beyond Cool (excerpted from Oct. 2000 tour program)

"Headlines had definitely had an impact on my thinking. I have reaped a lot of benefit, confidence, and awareness about myself, community, and understanding of community-based education. I know how drama/theatre can be an effective tool for getting at the stuff necessary for social change making."

Vera Francis, Passamaquoddy workshop, Maine, USA, May 2000

"Headlines' THEATRE FOR LIVING projects - notably this year's **Squeegie**, show a committed, tenacious courage and a public-spirited vision remarkable for their rarity in our laissez-faire times."

Lionel Johnston, Executive Director, The Melusine Foundation, November 1999

"I was in awe of the courage and resiliency of the youth and the depth and intensity of their experiences. Their level of commitment speaks to the nature and quality of work and to David's ability. For many, this was the first time they were able to look in the mirror and smile - having a profound sense of their worth and goodness and the ability to share this with others. I consider the work David has done (on **Street Spirits**) as being instrumental in creating lasting healing and positive change, not only for the workshop participants, but for the audience in our city."

Susie Wheeler, Coordinator, Youth Around Prince, Prince George, September 1999

"They (the youth) are empowered, not passive; spontaneous, not scripted; subjects in their own right, not mere objects of another's actions. There are no pre-determined outcomes but endless surprises. Just like in real life. Street Spirits was an excellent example of a particular kind of interactive theatre....and highly necessary addition to the theatre scene in Prince George. Encore!"

Forte Magazine, September 1999

"The youth involved have discovered the cathartic potential theatre has, and have used that discovery to their advantage,"

Prince George Citizen, September 17, 1999

"The Firehall Theatre rocked. Laughter, anger, frustration and sadness filled the place, and a generosity of spirit came from both sides of the stage. I was amazed at the professionalism of the performers. It was an exhilarating but disturbing evening. Personally, I have to figure out what I'm going to do about the **squeegee** kids at Main and Terminal, an intersection I go through almost every day. There's no way I can look away, look embarrassed or fiddle with the radio. That corner will never be the same again."

Excerpted from Jo Ledingham's, Vancouver Courier, May 30, 1999 review

"The empowering nature of **Squeegee** was clear. The street involved youth that developed the production were given a voice and a safe environment in which to express their experiences. As an agency dedicated to the increased education and general health of our children, it was a pleasure to be able to lend support to the project. Thank you for your dedication and enthusiasm. It is inspiring."

Michelle Fortin, Special Services Co-ordinator, Watari, May 31, 1999.

"**Squeegee** is only about 20 minutes long, but its Shakespearean in its tragedy (and, by the bye, in its comic relief). Squeegee is good theatre. Its also an indictment of Vancouver's mean and "clean" civic values."

Review by Anne Fleming, Georgia Straight, May 27, 1999

"Once in a while, a group of people will come together and present work that is truly visionary. This does not happen often but when it does, it creates opportunities previously unseen. Those involved with **Squeegee** have created many opportunities. It is now up to the rest of the community to join in, seize the opportunities and make a real investment with respect to the next generation."

Angelo Lam M.S.W., Coordinator, Centre for Integrated Personal & Community

Development, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. (June, 1999)

"I would like to thank you for changing my life. Yes, changing my life. I only wish I would have gone through this as a teen. I was so shy, timid, low self-esteem, just waiting and hoping to change and I did by taking risks throughout your Headlines Theatre training (in 1992). You made me realize I can act and have fun without making a fool of myself and feeling stupid. Everyone else in that hall did the same as me, we were as one."

With permission from e-mail received March 9/99 from Bev Stacey, workshop participant,

"...a series of poignant moments and hilarious ones, vividly illustrating the morass of conflicting emotions that burble up around two people in bed. It may be a truism to say, as Diamond will with little provocation, that prepackaged entertainment - recorded music, movies, and television- has robbed us of the sense of belonging and worth that making our own entertainment once provided. But it is a whole

'nother thing to feel what we've lost, to feel the beginnings of community forming in a roomful of strangers over the course of two short hours. Even if you haven't leaped on stage - and maybe you have - you've grown fond of the people up there, and the people next to you, shouting things out. You've been part of something."

From Anne Fleming's March 4/99 unpublished Georgia Straight review of *Safe Sex*

"I often think about my participation in that phenomenal **Rainbow of Desire** process at the CAPACOA Conference in Ottawa; the experience started me down a different path here at Arena Stage. Even in my own life I am thinking about my own motivations, the subtext that underlines my personal speech, and how I couple physical expression with speech. And it all started with that evening in Ottawa."

Neill Roan, Director of External Affairs, Arena Stage, Washington, DC (Jan. 20, 1999)

".....in terms of Forum Theatre practice, Headlines sets the standard in Canada."

The Canada Council (June 29, 1998)

"The work that Headlines accomplishes, not only in Vancouver but all over our province, restores my own faith that change for the better can happen for youth who, at the moment, feel there is no future for them. The work done here with "**Cops in the Head**" will substantially effect how these young people will deal with confrontation in their futures. New ways to deal with their anger and frustration can lead them toward of feelings of success rather than failure, power rather than powerlessness and "I have a choice" rather than reacting with rage. It is hard to find the brilliant words I need in order to express my thanks enough."

Wendy Wood, Youth Programmer, The Gathering Place (May 7, 1998)

"Using theatre as an investigative tool, Diamond draws on the experience of everyone in the theatre. (**The Dying Game**) is a fascinating process and it's absolutely impossible not to imagine yourself in the action - even if you don't physically intervene. There were tears, frustration and anger - all in a safe, supportive environment. Diamond does not promise to make it all go away but he certainly set some lamps along that dark path."

Jo Ledingham, Vancouver Courier (Feb. 22, 1998)

"The **Generations** project represented a redefinition of how community work could be accomplished. The quality was second to none. Feedback has been extremely positive and the impact on staff as well as the community that we serve has been phenomenal! Your work continues to be an inspiration to us."

Angelo Lam, Coordinator, Popular Education and Theatre Program, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. (1997)

"The fact that a lot of Headlines Theatre's work is participatory terrifies some people, but let me tell you: Headlines' Artistic Director, David Diamond, works such magic -- the theatre he creates is so compelling and often so much flat-out fun -- that, once you're actually in the theatre, the pull to get up and take part can be stronger than the tide, more subliminally insistent than the force that guides the Ouija board."

Colin Thomas, George Straight, regarding THEATRE FOR LIVING (1997)

"David Diamond, the guy in charge of the (THEATRE FOR LIVING) proceedings, never lets things get out of hand. Diamond is a master at working the crowd.....participants find it very liberating"

Renee Doruyter, The Vancouver Province (1997)

"The THEATRE FOR LIVING training and performances were excellent! The awareness created on both a personal and community level has brought us one step closer to addressing the Residential School issue and its effects. The (theatre) training provided a wealth of information and new tools for caregivers and/or facilitators."

Sharon D. Russell, NW Co-ordinator, Provincial Residential School Project (1996)

“(Creative Audience is) great fun, unusual, energetic; bold, refreshing and hugely entertaining.”

Barbara Crook, Vancouver Sun (1996)

“The Reclaiming Our Spirits workshop has affected me deeply. I feel like a new person now, having let go of the past negative experiences that I had throughout my life. I’ve learned to control the cops in my head.”

Men ga den wii hayastk -- Helen Johnson (1996)

“I was inspired and moved and ultimately I was changed by the (Forum Theatre) evening.”

From a letter from Dorothy Dittrich, audience member at a Street Youth Forum (1996)

“When I now see the 21 participants of our THEATRE FOR LIVING workshop on family violence, they enthusiastically talk about the effects the process had on them. These Junior High School students comment on the confidence and clarity they now have about issues in their own family and amongst their friends. They seem to have let go of the usual misgivings that students their age have about sharing their emotions, thoughts and beliefs with others in a direct way. In short, they appear to have found a strong piece of inner courage about themselves and their ability to take on the world.”

Stephen Garnet, Port Alberni Drug & Alcohol Counselling Service Society (1995)

...“(Mamu is) a bold, ambitious and breathtakingly imaginative play....achingly beautiful images.”

Barbara Crook, Vancouver Sun (1994)

“...flying actors, a spectacular musical soundscape and more imagination and genuine passion that you’ll see in a full season at most Canadian theatres...(Mamu is) one of the most moving and powerful pieces of theatre I’ve ever had the privilege of experiencing.”

Mark Leiren-Young, Theatrum Magazine (1994)

"It is an enormous task to give 'voice' to issues and topics which are usually not discussed openly and honestly. The performance and treatment of the difficult topic of family violence in **Out of the Silence** had the clarity, focus and brilliance that comes from direct experience."

Lorna Williams, First Nations Education Specialist, Vancouver School Board (1992)

"**Out of the Silence** will add immeasurably to the new pool of knowledge and understanding about the root causes and results of abusive behaviour, however dramatic or however subtle."

Blair Harvey, Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre (1992)

".....coherent and complex. I can recall few times when I have been so moved in the theatre.....electric moments....(**Out of the Silence**) offers comfort and acceptance."

Colin Thomas, Georgia Straight (1992)

"(**Out of the silence is**) Taut, convincing and skillfully presented"

Lloyd Dykk, Vancouver Sun (1992)

"...now I understand why theatre fundamentally exists and what it can do. Communication for a reason-- to help, heal, and activate people. Thank you for revealing that to me with **Out of the Silence**."

Karen Rose, audience member (1992)

"I felt more electricity discharging around this small stage than I’ve felt in any of the black-tie openings I’ve attended in glitzy big city theatres. The play’s cathartic power springs from its ability not simply to let light into the dark corners of the soul, but to give constructive voice to people struggling with demons. **Out of the Silence** offers the redemptive hope of self-directed solutions."

Stephen Hume, Vancouver Sun (1992)

“ **Out of the Silence** is a powerful tool to help people come to terms with family violence. Everyone was affected deeply by it.”
Louise Kilby, Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre (1992)

“**Out of the Silence** is powerful, painful and provocative.”

Teresa Mallam, Quesnel Observer (1992)

“...well scripted and realistically acted....not a play for the weak of heart.....**Out of the Silence** will help to open more doors for people to change their lives and love instead of hurt each other.”

Jonathan Beckwith, the Nexus, Victoria (1992)

“**Out of the Silence** was incredibly powerful. I left with a feeling of hope and a belief that this technique has the potential for affecting significant, long-lasting change in individuals, families and communities.”

Suzan Denis, The Observer, Queen Charlotte Islands (1992)

“**Out of the Silence** is one of those rare plays that can bring about changes in people.”

Douglas Broome, Kamloops North Shore Today (1992)