

JENNIFER RITCHKOFF, MSW (Executive Director)

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Artistic Experience

Jennifer began studying acting at the age of twelve, doing improvisation, then quickly moved into serious scene study. She did her first play at the age of thirteen and has since been in over thirty plays, studying acting non-stop along the way. She did five plays in high school (including musicals!), started a Drama Club and served as its President. She did eight productions while in college, including *Standing on My Knees* (for which she received the theatre department award for "best role" of the year), *The Miracle Worker*, *Come Back to the 5 & Dime*, *Jimmy Dean*, *Jimmy Dean*, and *A Shayna Maidel*. In NY, she performed at little theatres such as The Present Company, The Producer's Club, NADA, and Dixon Place. Since being in Los Angeles, Jennifer has starred in *So Long on Lonely Street* with Alaina Reed Hall, and has performed in several plays at West Coast Ensemble, including *Wabi Sabi* and *Sophocles' Electra*. She has also performed in several films and television shows, including a co-star role on *Spin City* in two episodes, and a guest star role on *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. She was a Host for a pilot demo called *Pet Project*, and was the on-camera Acting Coach for two episodes of an A&E reality series called *Spying on Myself*.

Jennifer's directing credits include *Slow Dance with Cake* and *Carnality* at West Coast Ensemble in Los Angeles, where she also assistant directed *Sophocles' Electra*. In NJ, she directed *Asleep on the Wind*, *The Crucible*, and three high school showcases called *Art & Soul Theatre Café*, which she also created and produced. She also created and taught a teen acting workshop, which involved improvisation and scene study, and promoted self-awareness, self-exploration and self-esteem. She also Assistant Directed a high school production of *Into the Woods*, and did crew work for several others.

Jennifer has technical/production experience in theatre, television and film, including production internships at both Theaterfest, a professional Equity theatre in NJ, and at a daytime drama on ABC. Administrative experience includes working as a box office assistant at her on-campus theatre, where she worked in audience services for four years and in a professional Equity theatre box office after college. Jennifer has also free-lanced as an administrative assistant for professionals in the entertainment industry, worked at a talent management company in Los Angeles, and was the Marketing Director for West Coast Ensemble, where she also produced several plays. An avid writer, she has written poetry, essays and several screenplays, as well as an instructional theatre handbook for adolescents.

Jennifer graduated Cum Laude from Montclair State University with a B.F.A. in Theater, with a concentration in Acting. She has had private training in acting (Improvisation and Monologue, Scene Study & On Camera, Commercials), as well as in jazz & ballet. She studied the Michael Chekhov Technique with Lisa Dalton, cold reading with Marki Costello, and scene study with Anthony Meindl. In New York she studied at The Acting Studio with Sande Shurin (co-founder), Bruce Levy (Bruce Levy Agency & co-founder), Tripp Hanson (B'way: *Crazy for You*, *Kiss Me Kate*) and Anthony Rapp (B'way: *Rent*, *Six Degrees of Separation*).

Community Service

While in high school, Jennifer was very active in community service. She was a member of S.A.D.D. (Students Against Drunk Driving), and served as President her senior year and ran

a program called "Safe Rides," and during which time she implemented several new programs for the organization, including a widely publicized event called "Dead Day," which gained media attention, and is now a school tradition. Jennifer was also the President of T.R.E.N.D. (Turning Recreational Excitement in New Directions), which promoted gaining self-esteem and having fun without drugs and alcohol. She was also a Peer Counselor and ran workshops for the students on topics that concern teenagers. She was a member of the Key Club, a service organization that held events or fundraisers for community-based and national charities; and of the Girls' Club, a social and service organization for girls that promoted female strength and spirit, and included participation in many social events and charitable events. She was also a member of the Social Awareness Club. Jennifer was a member of YPS a youth group in her church, with which she did many projects for Habitat for Humanity.

While in Los Angeles Ms. Ritchkoff has volunteered for the Hollywood Senior Center meal delivery program, Habitat for Humanity, AIDS Project LA and the AIDS Walk, and the Screen Actor's Guild BookPals Program, and has been volunteering for the past several years to serve food to homebound seniors. At USC, she founded and served as Chair of the Social Action Caucus, and participated in on-campus events like Take Back the Night.

As a teenager, Jennifer was chosen by her school to attend a leadership camp, T.I.G.S. (Teen Institute of the Garden State). She was also nominated for the US Senate Youth Program and sent as a representative to a National Arts Competition. Jennifer was on the Honor Roll and High Honor Roll throughout high school. She received both the Bill Bradley's Young Citizen Award and the Women's Club Scholarship for her commitment to service. Jennifer was on the Dean's List at Montclair State University, graduated cum laude, and received the Dennis MacDonald Theatre Award for talent and professionalism.

Teaching

Jennifer has been teaching with Changing Perceptions Theater By the Blind and Physically Disabled since 2006. She has taught acting and privately coached professional actors in cold reading, audition preparation and character work. In Los Angeles, she taught improvisation at West Coast Ensemble, and was the on-camera acting coach for two episodes of a reality television program. In NJ, she worked with teenagers on improvisation, characterization, and basic acting skills, voice and body work, monologue preparation through a technique that she developed which uses drama to encourage self-exploration and build self-esteem. She also has experience working with children as a babysitter and nanny for several families. She also has a Substitute Teaching Certificate in NJ and worked in a special education school for two years.