

# The Southington Citizen

A Property of the Record-Journal Publishing Co

## **Schoolhouse program to teach theater, history**

Published: August 27, 2013

By Julie Sopchak The Southington Citizen

Within the walls of the old Marion schoolhouse is a rich embodiment of the history of Marion, a small village tucked in the southwestern corner of Southington.

The building is used frequently as a community center after being saved from leveling in 1997. One of the newest programs which will enter the structure is **AspenDream Productions, a theatrical company based in Connecticut and Massachusetts.**

AspenDream Executive Director **Janice Luise-Lutkus** plans to host a theater class in the fall for Southington kids, teaching them the ropes about drama, and some history.

Plans for the class not only include teaching drama skills, but the last class will be a reenactment of what it was like to be a student at the Marion schoolhouse in 1910.

"It's a multi-layered opportunity," said Vicky McCarthy, president of the Marion Community Association. "It's taking place in the historic schoolhouse, they're learning all these great skills, then they get to practice the history about the schoolhouse."

The program is designed for kids in kindergarten through middle school and will incorporate creative dramatics, improvisation, beginner-level acting, story dramatization, movement, and short scene work.

The building has a history of housing theater activities before going vacant in the 1960s.

"I thought it'd be a great place for the kids to learn a little bit about acting and also about the town of Marion," Luise-Lutkus said.

"It should be a great community event and a great after school program," McCarthy said.

The original building, built around 1825, was made obsolete by the mid-20th century as a result of a growing population and larger schools, despite a second room being added.

In 1997, the building's existence was threatened by a local developer interested in tearing it down to erect two homes on the property.

Concerned citizens saved the building, and it has since been used as a community center.

The class will be held Tuesdays and Wednesdays beginning Tuesday, Oct. 8, from 4 to 5 p.m. at the schoolhouse, located on Marion Avenue, and will run for eight weeks. There is a cost.

For more information, or to register, call (860) 309-1341 or email [Janice@aspendreamproductions.com](mailto:Janice@aspendreamproductions.com).