

2014 AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ARTS EDUCATOR

Joanna Pang Atkins, teaching artist

Joanna Pang Atkins has a unique perspective gained from a fascinating lifetime of experience. Since she was a young girl, Joanna has traveled the world over, performing as an actress and dancer on stage, television and film. As a natural progression, she began producing and directing theater for teens and now brings her experience into schools with multi-cultural dance assemblies and residencies.

From her starring role as a teenage idol on *The Secrets of ISIS*, Joanna's TV appearances have varied as widely as *Saturday Night Live*, numerous daytime soap operas, *The Lawrence Welk Show*, and dozens of TV commercials.

Joanna's stage performances have taken her throughout the country, touring in well-known musicals including *West Side Story*, *South Pacific*, *Music Man*, and *The King and I*, as well as close to home in the world premiere production of *Sayonara* at the Paper Mill Playhouse. Her professional teaching background is in dance, ranging from ballet to jazz to folk.

Since 2002, Joanna has been a teaching artist with Morris Arts and, in that time, has led 96 artist residencies involving over 12,000 students directly and reaching over 37,000 in school audiences. During her residency program, each class learns a different folk dance representing a country or culture, while also learning about the history, geography, music and traditional attire of the selected country. The residency culminates with an assembly program for the entire school community, where each class

performs its own dance, in full costume, and has the opportunity to see the accomplishments of all the other classes.

We love Joanna's residencies because they celebrate diversity and inclusion. Students of all abilities participate fully in these residencies.

Joanna's passion for dance, for arts in education and for world culture achieves remarkable results As Kelly Harte, principal of Normandy Park School in Morristown explains:

Joanna Pang Atkins has been an amazing addition to the lives of the Normandy Park School community. As an Artist in Residency, Joanna generously shares her many talents with students and staff as she supports the teaching of history through traditional music, dances, culture and attire. Joanna's work with the students culminates in an amazing assembly program that celebrates students and their talents through dance and movement. The staff, students and parents truly love working with Joanna—We consider our time with Joanna a gift! Thank you Joanna Pang Atkins.

Because of her passionate dedication to her art form and her ability to touch so many lives with her love and knowledge of dance and cultural diversity, Morris Arts is proud to present the 2014 Outstanding Arts Educator award to Joanna Pang Atkins.

Will Joanna please come forward to accept her award.

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