

# performing arts



Acting Academy for Kids was started in Stephen Zygo's 4th grade classroom at St. Mary's School in Aliso Viejo. Since that day back in 2008, Stephen and Maggie Zygo have never looked back, pouring their hearts and soul into their acting kiddos. Seeking a venue to call their own, they partnered with Camino Real Playhouse, starting with an enrollment of a whopping two students. Fast forward eight years later, they have had the opportunity to serve over 10,000 kids in the South Orange County area as well as welcoming their two sons into the world, Julian (26 months) and Jesse (11 months). Acting Academy for Kids (AA4K) is a full-service performing arts academy serving students ages 4 to 17, with classes in acting, voice, instrumental, musical theater and film.

Stephen and Maggie Zygos' success has not been without storms. Around the same time they found out they were pregnant with their second son, they also found out the Playhouse they have called "home" for eight years, would be closing their doors shortly down the road. Not only would they be searching for a new home for AA4K, but Maggie would

also come to find some strange lumps in her neck around month 5 of pregnancy. Three days before their second son was born, Maggie had a surgical biopsy procedure. The results were devastating. What ultimately would be only hours before their second son was born, Maggie received the call she had early stage Non-Hodgkin's Follicular Lymphoma, an incurable cancer. After the birth of their second son, the growing family of four spent every day for 4 weeks traveling to Anaheim Kaiser Center where Maggie underwent radiation treatment on her neck. They were hopeful the radiation would prove successful. Their hopes were crushed when the scans came back proving the radiation was successful in her neck but unfortunately the cancer had spread to her abdomen progressing her diagnosis to a stage 3/4.

Despite the year's heartbreaks, the Zygo family remains steadfast in their faith and often recall the story of Job in the

Old Testament for comfort and peace. In the midst of trials and tribulations, Stephen and Maggie Zygo have decided to push forward and continue their dream for AA4K. With the transition from the Playhouse in San Juan Capistrano set for March 31, expansion has been on the horizon for AA4K for many months. With an upstanding reputation amongst families in the South Orange County, Stephen and Maggie are excited to announce AA4K will be kicking off their 3

new locations this April! The first of the locations will be a partnership with Community Roots Academy Foundation. Their Performing Arts Center can seat up to 400 people and will be upgraded with over \$50,000 in new sound, lighting and audio/

visual technologies making it the perfect venue for any performer as well as one of AA4K's new homes. The second location will be a partnership by a brand new per-

**I KNOW WE CAN CREATE SOME MAGIC IN SOUTH COUNTY WITH THIS VENUE! IT IS SPACIOUS AND MAJESTIC AND WILL BE OUTFITTED IN VINTAGE 1920'S HOLLYWOOD STYLE!**



# takes the stage



“My ultimate dream is to be a staple in the South OC community for generations to come, constantly adapting with the times and doing art that is family friendly yet relevant to the kids and teens.”

Maggie and Stephen Zygo with their boys, Jesse (now 11 months) and Julian (now 26 months).

forming arts school in Irvine that shares a building with the Pacific Symphony, OC Music and Dance. The location is equipped with a beautiful café and exquisite lobby, parent lobby, three dance studios, an enormous dressing room, two board/classrooms, a recording studio, six piano/rehearsal rooms and a state-of-the-art theatre that can seat 140 people with a \$150,000 LED stage screen! The venue is an absolute dream and Stephen and Maggie are so thankful for the opportunity to serve the Irvine area!

The last location is an answer to many prayers not only for the Zygos, but to many of the AA4K families who have petitioned for an answer. AA4K's new “home turf,” will be within the Holiday Inn Express off of Pico in San Clemente where an old restaurant sat vacant for over 10 years. When Stephen first walked into the location his eyes welled up with tears as he knew they had finally found AA4K's home of homes. It is indeed a work in progress but the venue is spacious and wonderfully majestic to the eyes. It's a two-story open space with roughly 10,000 square feet of room to build a stage, seating for 120 with a front

row balcony and grand communal lobby with diner-style seats that sit roughly 45 to relax while the kids rehearse. Plans for the venue are nothing short of extraordinary. A stage will be built, dressing rooms created, a TV/Film Conservatory implemented and a piano/recording studio designed. It will be outfitted in vintage 1920's Hollywood style! In the meantime, it is suitable to begin musical theatre rehearsals which will be taking place in April! Keep a watch out for, “Z Playhouse!”

With new and exciting ventures on the horizon, the Acting Academy for Kids will maintain their core values and passion for their kids. AA4K prides themselves on only employing teachers that have spent significant amounts of time in a classroom setting along with professional credentials in the industry. “This is crucial for competency in the classroom,” says Stephen. Similar to a school classroom, AA4K does not like to exceed 30 kids per class and their TV/Film Conservatory maxes out at 16 students. Stephen states, “Being able to see a kid go from a shy and insecure little one to a confident and poised young performer is one of the

most gratifying parts of his job.” AA4K has seen kid after kid grow up and go to college knowing that their programs have played a major role in the child's decision in choosing a major and/or career path keeping Stephen and Maggie pushing forward. “I have watched best friends blossom, play dates and sleep-overs transpire, cast parties thrown and trips to Segerstrom and even NYC go down through our programs. Knowing that we provided that opportunity means the world to me!” –Stephen Zygo.

The Zygo's ultimate dream is to be the staple in the South Orange County Community for generations to come and to constantly adapt with the times and do art that is family-friendly yet relevant to the kids and teens. “We want to be the foremost leader in arts education in Orange County and through strategic partnerships with schools and foundations, that is very possible!” –Stephen Zygo

Stephen and Maggie, our thoughts and prayers are with you as you not only dominate cancer but continue to spread your love and passion for the arts in our community!



**Community Roots Academy**  
29292 Crown Valley Pkwy, Laguna Niguel



**OC Music & Dance**  
17620 Fitch Avenue, Irvine



**Z PlayHouse**  
35 Via Pico Plaza, San Clemente  
Located inside the Holiday Inn Express

***"Training the Next Generation  
of Talented Performers"***  
**ActingAcademyforKids.com**