

At the last practice of the season, a member of the board gave me a piece of paper and asked if I would take the time to put in words what Angels on Stage has meant to our family. My first thought was "what a ridiculously small piece of paper". You see, Angels on Stage may have started as a weekend activity for our son, but it has become so much more.

Angels on Stage is a safe caring place where our children can shine. As the parent of an Angel, the first thing I noticed was the staff. When you see the way the board members work and interact with the kids you immediately know that they "get it". It doesn't matter what challenge a child may face, the staff does everything possible to ensure a stress free environment that gives every Angel a chance to shine. The second thing I noticed were the Angels as a whole. The acceptance, regardless of differences, is amazing to see. The camaraderie and the friendships formed were unexpected and oh so heart warming. It wasn't until toward the end of the season that I really started to notice the Buddy Coaches. Young men and women who volunteer to help the Angels succeed. Many whom I observed showed a caring and empathy beyond their years. Angels on Stage truly is a place where children of any ability can shine.

Angels on Stage is a place where the parents of a special needs child can relax. It took several weeks for me to find a comfort level that allowed me to leave my son with the staff and wander away to visit with the other adults. I always knew that if they needed me, they would, and did, come find me. Soon after that I found myself looking forward to Saturday practices as much as my son. I have made friends over this last season that I know will last for years.

Angels on Stage is a place where you can give back. When you see how much our children get from the program it is amazing, and inspiring. And then when you take a broader look at Angels on Stage you see that behind the board and buddy coaches is a group of dedicated and hard working volunteers. Parents, grand parents, siblings, friends, friends of friends, coworkers of parents of Angels, and the list goes on and on. When you see this group of dedicated and diverse people working hands on towards a common goal, helping all our children succeed, it warms the heart. And then beyond that, all those who support the program financially. Individuals and businesses donating money and services to help make this program, and ultimately our children, be successful. As a parent, I see all this love and hard work directed towards helping my child and I was moved. If I had been asked at the beginning of the season if I could volunteer 40-50 hours over the course of the season I would have been doubtful I could. Yet that is exactly what I did. My wife found the time to volunteer more than that. Call it contagious, but knowing you are giving to an organization like Angels on Stage, knowing how much good they do, knowing how much MY child is getting from the program, I can't wait till next season starts. Not just for my son's sake but for mine and my wife's as well. Doing something good feels really good. And helping Angels on Stage feels really good.

With our utmost gratitude and respect,

Jim and Kitty Rankin, parents to an Angel