

Epoch Arts production tackles bullying

By [Kevin Hotary - Staff Writer](#)

East Hampton - posted Wed., Nov. 30, 2011

Cayla Schaub (left), Aly Krauth and Reanna Holmes in rehearsal for the Epoch Arts production, 'Falling Out,' Photos by Kevin Hotary.

Since its origins several years ago, Epoch Arts has built its programs and productions around the basic concept of acceptance – taking people as they are, without judging them, no matter their appearance or personal quirks.

“What a boring place this would be if we all looked and acted the same,” said Elizabeth Namen, the founder and current artistic director of Epoch, as she talked about the group's most recent production, “Falling Out,” an original play that examines a topic that is diametrically opposed to the Epoch concept. A topic that, after an ever-increasing number of tragedies, has gained nationwide attention – bullying.

“We always try to do something that has relevance to our students and to the whole world,” said Namen. And “Falling Out” is about as relevant as can be, having been written by a group of Epoch students, often based on their own experiences with bullying.

“They [the students] wrote the script, so it’s all from their viewpoint,” said Namen.

The play looks at a single week in a school, following several students as they deal with bullying in its various forms in their day-to-day lives. Steering away from a more stereotypical bullying story, “Falling Out” looks at bullying from different angles, including those witnessing the bullying, and those who are the victims, as well as that of the bullies themselves.

While “Falling Out” doesn’t solve the problem of bullying, Namen hopes that people seeing the play will acquire some of the tools that they need to better deal with bullying when they are victims or see it occurring to others. “I think everyone will take home something,” she said.

Caryssa Propfe is one of the contributors to the script of “Falling Out,” as well as one of the performers. Propfe said that she keeps an eye out for bullying at school, and has incorporated some events into her contribution. “A lot of the situations [in the play] are based on real life. My character's situation is happening to me right now,” she said.

In contrast, Aly Krauth’s role is the opposite of her real-life experience. “I’m a bully in the play. It’s something new for me,” said Krauth. “It’s rough. She’s a scary person,” she said of her role, in which she picks on other girls. “It’s kind of sad. How does a person get to the point where they’re this mean?” she added. Krauth sees bullying as a big problem, and just doesn’t believe that the old adage about “sticks and stones” will work.

“If you’re really hurt, it has to be acknowledged,” she said. And the goal of “Falling Out” is to provide people with constructive ways of acknowledging and dealing with the problem.

Sponsored by the East Hampton Local Prevention Council and Youth and Family Services, “Falling Out” will run on Dec. 9 and 10 at 7 p.m. at Epoch Arts, 27 Skinner St. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for students and seniors. In addition, a special showing of “Falling Out” will be held for students at East Hampton Middle School on Monday, Dec. 12.



