

A Child Left Behind

written and performed by Alan Aymie



directed by
Paul Stein

He fought hard to teach his students...he fought harder to teach his son.



"....Thank you for performing your play, A Child Left Behind, for our professional development series. It was informative for our special education students as they prepare to work with students on the spectrum and their families. Your passionate perspective and ability to connect with the audience made this a compelling experience. Our faculty reported that they used the play to also address important issues related to both special education and low socio-economic challenges. We truly appreciated the opportunity to work with you and provide this exceptional experience for our students and faculty...."

*Dr. Shirley Resich,
MA, Clinical Coordinator
CalState Dominguez Hills*

A Child Left Behind

Educator * Advocate * Parent



Alan Aymie, Autism Specialist

Autism Specialist, Teach the Spectrum

Alan Aymie is a writer, educator, autism advocate, and most importantly a father to a child on the Autism Spectrum.

After twenty + years in public education as a classroom teacher, SEL Specialist, and autism support provider, Alan moved on to provide autism advocacy, life coaching, and educational training through his company, TeachtheSpectrum. He has been a requested presenter at both the CTA Special Education & New Teachers educational conferences for the past four years and has visited hundreds of schools to provide autism support and training.

A published author, Alan speaks across the country on his book, *“Turning Points - Tips, Tales, and Tactics of a Revolutionary Teacher”*.

Each April, Alan tours the country to promote autism awareness with his critically solo play, *A Child Left Behind*. Alan lives with his wife and family in Los Angeles.

Educational Theater

“Compelling...Aymie proves a first rate educator”

- LA TIMES

A powerful, 55-minute performance, 'A Child Left Behind' delves into the touching narrative of a teacher's journey through education and autism, heavily influenced by his first mentor - his father. An evocative and compelling account that grants teaching aspirants and administrators an intimate glimpse into the authentic challenges and prospects that educators inevitably encounter.

This narrative also fosters a profound understanding and empathy towards the hurdles confronting our neurodivergent and Title One student communities. The presentation is imbued with evidence-based practices (EBPs) and practical teaching strategies, not only making 'A Child Left Behind' an essential and valuable instructional resource for any educational department, but an enlightening tool, empowering educators with the knowledge and empathy necessary to support our diverse student communities.

“Excellence...Flawless writing...” - LA THEATRE EXAMINER

“First rate education... Compelling...” - LA TIMES

“Go! Pick of the Week!” - LA WEEKLY

“Beautifully paints a world...”
- CULVER CITY NEWS

“Thrilling... Crackles with energy and tension...”
- MadTheatrics

“Skill, energy, and talent keep his audience captivated.”
-REVIEWPLAYS.COM

“A play that should be seen by all.”
-WILLCALL



“A superior performance!”
- STAGE HAPPENINGS

“A fantastic one-man play”
- THE SKINNY

“Run to see this show.”
- JOESTRAW#9

“Fills the stage with a specificity and energy”
- EYESPY LA

A CHILD LEFT BEHIND



Testimonials

Dear Alan,

I want to thank you for taking the time to present your terrific play, A Child Left Behind on behalf of our psychological trauma center. I heard so many wonderful things and the evaluations were terrific!

Here are a few of the comments:

- The performance exceeded my expectations.*
- The play was touching, educational and excellent. – This was an outstanding performance.*

You made a real impact on our participants. Thank you for offering such a wonderful and educational experience.

Warmly,

Annie Wilson

-Asst. To Suzanne Silverstein; Founding Director

Alan,

Your performance was a powerful message about what it is like to have a child with autism. Your honest story helped our community learn more about autism and provided great takeaways we can use in our lives.”

Thank you,

Christopher Stier

Student Activities Director Casper College, Casper, WY

Dear Mr. Aymie,

Thank you for performing your play, A Child Left Behind, for our professional development series at the university. It was informative for our special education students as they prepare to work with students on the spectrum and their families. Your passionate perspective and ability to connect with the audience made this a compelling experience. We strive to help students make the connection from theory to practice and this was a valuable opportunity for them to reflect on what that means professionally and personally. Our faculty reported that they used the play to also address important issues related to both special education and low socio-economic challenges. We truly appreciated the opportunity to work with you and provide this exceptional experience for our students and faculty.

With much appreciation,

Shirley Resich MA MA, Clinical

Coordinator, Department of Special Education

California State University, Dominguez Hills

01 Reviews & Testimonials

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LAWEEKLY

PICK OF THE WEEK – GO!

Alan Aymie's autobiographical saga of his travails within LAUSD, *A Child Left Behind*, is this week's Pick. [Other New Reviews](#) also include Bill Raden's "GO" review of Anna Deavere Smith's *Twilight Los Angeles, 1992*, honoring the 20th anniversary of our most recent riots. Smith is not performing in that production (at the Skylight Theatre, 1816 N. Vermont Ave., Los Feliz).

Alan Aymie takes aim at the Los Angeles Unified School District and the *L.A. Times* in his solo show *A Child Left Behind*, about his time



spent as a teacher in a low-performing school. Laid off from teaching for a second time last year and given a "below average" ranking in the Times' database of value-added teacher ratings, which are based on student progress on standardized tests, Aymie picked up a pen instead of a picket sign. The resultant narrative is a Sisyphean struggle to teach poverty-stricken students amidst dwindling budgets and out-of-touch administrators. Compounding Aymie's frustrations over missed connections with kids is his son's diagnosis with Asperger's syndrome. The script

balances social and personal commentary successfully, and Aymie's energetic charm allows us easy access to his outrage. Beverly Hills Playhouse, 254 S. Robertson Blvd., Beverly Hills; Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m.; through May 26. (702) 582-8587. ktctickets.com, bhplayhouse.com (Amy Lyons)

http://blogs.laweekly.com/arts/2012/04/twilight_la_1992_back_in_town.php

REVIEWS/PRESS

8/13/13 Teacher Turns Disgust at Publishing of Value-Added Rating Into Solo Play | LAUSD Journal

LAUSD Journal
The EdMag for the LAUSD community

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Teacher Turns Disgust at Publishing of Value-Added Rating Into Solo Play

As a stage, film, and television actor for 25 years, Alan Aymie understands that his performances may be reviewed by professional critics, whose opinions are published in newspapers and on websites. Through the years, he has learned to appreciate the good notices, and keep in perspective those that are not as favorable.

But as a fifth-grade teacher — employed by the Los Angeles Unified School District since 1999 — he never expected that a one and two-word review of his classroom performance would appear in print and on-line. When The Los Angeles Times in 2010 published value-added ratings of elementary school teachers in the LAUSD, Aymie, graded average in English Arts and below average in Math, was livid.

Several of his angry colleagues reacted to release of the data with protests, comments on social media sites, and even by canceling their subscriptions to the Los Angeles Times. Aymie took more time with his response; he wrote a solo play, entitled "A Child Left Behind," which ran this year at the Beverly Hills Playhouse from mid-April through August 14th. The show will be performed in September on Thursday evenings and Sunday afternoons at the Ruskin Group Theater Company in Santa Monica (310) 397-3244, and is also scheduled to run in Ojai next April at the Ojai Youth Entertainers Studio.

Combining his experiences in the classroom, anger over the release of the ratings, and the challenges of being the father of a son with Asperger's syndrome, a condition that causes significant problems in social interaction, Aymie, who is in his 40s, created a work that the LA Times reviewer wrote relayed a message of 'simple, truthful power.'

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LA STAGE TIMES
EMPOWERING ARTISTS AND ENGAGING AUDIENCES SINCE 1975

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A Child — and a Teacher — Left Behind
FIRST PERSON by ALAN AYMIE | April 19, 2012



Alan Aymie in "A Child Left Behind"

Last year, I was struggling to finish a play about the Old Man of the Mountain and family secrets, looking for the inspiration or my muse to help me finish the project. But I had to put the play on hold when I learned that LAUSD, the school district for which I had worked for more than 11 years, was giving me my pink slip. So I tucked my unfinished play into my drawer and joined the thousands of other laid-off teachers who were protesting the current budget cuts in front of LAUSD headquarters.

The teachers cheered, the union president raised his hands like a returning war hero. But the only other person watching this event was some homeless man across the street — no parents, no community members — only some dirty man in ragged clothing, dancing to Michael Jackson's *Thriller* on his beaten-up boom-box.



I've never liked picket signs — never been very big on protests or their supposed effectiveness. As I watched more than 200 of my fellow brethren in education marching in front of the LAUSD district offices with their homemade signs — as I sat across the street, in the air-conditioned car of a fellow teacher while eating a Carl's Jr. Six Dollar Western Burger, I rationalized my lack of participation by mumbling, "I'm just not

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Frustration leads to hope

Kat Michels | Fri, Apr 27 2012 07:30 PM



When the LA Times asked teachers to give a response to their value added assessment ratings, I don't believe that this is what they had in mind. "A Child Left Behind" written and performed by Alan Aymie at the Katselas Theatre Company, is one teachers response to his "below average" rating and a truly touching and thought provoking evening of entertainment. Aymie takes the audience on a journey through a year of teaching in a public school in South Central Los Angeles, while skillfully mirroring the challenges faced in our public education system with his own struggles at home trying to relate to and teach his own son who is diagnosed with Aspergers syndrome.

The overwhelming theme of the evening is frustration. Frustration towards the LAUSD school system, frustration towards his own perceived failings and frustration towards the inability to make it better. The focus in

public schools is standardized test scores, so the teachers that produce the best test scores are the teachers that are valued the most. However, as Aymie illustrates, test scores have nothing to do with good teaching, and not every LAUSD community is the same, so why are they treated the same?

A particularly poignant moment is where Aymie compares his son's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) to one of a student in his school. His son's is conceived by a team of professionals and well written and thought out: the IEP's at his school are "hastily written over lunch and five years too late". Why the difference — funding and man power. The LA Times value added assessment does not give points to inner city teachers for attending their students funerals, or cleaning their own classrooms because there isn't funding for a full time janitorial staff. Unfortunately, no one seems to ask or listen to the teachers, and those that speak up or buck against the system don't last long.

Aymie beautifully paints a world in which all of this comes vividly to life. However, amidst the frustration there is still hope. Hope that through the admission of our failings we can rise above them. He doesn't have an overwhelming answer or solution to the problem, but he shows great character in having the strength to stand up, identify the problem and accept his part in it. After all, "When a 14 year old expectant father says you were his best and last teacher, and you teach fifth grade, somebody f***ed up."

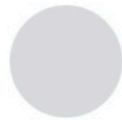
"...Aymie proves a first-rate educator here, making a cogent and compelling case that when it comes to educating children, numbers don't tell the whole story. The piece aches with vivid descriptions of life behind a teacher's desk..."

- Phillip Brandes - LA TIMES

"...While it is instructive, it is also a heartfelt piece that is well written, well acted and well worth your time. Tell all the teachers, students and parents you know to go see it..."

- Sarah Spitz - SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS

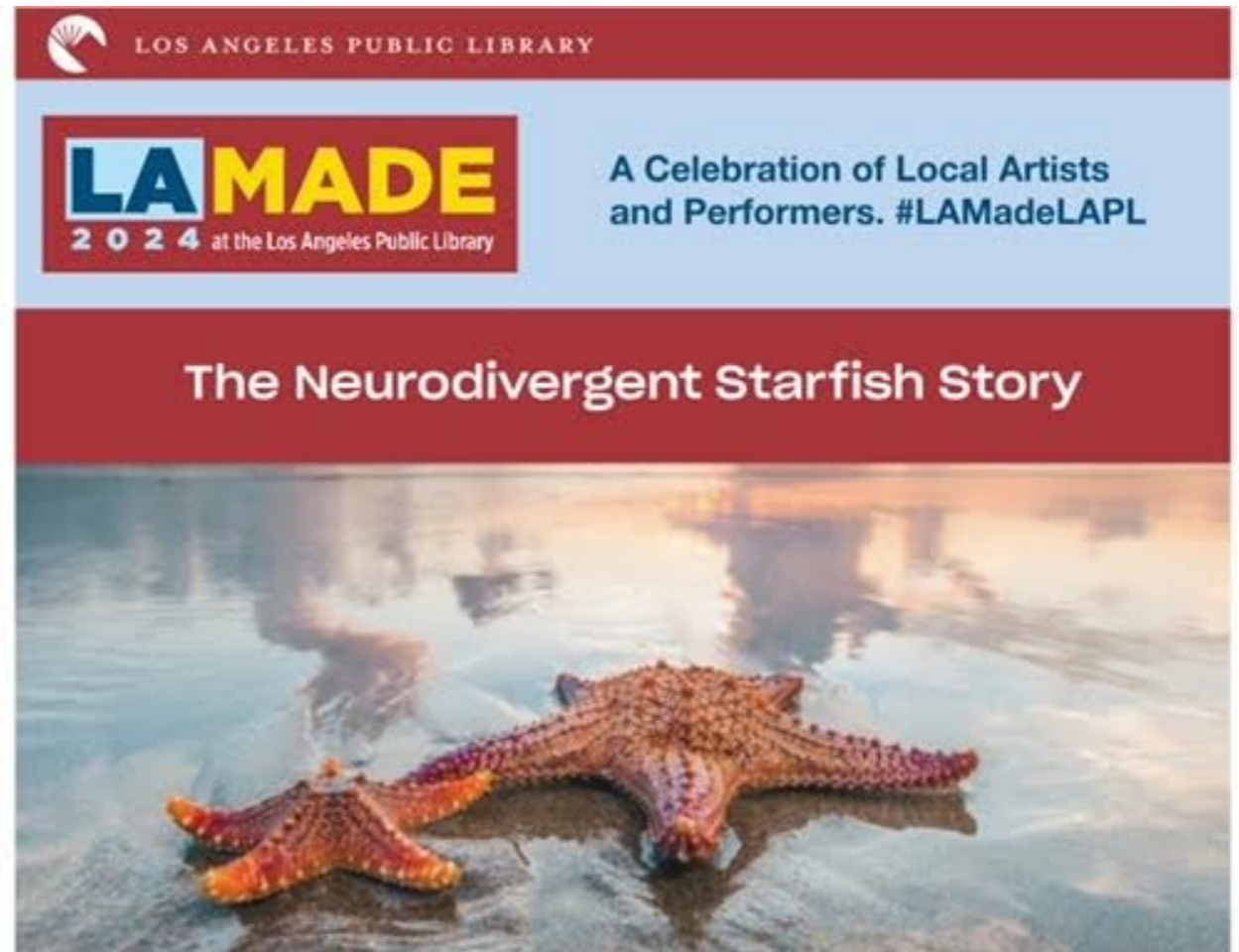
Book/Lectures



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@alanaymie for stopping
[...]



Based on the well-known "Starfish Story" parable, *The Neurodivergent Starfish Story* provides a detailed background in what ASD is, how it is characterized, and the best ways to support, integrate, and effectively work with/teach your autism spectrum child/student. Exploring how to best work with your school in regards to your child's current or potential IEP, communicate effectively with school and classroom teachers (or parents), and grasp effective strategies and practices to best support your child/student's success.

For questions, email: social@lapl.org

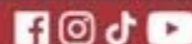
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