

# STAGESTRUCK

Theater camp manages programs with Camp & Class Manager in the wings

“The user experience is great – for us and for parents. The ease of using the system is lovely. It’s so intuitive.”

Rebecca Nichols, Operations Manager

Random Farms Kids Theater (RFKT) began as a summer theater “camp” in 16-year old Anya Wallach’s parents’ basement. Today, RFKT, located in Elmsford, New York, is a non-profit organization serving four states.

The organization has not only launched the careers of many of today’s youngest stars on Broadway, it’s also featured in *Stagestruck*, a fictionalized children’s book series based on Anya’s story, and is active in many outreach projects for the community.

## Bright Beginnings Turn Dark

In the early days, RFKT was a one-woman show, which started out novel and fun, but became extremely challenging, leading to burnout. The very thing that should have supported Anya’s efforts – technology – nearly put an end to her venture.

RFKT has experienced more than its share of unfortunate technology experiences, starting with registration nightmares that literally cost them customers. Beyond that, there were the solutions that didn’t integrate fully with their fundraising database, crashed frequently, would go offline for up to 72 hours without communication, or went bankrupt, owing them \$100k in program funds.

## A Trustworthy Technology Infrastructure

Given those experiences, Anya looked for a camp management software with the staying power of a global organization that wasn’t going to shut down in the middle of the night, leaving them with no one to call when they had problems.

ACTIVEWorks® Camp & Class Manager “felt safe, so well-established, with

a reliable infrastructure.” Anya says, “There’s something to be said for that. Fly-by-night places may look good online, but can they support you?”

**\$15k**

annual administrative savings

## Smooth Transition to Camp & Class Manager

Anya says, “It was so easy to transition to the new system because the implementation team took my spreadsheet, built the database and set up my programs. We were assigned a person for a couple of months who built everything for us – he was right there, answering questions for me – even ten times a day. ACTIVE made that overlap between two systems possible without losing revenue during the transition.”

**“ACTIVEWorks® Camp & Class Manager felt safe, so well-established, with a reliable infrastructure.”**



### Registration Rebuilds Parent Trust

RFKT's operations manager Rebecca Nichols now manages all participant activity with Camp & Class Manager, citing a 180-degree improvement in their registration experience:

- + **User Experience** - "The user experience is great – for us and for parents. The ease of using the system is lovely. It's so intuitive."
- + **Restored Relationships** - Camp & Class Manager helped rebuild parent's faith that had been destroyed by their previous registration systems. "Parents couldn't separate Random Farms from the registration provider, so it created a lot of bad will about the program. Now we don't hear from parents about registrations – no news is good news!"
- + **Operational Flexibility** - "We don't have to modify how we operate to fit with registration limitations."
- + **Mobile Responsiveness** - "It's mobile friendly. Parents registering multiple kids or programs are quite thrilled."

**"We want our registration software to be invisible – and Camp & Class Manager is!"**

### Immediate System Improvements

Right away, RFKT operations were improved with:

- + **Targeted email communications to a single group of participants "on the fly"** - "This is huge, huge, huge," Rebecca says. "I used to have to build a report in Excel, filter it out, and send it to marketing."
- + **Versatile Groups feature** - "With all our different casts and roles, rosters are always being updated. Previously we couldn't include all the needed information, like roles, timeslots for auditions, or headshot appointments. We had to build it out manually. Now, it's so easy!"
- + **Flexible Reporting** - "Registration is no good if you can't report on it," says Anya. "Previously, we couldn't manipulate individual fields. With Camp & Class Manager, it's so much easier. The filters are flexible and you can clone a report! We have 18 custom reports, including attendance, check-in, special needs, cast lists, parent contact, and carpool."

### Significant Time and Resource Savings

- + **Administrative Savings** - Before, Rebecca spent 100% of her time—at least 30 hours a week—communicating with parents about issues and managing breakdowns.

"Quantifying that into dollars, the cost savings of \$15k more than covers the cost of the software...and that doesn't even count what we're saving on sunk costs," Anya adds. Rebecca is now able to take on other things, such as the website, fundraising, managing customer and donor relationships, and brainstorming program improvement...all activities that impact revenue.

+ **Executive Focus on Fundraising**

“When parents were unhappy, it was all hands on deck,” says Anya. “As a nonprofit, the impact of my focus being diverted from fundraising is impossible to quantify.” Now she is able to increase fundraising, expand outreach, apply for grants, and steer the ship without the constant burden of registration problems.

+ **Participant Growth** - After the immeasurable loss of revenue from losing customers due to the catastrophic experiences they’d had, they were up 10% in registrants by mid-season of their January 2017 launch over the same time in 2016. “Mostly through word of mouth,” Anya says.

**Theater Drives Outreach for Social Change**

Anya now has 11 fulltime employees who serve 1,000 kids and 10,000 audience members annually. She processes 1,800 registrations a year, which means almost every registrant returns for multiple programs.

Her dream of putting on fun plays has developed into a serious outreach program that impacts families and children with educational arts training not found in schools, life skills, leadership and the use of theater as a vehicle for social change.

Her anti-bullying program has been touring schools for 7 years and her actors perform in battered women’s shelters and children’s hospitals. She focuses on accessibility and diversity

to underserved demographics, giving away \$20k annually in scholarships as well as free and discounted ticketing to busloads of kids coming to see musicals for the first time.

ACTIVE Network is thrilled to support RFKT’s community impact. It fuels our commitment to provide directors with technology and services so they can leave the mundane to us and focus on what matters.

Skip the technology drama with Camp & Class Manager.

888.820.5808  
ACTIVEcamps@ACTIVEnetwork.com  
ACTIVEcamps.com

