

ROOTS&BRANCHES VOLUNTEER HONORED

A.R.T./NY Presents “Local Hero” Award to Long Time Volunteer

Anita Marlene Merk, a long-time volunteer who has been contributing her graphic design expertise to the *Roots&Branches Theatre*, a community-based intergenerational theater group, has received a Local Hero Award from the Alliance of Resident Theatres/New York (A.R.T./NY), which serves and promotes some 400 not-for-profit theaters and theater-related organizations in New York City.

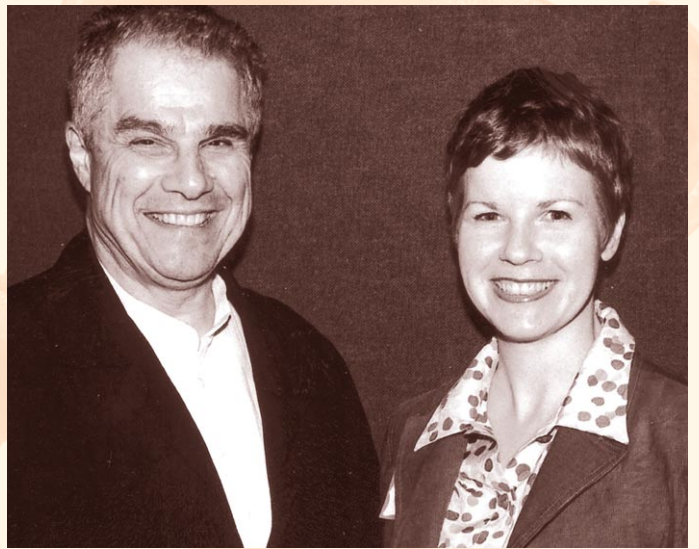
The Local Hero Awards salute individuals and businesses that provide substantial in-kind donations, services, or other assistance to New York City’s nonprofit Off-Broadway theater community. They were presented at a recent reception held at the New Victory Theater on 42nd Street.

Merk, Principal Designer at Flyleaf, a New York design firm, has been designing the *Roots&Branches* promotional materials for several years. “Her designs reflect our theatrical work in exciting and insightful ways. They are truthful and compelling, and give *Roots&Branches* a distinctive look and visual presence,” said Arthur Strimling, Artistic Director of the theater group that began more than a decade ago. Strimling also now serves as Director of the F·E·G·S Health and Human Services System’s newly created Haym Salomon Division of the Arts.

Community-Based Intergenerational Theater is Part of New F·E·G·S Arts Division

The division, which is now home to *Roots & Branches*, also offers special initiatives such as *Art in Our Neighborhoods*, an innovative program that provides grants to non-profit community organizations for art initiatives for the elderly and others, and the *Dignity Through Art Gallery*, displaying the F·E·G·S poster art series and other projects by artists with disabilities, older adults, and others.

“The arts are one of life’s great ‘coping mechanisms,’” says Alfred P. Miller, CEO of F·E·G·S. “A vital part of people’s humanity is their ability to express themselves creatively through the arts. F·E·G·S has long utilized creative arts to



(L-R) Arthur Strimling, Director, F·E·G·S Haym Salomon Division of the Arts congratulates Anita Marlene Merk, recipient of the A.R.T./NY Local Hero Award.

help its consumers deal with a full range of personal challenges, from mental or developmental disabilities to the inevitable toll brought on by such issues as aging and loneliness. Now, with the creation of the Haym Salomon Division of the Arts, F·E·G·S will be able to help greater numbers of people and at the same time bring the often overlooked talents of our consumers to a much wider community audience.”

F·E·G·S Health and Human Services System programs reach more than 80,000 individuals each year – more than 9,000 each day – at some 350 locations throughout the New York City area. Individuals with mental illness, developmental and physical disabilities, new immigrants, those who are unemployed, families, the frail elderly, youth, and others are helped to achieve their highest levels of self-sufficiency and independence.

For more information about F·E·G·S *Roots & Branches Theatre*, call: 212.366.8032

F·E·G·S

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