

To whom it may concern:

My name is Eric Hicks and my heritage traces back to the British Loyalists who first entered and established themselves in our great country. I have nothing but the utmost love and admiration for Canada and it's peoples. I grew up in the small valley town of Lumsden, Sk. and have lived in both Vancouver and Toronto since. I've hitchhiked from Toronto to Regina for the opportunity to explore our cultural heritage from a more first person perspective. I've camped, hiked, snowboarded, biked and traveled to a large portion of the towns, cities, valleys, mountains and lakes throughout this country from Peggy's Cove in the east to Vancouver Island in the West.

Education to me has been absolutely instrumental throughout my life in giving me the tools to achieve all the goals I've set out for myself. From receiving the Governor's General Medal of Honor in High School to becoming the youngest Certified Prosthetist in Canadian History to being able to more recently make a living from being a working Canadian Actor. Canada has it all.

I've always been a firm believer that everyone has something to teach. With that mentality I have brought it upon myself to continually train and study with as many different teachers and coaches throughout the years. My mentality has been to invest all my extra funds into taking classes to hone my craft as an actor. To do this I've had to quit my career as a Prosthetist, take up random jobs within marketing companies, served and bartended, and done unlimited amounts of other small gigs to make ends meet. Even so, I've had to rely on social assistance on two separate occasions just to keep this dream of being a full-time working actor a possibility.

As far as I'm able to see, the great difference worldwide in the quality of content being produced begins and always ends with training. I can't even begin to tell you how many industry friends of mine have had to sacrifice taking classes and training just to work full time jobs to be able to afford rent and living in our greater cities; Simply to have the chance to audition for an acting role. The only issue, is that they have spent all their time working non-industry related jobs to survive and when these opportunities to perform arise, they are not practiced and sharp as is required to produce high end powerful performances. This is the story for the large majority of performers in this city. I've come to see the same thing being said time and again, "classes are too expensive." Thing is, they aren't wrong. All acting classes in Toronto and Vancouver run at approximately \$70-85 per class and most of us take multiple classes at once. This leads to an added expense of approximately \$280-600 per month just for continued training.

Actra has done a wonderful job of providing free self-taping services which aids those in need greatly, the CFC has created an intranet of support for our industry professionals here in Toronto, but the one issue time and again narrows down to being able to afford continual training. If training were more affordable in our industry then more of our performers would be continually developing and honing

their craft, more of our performers would be booking jobs and more of our performers would be gaining worldwide recognition for the quality of their work. The quality of our productions would inherently skyrocket.

Canada has produced some of the finest talent worldwide. It's time to support the development of our current generation of performers by subsidizing the costs of our on-going acting training throughout Canada. I don't know how to do it yet, but I'm more than willing to get the ball rolling and create some innovative strategies to making this dream a reality.

Sincerely,

Eric Hicks