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## Our Members Give Back by Conducting Free AWP Workshops

**Nancy Sondag** is the Director of Therapeutic Recreation at Menorah Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing Care in Brooklyn. A Licensed Creative Arts Therapist, Registered Drama Therapist and Board Certified Trainer with the National Association for Drama Therapy, and Certified Dementia Practitioner and Trainer with the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners, Nancy has over twenty years experience in teaching, training and mentoring students, teachers and therapists. She has also developed creative arts education and therapy programs for NYC public schools, HIV/AIDS wards, obesity clinics, community colleges, universities and nursing homes.



When Nancy first came to [The Actors Fund Work Program](#) in 1989, a career counselor quickly helped her find a job as a teaching artist and connected her with a scholarship for graduate school. And as the years went on, AWP continued to help her as she shaped her career in drama therapy.

Today, Nancy maintains a close association with AWP by donating her services as a trainer, conducting workshops in Sociodrama, speaking on panels about Healthcare Careers, and coaching clients interested in using the creative arts for learning, healing and building community. Thank you, Nancy!

Retired actor **Michael Cannistraci** credits [The Actors Fund Work Program](#) with being a primary support as he has transitioned from life as a professional actor to becoming a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and therapist in private practice. An actor for 35 years (he began his career at age 12), Michael first worked with AWP in the early 1990's. He received training as an ESOL teacher (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and taught while continuing to pursue his acting.

In his mid-forties, Michael felt the need for a new career challenge and, working again with AWP, returned to graduate school to pursue his Masters in Social Work degree, helped by AWP's Willard Swire Scholarship, which provides financial support to qualified Actors Fund clients making a transition to a new career and enrolled in a degree or certificate program. He was then employed as a therapist, first at the Postgraduate Center for Mental Health and, for the past four years, as a therapist/social worker at New York Presbyterian Hospital/Payne Whitney Day Treatment Program.

Michael is also training to become a Registered Drama Therapist with his mentor, Nancy Sondag. Together, Nancy and Michael have donated their time to conduct workshops introducing Sociodrama techniques to AWP participants who work as teachers, trainers and facilitators. Thanks Nancy and Michael!

*AWP regularly sponsors career panels that explore a wide range of topics, from fitness, to fashion, to public relations and so many others. At these sessions, you will hear from experts with up-to-date labor market information, as well as performing arts and entertainment industry professionals who have found new and rewarding sideline careers. [Visit AWP today](#) to sign up for a group, class or workshop, and start on the road to "find the work you love, and love the work you find."*

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We are proud to present [The Actors Fund Podcast Series](#), offering valuable information based on workshops The Fund offers in our New York and Los Angeles offices. Stay tuned for more to come in the series!

