

Tualatin High School and Middle School Students Come Together for Theatre Arts Program

BY DAWN WOODWARD

During a time when the arts are less funded than ever, Hazelbrook Middle School put on a very cross-curricular and ambitious musical program that has brought students, faculty and families together spanning across the Middle School and the High School in what turned out to be a very exciting collaboration for the entire Tualatin community. Margaret Gorman, the director and Brianna Ballenti the assistant director of Hazelbrook Middle School's after-school drama program, orchestrated not only a remarkable performance of Annie Jr. but also brought a community together showcasing how truly special Tualatin has become.



Connor Barrow went completely bald for his role as Mr. Warbucks. He is shown here during performance with Annie played by 6th grader Heidi Williams in front of the set designed by High School student Jenny Burkley.

Schools working together and high school students supporting middle school students? Yes, it happens here to Tualatin! Stephen Jackson-Clark, Tualatin High School's theatre director, graciously donated use of the high school auditorium, his supply of costumes and his mentoring support for Margaret Gorman and ultimately the group of middle school actors. A large group of high school thespians volunteered an even larger number of hours to this middle school program. Natalie Fatehi did make-up. Jenny Burkely designed the set and the poster art and Megan Wheatley designed the lighting. Maria Cooley, Talie Day, Natalie Fatehi, Audrey Hewitt, Rossa Nunan, Morgan Olsen, Rebekah Veteto, Kilah Ruddy, Katie Souza and Braedon Kwicien helped the middle school actors

rehearse. Jenny Burkley, Natalie Fatehi, Starr Lynn, Erin McBain, Michelle Strahm, Brigit Walker, Caitlin Tsarouhas, Megan Wheatley and Megan Woodward painted the sets. One could feel how the venue, access to costumes, custom painted set and the overall high school student support made this group of 46 middle school actors feel and how this is going to help ease their transition into high school and hopefully into high school theatre.

Additionally, there were multiple opportunities afforded to the middle school students to not only act, but to get involved in improv, singing, dancing, choreography, stage management, advertising,

fundraising and working alongside the high school students in functional preparations. The most notable fundraising effort was the gracious and brave donation of hair made by 8th grader Connor Barrow. For a week, kids donated spare change to buy raffle tickets to get the chance to shave a strip of hair off of Connor's head on stage in front of the student body as he got ready go bald for his leading role as Mr. Warbucks. Eight middle school students got their chance to run the clippers over Connor's head during lunch time at Hazelbrook Middle School. Now that was a fun lunch and Connor is a brave young man!

Annie Jr. ran April 18-19 selling nearly 1000 seats! Margaret Gorman, a truly gifted director, pulled this together with very limited resources but also activated a group of eager middle school students, a giving high school program and a group of high school students who so willingly paid it forward to the next upcoming generation of Tualatin thespians making this something that Tualatin can truly be proud of.



Dawn Woodward is a Hazelbrook Middle School parent volunteer and the mother of two Tualatin teens, ages 14 and 16.



Meghan MacPherson (who played Grace Farrell) won an opportunity to shave a strip of Connor Barrow's hair during lunchtime at Hazelbrook Middle School.



Ms. Hannigan (played by Megan Woodward) was thrilled to have her make-up done by TuHS senior and award winning make-up artist Natalie Fatehi.