

Creative Living

Enter into 'a world of pure imagination'

WJHS drama group to present Roald Dahl's 'Willy Wonka Jr.'

By Kristine Coulter

The drama club at Wappingers Junior High School (WJHS) will present Roald Dahl's "Willy Wonka Jr." on March 24 and March 25 at 7 p.m. at the Wappingers Junior High School, 30 Major MacDonald Way, in the auditorium, in Wappingers Falls. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$8 for students, children and seniors. For more information, visit <https://sites.google.com/wcsdny.org/wjhs-drama/tickets>.

Najah Muhammad is the director for the drama club.

"The WJHS Drama advisors decided to do "Willy Wonka Jr." because it is a timeless show that is wacky and fun, while still being sneakily thought provoking. With songs like "Pure Imagination," "The Candy Man," and "I've Got a Golden Ticket," it's a family-friendly show that everyone will want to sing along to," said Muhammad.

There are 53 students total involved in the show. There are 30 members of the cast, three Student Production Team members (Assistant Director, Stage Manager, Assistant Stage Manager), and 20 members on backstage crew (sets, props, lights, and sound), according to Muhammad.

Regarding rehearsals, Muhammad remarked, "Rehearsals have been going so well. I'll often talk to my mom on the phone after rehearsals and tell her, "Today was awesome. The kids really nailed it." I don't think I've ever felt so confident about a show with students so early on in the process. The energy during rehearsals is infectious, and we hope that translates to the audience during the performances."

One of the cast members is Joshua Gallman, who portrays the character of "Mr. Salt."

"This production has been one of the most fun ones I've ever been in. [This] year we have some very experienced actors and actresses," remarked Joshua. "From this production I have learned more leadership skills as I am the vice president of the Drama Club and also some really helpful communication skills."

Regarding a favorite scene, Joshua responded, "My favorite scene in "Willy Wonka Jr." is probably Charlie Bucket's birthday scene. Charlie is a kid who is so kind and supportive to everyone around him. The Bucket family doesn't have much, and Charlie never complains about it. During his birthday, he is disappointed that he doesn't find a golden ticket in a candy bar. This is a moment where we see Charlie's human side come out. We learn that even as a positive person, we all feel down sometimes. His parents and Grandpa Joe sing "Cheer Up, Charlie," and in that moment, we see a broken little child, being uplifted by the grown-ups in his life. Charlie learns that he doesn't have to always be the rock for everyone else."

Isabel Saquicela is part of the crew. "My job is to make movable sets for the play. Right now, my friend and I are making the candy stand for "Willy Wonka Jr.," explained Isabel. "It has been a lot of work, but I find it super fun and enjoyable to be able to stay-after school and work on sets for the show."

Regarding what the experience has taught, Isabel said, "I have learned how to



The Wappingers Falls Junior High School drama club will present Roald Dahl's "Willy Wonka Jr." on March 24 and March 25 at Wappingers Junior High School, 30 Major MacDonald Way, in Wappingers Falls.

-Courtesy photo

use some power drills, the does and don'ts when using a knife to cut cardboard and I have learned how to get creative and see things in a creative perspective."

Joshua said community members should attend because "we have some of the most talented and dedicated people this year and we have some very funny and well-thought-out scenes that will give everyone a good laugh."

As for Isabel, "People should go watch the show because the cast and crew members have put so much hard work and creativity into it. Also, the production of "Willy Wonka Jr." is a very fun and creative movie so people should attend and watch it."

Muhammad said, "Come see Willy

Wonka Jr. at WJHS and enter into 'a world of 'pure imagination.' The students are full of passion, talent, energy, and so much more. This will be a deliciously sweet night for everyone to remember!"

One can call 845-298-5200 ext. 21044 for more information.

Words and Music are by Leslie Bricusse & Anthony Newley. The production is Adapted for the Stage by Leslie Bricusse and Timothy A McDonald. It is based on the book "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" by Roald Dahl. Roald Dahl's "Willy Wonka Jr." is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI, according to Heidi Kane, who is with the drama club.

Youth baseball, softball leagues can apply for 3 Up 3 Down grants

3 Up 3 Down, a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization based in the Hudson Valley, announced the opening of its 2023 grant giving season to benefit local youth baseball and softball leagues.

The mission of 3 Up 3 Down is to promote, strengthen, and foster youth baseball in and around the Greater New York and Hudson Valley areas, as well as provide additional community support for those with developmental disabilities. The non-profit, which recently celebrated its sixth anniversary, has awarded more than \$100,000 in grants and in-kind-donations to local organizations to-date in support of this mission.

This year, 3 Up 3 Down will award up to ten youth leagues with monetary grants to help youth baseball and softball leagues enhance their in-house programs, with the goal of getting children into the game and further keeping them into the sport.

To further support the sport, 3 Up 3 Down has added a new grant opportunity for local schools and booster clubs in

2023. Local schools and booster clubs may now apply for an in-kind donation to support a specific need, such as field upkeep or new equipment. Up to five grants will be supported at this level.

Some of the local youth leagues to receive previous 3 Up 3 Down grants include: Hyde Park Little League, Patterson Little League, Town of Kent, Beekman, City of Poughkeepsie, Shrub Oak (SOAC), WaterOak (CT), Wappingers, Orange County Cal Ripken, Newburgh, Highland Babe Ruth, and New City.

In 2022, grant recipients included Brewster, East Fishkill, Town of Poughkeepsie, and Mahopac Sports Association which received a \$2,500 during a Hudson Valley Renegades Game at Dutchess Stadium, sponsored by the 3 Up 3 Down.

Should Hudson Valley leagues be interested in applying for 2023 grants, they may do so under the "Grants" tab on the 3 Up 3 Down website, www.3up3down.org.

Needlework fun set April 5

Skyllkill, a local chapter of the Embroiderer's Guild of America, presents Diana Louie, owner of the Village Fabric Shop in Red Hook as she discusses repairing, repurposing and learning from Old Textiles, on April 5. Diana will bring samples and invites participants to bring a textile if you have specific questions about it. This program begins at 12:30

p.m. Join other needleworkers for fun and learning beginning at 10 a.m. or, come for this program only beginning at 12:30 p.m. It will take place at Freedom Plains United Presbyterian Church, 1168 Rte. 55, Lagrangeville.

For more information visit www.facebook.com/SkyllkillEGA or email to EGASkyllkill@gmail.com.

Poughkeepsie Book Festival set April 1

Visit the annual Poughkeepsie Book Festival April 1 from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. inside Falcon Hall at Dutchess Community College, 53 Pendell Road, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601. Meet more than 50 authors, illustrators, and characters; peruse books for sale; and enjoy crafts and presentations!

This is a free family event for ages 17

and under, no registration is required. Visit poklib.org for more information.

Organizers offer thanks to the Friends of PPLD for sponsoring our free Book Vouchers. Visitors to the Book Festival aged 17 or younger may receive one voucher, which is valued at \$15. Some restrictions apply.

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