

North Hills School District

North Hills Junior High School

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Drama Club Musical Production

Opportunities and Guidelines for High School Student Directors of the Junior High Musical

Purpose:

- 1) To enable and foster student leadership in the performing arts by providing hands-on opportunities for high school students to work directly with junior high drama club and tech crew students under the supervision of adult directors and staff;
- 2) To assist the directors in the execution of a high quality musical production that challenges the junior high participants and provides meaningful experiences for all involved.

Duration:

As scheduled by the directors, as often as daily after school, beginning in October with auditions, and ending with the public performances and post-performance set strike in February.

Prerequisites:

- 1) Prior experience with the drama club or tech crew, either in the junior high school or at the high school level.
- 2) Leadership experience in extra-curricular activities or athletics is recommended, but not required.
- 3) A written paper outlining personal goals to be achieved during the musical production process including a timetable or series of steps/actions that will be taken to obtain success.
- 4) Written approval from the sponsoring director.

Available Positions from Which to Choose:

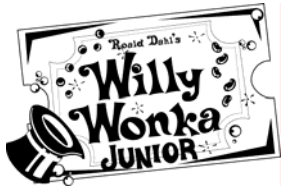
- 1) **Stage Director:** assists the stage director in blocking scenes, working with leads in remembering lines and placement on stage, developing characters, coaching individuals at the director's discretion, and preparing one scene's blocking as designated by the director. Takes attendance at each rehearsal in accordance with the set schedule. Also responsible for managing the Props List and securing the items called for in the script or requested by the directors.
- 2) **Choreographer:** when an adult choreographer is not on staff, serves as primary dance instructor for the cast, creating complete dance routines and teaching the cast at scheduled dance rehearsals. If a set choreographer is available, serves as an assistant to that person, working with individuals and groups as directed, and is responsible for at least one complete dance sequence in the show from creation to performance.
- 3) **Tech Crew Captains/Stage Managers:** *You're all automatically on the Tech Crew.* What we need is someone who assists the directors by overseeing the projects of the junior high tech crew. Provides ideas for use of materials, assists in securing materials, assures that set pieces are created and available in a timely manner for use with the cast before the performance. Also assists in selecting those who will be making scene changes and works with the stage managers

and crew to assure quick and efficient movement of set pieces and curtains. Stage Managers: Work one side of the stage, communicating with the technical director on scene changes, curtain cues, and crowd control beginning with the beginning of tech week through the final performance.

- 4) **Technical Manager:** Assists the technical director in focusing lights, programming the light board, testing microphones, managing the wireless microphones for leads, and any other technical aspect assigned by the directors beginning prior to the tech week rehearsals and ending with the final performance and set strike.
- 5) **Costume Designer:** Assures, with the guidance of the directors, that all cast members are outfitted with the proper number of costumes, pieces, and styles as appropriate for the given show. Sewing skills are required for this position, as many costumes need to be altered and/or created from scratch.
- 6) **Program Designer/Ad Manager:** Responsible for distributing and collecting all director-approved paperwork associated with patron ads, well-wisher messages, and biographies for the printed program. Maintain an accurate record of money received as a back-up for the directors' accounting with the main office. Once ads are submitted, makes sure they are in a format that is usable with our computer software, then places them in the program according to size, content, etc. Must be proficient user of Microsoft Publisher.

Basic Guidelines:

- 1) The directors have sole discretion in any given year to limit the number of high school students involved in the production based on the needs of the show and the availability of adult staff. Seven is the absolute maximum number of students that will be approved.
- 2) Keep a positive attitude. Musicals can be very physically and emotionally taxing endeavors. Junior high students will take their lead from the examples given by high school students. The unwritten rule of the graduation project assistant is to be a "cheerleader" for the cast, keeping them on task and energetic during rehearsals, especially as the time gets longer closer to the performance.
- 3) Communication is expected. It is understood that high school activities, work schedules, and family obligations will prevent attendance at some scheduled rehearsals. Keep the directors informed on a weekly basis (at minimum) of availability, as rehearsal schedules may need to be adjusted regarding who is present on a given day.
- 4) Don't push yourself too hard. In an intense setting like the production of a musical, it becomes very easy to focus on many little details at the expense of school work, sleep, and physical health. Pace yourself – if the schedule becomes too demanding and you feel the need to scale back your responsibilities or you need to devote time to a school project, let the directors know and the appropriate adjustments will be made. Changing goals is not a sign of failure, but a demonstration of self-awareness and strength of character. Getting sick or failing a class just to be at rehearsal doesn't help anyone.
- 5) Come to the directors with any issues that arise. If a situation presents itself where personalities are conflicting, or something that may violate school policies becomes apparent, remove yourself from the situation as quickly as possible and let the staff deal accordingly. Do not assume any authority that rightly belongs to a teacher; remember that even though you have a leadership position, you are still a student.
- 6) The adult directors have final decision-making authority in any given situation. The student director's job is to support the directors, regardless of what the cast may feel. In no way will insubordination be tolerated. If a student director is found to be undermining the authority of the directors, disciplinary action may be taken, which could result in possible removal from the staff.



Specific Student Director Needs for This Show 2008-2009 Production

Set Construction

We learned from last year that our jr. high tech crew works best when they have tasks ready for them to complete, and not a whole lot of free time. With that in mind, we've adjusted the schedule this year so that the Tech Crew doesn't begin working until after the adult staff and student directors have already spent 3 or 4 days working on actual construction. Our plan is to have several large pieces already built and ready to go during the last few days in December, so that when we return in January, the crew can be given painting assignments, etc. What will be expected of you as student directors:

- 1) Attend the set construction days marked on the calendar (mostly Fridays, plus the afternoon of the early dismissal in December).
- 2) Set an example for the junior high crew by staying on task as much as possible. We've greatly reduced the number of hours they will be here, so every minute should be valuable. Keep cell phones and iPods out of sight until we're done. It sends a mixed message.
- 3) Be flexible...you know from past experience that things don't always go as planned and the more supportive you can be, the better chance we will have to really have a good time.

Costumes

This is always one of our weakest areas. Last year we were fortunate to be able to rent from Woodland Hills and OLSH. Not so this year...Wonka is new as of last fall, so very few places have the outfits available. Whoever decides to help Mrs. DeWitt should be prepared to work beginning in December. Our plan is to have the entire cast outfitted by the end of the first week of January, so that we're not piecing things together the week before the show. By the time we get to our Tech Rehearsal, the show should look pretty much the way it's going to look. We will most likely have to do some costume creation of our own, so the ability to use a sewing machine would be beneficial.

Program Ads

We do a decent job with this, but there's always room for improvement. The more ads we sell, the more things we can buy to make the show look great. It would be great if one of you would consider taking the lead and creating a friendly competition amongst the cast members. If we set a goal of two \$10 ads per cast member, at 65 cast members, we'd make \$1,300. That doesn't include you or the tech crew, or any full page \$25 ads or business ads.

Whoever decides to do the program layout needs to have access to a scanner and have knowledge of how to use Microsoft Publisher. Steph left big shoes to fill!

Regular Rehearsals

Not all of you needs to attend every day. You'll notice that this show is very different than *Seussical* in that there isn't nearly as much dancing or singing. Many of the scenes only involve 7 or 8 people, so we won't have full ensemble rehearsals as often as in the past. Take a look at the schedule and discuss among yourselves who will attend which rehearsals. As long as we have at least 1 person with us to help with taking attendance, moving the cast, stacking chairs, setting up the CD player/monitor speakers, etc., that will greatly help us.

We greatly appreciate all that you do to help us in making this the best possible experience for our junior high cast and crew members. You are all valuable to us and we couldn't do what we do without your help. Thanks in advance for all of the hard work we know you will put in to *Willy Wonka Junior!*