



Marisa A. Vette
Communications Director

4855 Bloom Avenue
White Bear Lake, MN 55110
651-407-7695
mavett@wbl.whitebear.k12.mn.us

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Contact: Marisa Vette, Communications Director
White Bear Lake Area Public Schools
651-407-7695 (office)
mavett@wbl.whitebear.k12.mn.us

White Bear Lake Area High School honored for fall musical

WHITE BEAR LAKE, Minn. – For the third consecutive year, the White Bear Lake Area High School Theatre Department received accolades from the Hennepin Theatre Trust’s SpotLight Music Theatre Program, which honors high school musicals and students by recognizing their extraordinary achievements and working to develop young talent in Minnesota’s high school musical theatre programs.

This year’s honors are for the high school’s fall musical “How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying” have set school records. The production received more SpotLight awards than any previous WBLAHS Theatre Department production.

Overall awards received

Outstanding Overall Performance (includes chorus and choreography)

Outstanding Overall Production (all production elements)

Individual awards received

Outstanding Leading Role:

Dylan Rugh as J. Pierrepont Finch

Emily Nies as Rosemary

Outstanding Supporting Role:

Maddy McLevish-Hughs as Smitty

Jon Woodruff as Bud Frump

Honorable Mention Supporting Role:

Alex Carney as Mr. Twimble

Jordan Beckers as J. B. Biggley

Aly Carney as Miss Jones

Additionally, the four White Bear Lake Area High School students who received an Outstanding honor (Rugh, Nies, Mclevish-Hughs and Woodruff) are eligible to compete for the Triple Threat Award. This vigorous process takes a well-rounded approach to discovering the two students that not only sing, dance and act well, but also encompass the spirit of SpotLight.

“I am inspired every day by the production staff, volunteers and students involved in the White Bear Lake Area High School musicals,” said Theatre Director Wendy Suoja. “These adults and students are not only dedicated, hard-working and talented people, but they personify a care and compassion that is truly unique. It has been fun watching the supportive celebrations of success throughout the family of volunteers, parents, cast and crew.”

The full cast will perform a medley of the musical’s numbers at the Orpheum Theatre this summer on June 11th. Also, all of the individual honorable mention and outstanding performance will perform group numbers with other students from around the state who received a similar award.

The White Bear Lake Area Schools Theatre Program continues to grow. During its 14 years, the number of students who are auditioning for parts has more than doubled. The number of students who join the back stage crew now equals the number of students who are performing on stage. The department’s home theatre, located at White Bear Lake Area High School – North Campus, was renovated last year with the addition of an orchestra pit and improvements to the acoustics, esthetics and electronic capabilities of the theater.



White Bear Lake Area High School “How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying” cast
Photo courtesy Press Publications



Rosemary Pilkington (Emily Nies), J. Pirepont Finch (Dylan Rugh) and Smitty Smith (Maddy McLevish-Hughes)



J. B. Biggley (Jordan Beckers) and Bud Frump (Jon Woodruff)



Miss Jones (Aly Carney)



Mr. Twimble (Alex Carney)

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