

Mean Girls

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parents and community members.

"I decided on a play (Mean Girls Jr) because I had the right kids for it," Muth said. "I know the Broadway version has things that are inappropriate for high schoolers, and [so] I didn't even choose the high school version; this is the junior version. This [version] is as stripped down as you can get, and it keeps the core storyline intact...I don't want to see girls dressed in skinny clothes on stage - that's not [what it's about]. I'm going to set the mean girls apart from the rest through costume choices, but not in that kind of costume choice."

Muth added that the story of Mean Girls Jr holds a good lesson for her students to learn from and that none of her performers personify or showcase traits of the title/story in any way.

"The kids that I have are not mean girls. They're not mean kids, so I wasn't worried about people picking up bad habits," she stated.

With outside issues being put to rest, Muth says her performers have had a good time preparing for the musical and are nearly all memorized with their lines.

Specific challenges for members of the cast in preparing for the upcoming play have been learning to sing and dance on stage simultaneously. Certain cast members are also involved with other ongoing extracurricular

activities or juggling obligations such as work which has made practice difficult at times.

Wanner explained that one reason this musical in specific was chosen was because he and Muth knew they would have a lot of strong girls to round out the cast. With each student cast in their roles having been selected thoughtfully by him and Muth, Wanner says the challenges in practice have been more towards the engagement from performers.

"The challenges have mainly been contained to 'are the kids engaged? How engaged are the kids when they're rehearsing? Are they taking it seriously?' We used to have more worry [about] kids having no experience, and now that [we're] multiple musicals in, there's definitely kids who have experience now, which makes a huge difference because they memorize things quickly; they pick up movement really quickly," Wanner stated.

"It's one step at a time," Muth said. "They learn the music so they are comfortable singing... and then we add movement to it. We find ways to push through it and break it down in a different way and get them to understand it, and if not, we find a way for their character to be involved [while] not necessarily doing that step."

With their performances scheduled to begin Friday, May 1, Muth says the cast and crew are in full force to polish up the show and

hopefully put the prior controversy to bed for good. "I just want people to come and see and realize all of the controversy surrounding this was all for nothing," Muth stated. "It's been fun [practicing]. They've been putting in more effort knowing that [maybe] there's people out there that aren't wishing them well."

The first performance of Mean Girls Jr is scheduled for Friday, May 1 at 7:00 p.m. in the New Salem Auditorium. Additional shows are scheduled for Saturday, May 2 at 7:00 p.m., and Sunday, May 3 at 2:00 p.m. in the auditorium.

Full Cast: Cady Heron- Shelby Kalvoda; Damian- Bentley Quissell; Janis Sarkisian- Cloe Gniffke; Aaron Samuels- Deacon Blackbury; Ms. Norbury- Raleigh Miller; Regina George- Bailey Maier; Gretchen Wieners- Taven Maier; Karen Smith- Makynna Nelson; Mrs. George/ French Teacher/ Caroline Krafft- Sofia Young; Kevin G/Mr. Herron- Mathew Franciere; Mr. Duvall/Student- Landon Vanlwaarden; Mrs. Heron/Mathlete Moderator/Student- Cheyanne Quissell; Rachel- Bristol Rud; Sonja Acquino/ Grace- Amelia Boehm; Coach Carr/Jason- Connor Vanlwaarden; Glenn Cocco/Marymount Captain- Jaxon Koenings; Shane Oman- Derek Zimney; Dawn/Sophie- Jamy Franciere; Lizzie/Teary Girl- Alexis Peters; Martin- Audrey Benz; Tony- Bentley Wetzel.

Western Plains Public Health Recognizes National Public Health Week

Western Plains Public Health (WPPH) is joining organizations across the country to recognize National Public Health Week, April 6-12, 2026. This year's theme, "Ready. Set. Action!" highlights how public health efforts help protect families, prevent disease and build stronger communities.

Public health plays an important role in everyday life from ensuring safe drinking water and food safety to preventing illness and promoting healthier lifestyles. Through education, prevention programs and community partnerships, public health helps individuals and families make informed choices that support long-term well-being.

As part of National Public Health Week, Western Plains Public Health will be celebrating by offering free blood pressure screen-

ings and partnering with Morton-Mandan Public Library to host a dance party. In addition, WPPH is joining all 28 local public health departments across North Dakota for the Stroll N Roll North Dakota walk on Wednesday, April 8. Residents of all ages and abilities are encouraged to get moving by walking, biking, rollerblading or using mobility devices like wheelchairs or strollers.

The event encourages residents to get moving while promoting physical activity and social connection. Community members of all ages and abilities are invited to participate at any time during the day. There is no registration or fee to participate. "Stroll N Roll North Dakota" is sponsored by the North Dakota State Association of City and County Health Officials, which helps coordinated public

health efforts across the state. Residents are encouraged to share photos of their activity using #StrollNRollND on social media, including on the WPPH Facebook page.

Other National Public Health Week Events

Thursday, April 9- Plan Today, Safe Tomorrow- pick up your free emergency safety booklet at WPPH in Mandan, 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Friday, April 10- Healthy Home-What's in Your Air?- check out WPPH's website and social media for tips

Saturday, April 11- Fresh and Safe Tips- Good Food, Good Health- check out WPPH's website and social media for tips

Sunday, April 12- Recharge Time- Taking Time for You- check out WPPH's website and social media for tips



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