

# THE COMPASS GLENCOE

A SOCIAL MAGAZINE EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE RESIDENTS OF GLENCOE

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## WILDCATS

**GHP performs**  
"High School Musical"

*Feature/Cover, 12*

Local Events 10  
Business Spotlight 16  
Glencoe Family Services 20  
Style Files 24  
Libations 27  
Glencoe Historical Society 31  
Cub Scout Corner 32



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## around town

By Rebecca Osberg  
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# GJHP Students Shine Performing HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL

The Glencoe community looks forward to attending the student-led, high-quality production that The Glencoe Junior High Project (GJHP) puts on every year. GJHP is a non-profit organization that offers many programs and activities throughout the year. One of their most renowned and anticipated is the “big” play they produce. This year, GJHP put on a rousing performance of *High School Musical*, a high-energy musical with relatable themes and a great message of unity and positivity for the community.

Samara Harand jumped in with both feet this year, taking over as the director for the musical. “I really enjoyed getting to know all of the students and dive into this project with them. I have directed or choreographed so many musicals over the years, but this is my first experience with *High School Musical* and GJHP,” says Samara. “The parent producers, our creative team, families, and everyone at GJHP have been so supportive.”

GJHP puts on a big musical every year, but each year is a new play and a new opportunity to show Glencoe what they’re made of.

“Working on a new show, in a new environment, with new students and a new team can be daunting, but everyone has been wonderful. We are creating something new and finding our way together and that’s exciting,” says Samara.

Choosing which musical to produce is always a difficult decision. This year, the team wanted to make sure they choose a

musical that allowed as many students the largest amount of stage time possible.

“While we do have auditions, this is a no-cut program, so we really took a lot of time when breaking down the script and musical numbers to find places for everyone to have a chance in the spotlight,” explains Samara. “As a director/choreographer and teacher, it’s very important to me that all students can learn something and surpass what limits they may have set for themselves. No one just stands in the back waving their arms around. Everyone is singing harmony. Everyone is doing full choreography. Everyone gets their chance in the front. Everyone is challenged. It takes a lot of time and coordination. But it’s worth it. I know our music director Mike O’Mara feels this way as well, and he and our student assistant director Con Parker have been great partners in this.”

While the actors may be busy tearing up the stage, everyone who loves theater knows there is a dedicated crew working tirelessly behind the scenes to keep the show running.

“We also have a terrific crew component for the show so students who may not want to perform can be a part of the program in another way. Theater is more than just the performers on the stage. No musical is possible without the stage crew and those that work behind the scenes. And I think it’s wonderful that we are giving these kids a chance to learn



new skills and find a love of theater – and place for themselves in it – in another way. Stacy Pritsker is the Crew Manager and in addition to her terrific work with the kids, she’s been a great resource for me as well,” says Samara.



This year’s performance has 39 students in the cast and 17 in the crew including 8th-grader Audrey Mesterharm who plays Gabrielle Montez. “I love everything about the play. It is such a creative outlet for escaping the stresses of day-to-day life. And I especially love the camaraderie of the cast and crew.”



Harper Glinn, in 6th grade, plays Nikki. “I really enjoy everything about participating in *High School Musical*. Everyone is so nice and funny, and it isn’t like a strict thing where we can’t have fun. We make jokes and we are basically laughing the whole time. It’s also a new thing for most of us and it’s just a great learning experience.”

The whole town of Glencoe can’t wait to see what play is selected to be performed in 2021!

To learn more about GJHP visit <http://www.gjhp.org/>.