



Theater-Loving Youth FOUND THEIR HOME AT GJHP

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 Xanadu, a musical comedy based on a 1980s film.



Adam Busch, the director for *Xanadu*, explains how he picked this year's performance. "I wanted to choose a show that the performers AND audiences would love. Something fun and funny, upbeat—with room to feature all of our talented participants. It's a challenge every year to find that one show that can be done appropriately...that's not been seen everywhere before yet has enough appeal to get performers to audition and audiences to attend. *Xanadu* is a perfect choice! It's NOT the movie, but it has all the songs people know and love," says Adam.

Every May, GJHP announces their pick for that year's play. From there, they spend time promoting the audition process. "We're fortunate that every year we have a large number of returning performers," says Adam. "Others see our shows and get inspired to try-out the following years, and some join in our annual 'Variety Show' and get hooked on the experience that way."

Jonathan Wolf, an 8th grader who plays Sonny Malone, followed his siblings into the world of theater. "I got involved in theater when my older brother and sister did the GHJP shows. I always wanted to be a part of them,"

Jonathan says. "My family loves theater and we go as often as possible. Over winter break we were able to see *Book of Mormon* and *Fiddler on the Roof*."

Sadie Block, an 8th grader who plays Kira, couldn't choose her favorite part of *Xanadu*. "One of my favorite parts of being in *Xanadu* is when the whole cast is around the piano singing the music for the show. It's so much fun and if I didn't do this show I would not have been exposed to it," remembers Sadie. "My other favorite part is the roller skating. My character is on roller skates the majority of the show, so I worked really hard to become comfortable on them."

Every year the GJHP production includes 35–45 cast members and 20–25 crew members. "Our goal is to help every performer feel confident and accepted as part of something bigger. From day one, they hear me talk about puzzles and how we're each a part that fits into one big amazing picture," says Adam. "I think this experience is so much bigger than just putting on a show. It's challenging yourself, growing, trying, connecting, and working, just like in life."

To learn more about GJHP, visit gjhp.org.