

What to Expect When Your Child Is in NHS Drama

This is primarily aimed at the parents of freshmen, or parents of children new to drama, but perhaps the rest of you will benefit from hearing this information again.

Being involved in Norcross High School drama is an extraordinary experience for all concerned. The quality of theatre arts at NHS is on par with many of the Community Theater Productions you might see. That is not an exaggeration. The acting, the singing and dancing, the sets, the costumes, the props - you name it, it's all good. Even years later, people are still talking about the musicals – Beauty and The Beast, Hairspray, Legally Blonde, Guys & Dolls and Footloose, just to name a few. And it's not just the musicals. Dramatic and comic productions are superb too. In 2018, See How They Run placed 2nd at Regionals and 2016 and 2017, Arabian Nights and Moon Over Buffalo, respectively, both won Best Show at Regionals and fourth place at State along with several Best Actresses, Best Actor, All Stars and Best Set.

Clearly, this is a first-rate program here at Norcross. When you emerge from the auditorium after seeing shows like these, you can't help but conclude that the time your child spent in rehearsals, all the volunteering you did, all the many dramas you endured, were all so worth it.

“Triangle of Support”

NHS Drama is, essentially, a family, and every great family has a strong mother figure. Gina Parrish, “Pev,” has headed the drama department here for decades, and she really pours her heart and soul into her work. We are not alone in this assessment of Pev. Pev was one of only two teachers inducted into the National Educational Theatre Association's Hall of Fame in 2017, and she was also inducted in the Norcross High School Hall of Fame 2018. Suffice it to say, Pev knows what she is doing and knows how to get results.

Like any good matriarch she has been known to crack the whip on occasion to keep everyone focused on the job at hand, which is top quality theatre arts. There may be days when either you or your child, or both, wonder why you chose this school activity. But Pev and Doug Jordan, the newest addition to the amazing drama team, do an enormous amount - they work long, hard hours, and it's ultimately all for the kids.

As for the students, be they cast or crew members, they become very supportive of each other as they work hand-in-hand on their part in the big picture - auditioning, building sets, learning lines, gathering props, making costumes, mentoring the new kids, laughing, crying, working, playing. If there are any guarantees concerning your child's participation and drama it's this: *your son or daughter will form close friendships here as they learn important life lessons.*

So, we have two strong dedicated teachers. We've got an energetic and talented group of mutually supportive students who give it their all. *The third and equally vital part of what we call “The Triangle of Support” is **YOU, the parents.*** The Drama Boosters Club is run by half a dozen of us parents who have chosen to make the commitment of time and effort to ensure that the theatre arts program here remains one of the most successful and well-regarded in the county, the state, and even the nation but we're just the officers. We need soldiers! **We need YOU!**

Just as the school's athletic teams, band, orchestra, and other activities expect, even require, some degree of parental involvement, financial support, and volunteering, so do we. The cold hard truth is this - it takes a lot of bodies, a lot of time, and a lot of money to maintain a successful high school program, be it football, band, volleyball, drama, whatever. We strongly encourage each of you with a child in drama become involved in drama yourself by volunteering. Even if you have trouble giving your time because of jobs or other commitments, you can contribute financially. For those who have more time than money, please volunteer your time! So we really really need your help. Please join our group effort in providing outstanding Theatre art opportunities for our kids and superlative theatre arts for the Norcross company. Please step up and join the family! **Our goal is 100% parent participation. Plus, it is FUN!**

Time Commitment/Rehearsals

What makes a success? In business, in academics, in athletics, in music, in dramatic arts, in just about everything, what it takes is: Hard work. Practice. Perseverance. In theater, practice means rehearsals. Some rehearsing does take place during the regular school day and drama class, but the bulk of the work is done during after-school rehearsals. In a few cases, students who want to participate in two or more extracurricular activities will find it

impossible because of conflicts between play rehearsal and volleyball practice, and sadly they may be forced to choose one and drop the other.

After-school rehearsals are scheduled in advance for whole ensembles or just selected cast members, or just those in certain scenes. The cast and crew will be informed about where and when they are expected to be here. Typically, rehearsals run after school until 5:30...but sometimes they'll be released early or be asked to stay a little later. Sometimes the schedule has to be changed, and a scheduled rehearsal will be cancelled. Unexpected problems, delays, illnesses and so forth do occur, and creative minds really work like clockwork with each part depending on another. The key here, parents, is to try to be flexible. Please make sure your students know their bus number in the event they are not called to rehearse. And as always, please **go with the flow!**

When it's crunch time - meaning the two or three weeks leading up to opening night or before competition- things get a little intense around here. There will typically be a lock in rehearsal all day Saturday and Sunday, and on the dress rehearsal nights, the kids will probably be rehearsing after school until as late as 9p.m. You are probably thinking: what about school work? What about getting enough sleep? Valid questions. Yes, academics should come first. Just as with sports teams and other time-intensive clubs, drama students are expected to be organized and use their time wisely to stay on top of their academic responsibilities. *Please help them plan ahead to get their long-term projects done early if they will be due during show week.*

Life Lessons

Being involved in drama here teaches students so much more than acting, singing, dancing. It teaches them important lessons that will help them later in life. For instance, it teaches them how to improvise. What do you do when the zipper on your costume breaks just as you're about to walk on stage? What if you're supposed to be giving a line of dialogue to another actor, but that actor isn't where he supposed to be? What if a crucial prop turns up missing? These situations teach them how to improvise, maintain their composure and find creative solutions to problems in the moment. And it teaches them responsibility. No matter what task your child is given in a production, it is a crucial cog in the overall machinery. Working the lights, remembering lines, ensuring props are in their proper place, changing the backdrop and sets are all critical to the overall mission. If any one of these folks drops the ball, everyone is affected. They learn what they need to do to get the job done.

Your booster officers are always happy to answer your questions and address any concerns you may have about anything drama related. **Please feel free to contact Booster Club President Anne Keeton at 404-246-6460 anytime (texting me is best).** Let us help you. That's what we're here for!

So, in conclusion, let me sum up: Drama is fun, it's a learning experience, it's exhausting and exhilarating, and it pretty much takes a village to put on a theater production. We booster officers join Pev and Doug in sincerely hoping all of you will join our happy family and contribute your support, your time and your dollars, for the betterment of everyone in the Norcross drama Community.

Thank you!
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