

Heathers the Musical opens soon at LTG

Ted Hall

Special to The Gazette
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Little Theater of Gastonia is big on talent, enthusiasm and providing theatrical entertainment for the residents of Gastonia and Gaston County.

LTG Executive Director Lauren Park-

er, an award-winning actress, director and drama teacher, spoke recently to Belmont Rotarians about the history of the Little Theater and about upcoming productions. The program was hosted by Rotarian Ashley Brayton of Bank OZK in Cramerton, an actress who has performed in several Little Theater productions.

The theater is located at 238 Clay St., Gastonia. The nonprofit Little Theater of Gastonia organization began in the 1950s, and the theater building opened in 1974. An all-volunteer board of 13 oversees the LTG. Jennifer Stepp is board president.

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From left, Autumn Bolton, Hannah Risser, Sid Willoughby and Alyssa White will take the stage in *Heathers the Musical*. PROVIDED BY THE LITTLE THEATER OF GASTONIA.

Heathers

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Other officers are Michael Sisk, vice president; Sarah Drummond, treasurer; and Bryan Rife, secretary.

Parker said the Little Theater operates entirely on proceeds from ticket sales, sponsorships and contributions. Volunteer actors, musicians, production crew members and others come in all ages and backgrounds and from throughout the community because of their love for the theater, she said.

“Art is a driving force in the community,” she added, “and studying theater helps in developing other skills such as public speaking and being successful in the business world.”

The LTG will conclude its current five-show season on July 28-30 and Aug. 4-6 with performances of *Heathers The Musical*, a moving love story and laugh-out-loud comedy recommended for mature audiences. It’s about a brainy, beautiful teenage misfit who hustles her way into her high school’s most powerful and ruthless clique, the *Heathers*, led by the almighty Heather Chandler.

Five shows are planned for the upcoming season, which starts this fall. They include: *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, Oct. 2023; *The Diary of Anne Frank*, Jan. 2024;

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The Lion, The Witch & The Wardrobe, March 2024; *The Odd Couple* (female version), May 2024; and *Sister Act*, July 2024.

Between the current season and into the upcoming season, the Little Theater will conduct summer camps and two 16-week semesters of drama classes, one for beginners age kindergarten through 5th grade and another for intermediate and advanced performers age 6th through 12th grade.

Lauren Parker and Shane Elks will be the instructors. Scholarships are offered.

For information on tickets for shows, summer camps and drama classes or on auditioning to join the cast for an upcoming production, go to littletheaterofgastonia.org , or call 704-865-0160.