

# THE EVERETT HERALD

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## Murphy students create theater day camp for kids in Everett

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EVERETT — Archbishop Murphy High School requires annual community service hours, and the deadline is during spring semester.

Bryce Carabello, Eleanor Lund, Catherine Pepper and Jeff Wilson aren't the type to procrastinate. Earlier this month, they ran a week-long theater day camp for children as a service project.

All four of the teens love the performing arts. They participate in the fall play and spring musical, except for Pepper during soccer season.

Theater helps young people find out who they are, Pepper said. They wanted to share that with others.

"We get to teach what we love," she said.

The idea came from Lund's mother, Mary Rollins. Through her own community involvement, Rollins knew there were opportunities to serve through Mari's Place. The Everett organization brings art programs to families who might not have access otherwise.

Trinity Episcopal Church on Hoyt Avenue leases space to the nonprofit. Rollins knew the pastor from previous volunteering.

The teens were game, even after realizing it would be a ton of work. They wrote a proposal to the Mari's Place board of directors. They also had to get approval from their campus minister. Trinity provided the space.

The first day, many of the kids were shy. Ages 6-14, they hadn't seen live plays. They weren't so sure about singing and dancing in the church gym, or writing their own music.

The Archbishop team had envisioned a final production with a lot of memorized lines. They adjusted those plans when they learned that some of the younger ones were working on their reading. It became more of a theater workshop.

Before the week was out, campers were practicing moves to "I Won't Grow Up" from "Peter Pan."

"It's a good way to get out of your shell," Lund said. "There are mer-



At Trinity Episcopal Church in Everett, Ceja Nelson, 6, goes straight for the pirate stuff when costumes and props are unveiled by Archbishop Murphy High School Student directors for their 2017 "Intro to Theater Workshop," which began August 9. (Dan Bates / The Herald)

maids. There are pirates."

The kids also were shouting ideas for an improvisation game. Pretend to be brave! Lost! A monkey!

"They didn't know this world existed and they realized they could do it, too," Pepper said. "It's not just in Disney movies."

Much of the camaraderie in theater comes from pretending to be somebody else, Carabello said. Everyone makes new friends who are also putting themselves out there, Wilson said.

During the fun, the teens slipped in acting lingo: Simon Says meets stage directions. After camp every day, they had more to do, preparing the songs, snacks and fliers.

Camp culminated in a "Peter Pan"-inspired production Aug. 11.

Lund and Wilson soon will be starting junior year. Pepper will be a sophomore and Carabello is an incoming senior. Lund plans to major in musical theater. Wilson is looking at a career in sound engineering. Pepper wants to keep singing. Carabello hopes to pursue acting.



ABOVE: Archbishop Murphy High School students in matching blue t-shirts from left, Jeff Wilson, Eleanor Lund, Catherine Pepper and Bryce Carabello bring out costumes to entice youngsters with their 2017 "Intro to Theater Workshop," August 9 at Trinity Episcopal Church. (Dan Bates / The Herald)

RIGHT: Hector Hernandez, 10, reacts good-naturedly upon finishing second to Esmeralda Aguirre, 9, in musical chairs recently as other kids and Theater Workshop directors Catherine Pepper, 15, and Eleanor Lund of Archbishop Murphy High School watch at Trinity Episcopal Church in Everett. (Dan Bates / The Herald)

