

OLV Thespians “Claim Columbus” With Exciting Honors at Junior Thespian Festival

At the Georgia Junior Thespian Festival in Columbus, Georgia on February 25, OLV’s Troupe 88732 distinguished itself as an exemplary school with honors in several categories. The Troupe was entered in a total of 10 Individual Events including monologues, solo musical theatre, duet acting, and group musical theatre. OLV student events were awarded an impressive 2 “Superior” ratings and 8 “Excellent” ratings. The two superior events were ranked in the top ten of the entire conference and were performed twice in front of the entire festival. It was the first time OLV had received such a ranking for a group musical performance! This was a very strong showing for OLV at the Junior Thespian Festival. Another special note was that the students excelled even though only 5 of the 21 students had ever competed at the festival level. In addition, this is the second consecutive year that OLV walked away without any overall ratings below that of “Excellent.”

Students receiving superior awards included: Catherine Tudisco (solo musical theatre “Stranger to the Rain”) and Nathan Fisher, Talia Marotta, Rachel Cartwright, Catherine Buttrey, and Bailey Glasgow (group musical theatre “Five Forever”) For all “Superior” designees at OLV, it was their first time to receive such an honor, and for the students in “Five Forever” it was their first time to ever compete at the Thespian Festival.



Students receiving “Superior” awards are eligible to compete at the National Thespian Festival held in Lincoln, Nebraska in June where they compete with and are evaluated against high school students from around the country. Eight entries and fifteen students earned ratings of “Excellent”: Marissa Latham (solo musical theatre “I Think He Likes Me”), Allie Picou (solo musical theatre “Gimme, Gimme”), Courtney Hayhurst (monologue “The Facial/Roses Are Red”); Kristen Martin and Aimee Sznajderman (duet acting “the Audition”); Abby Hagelskamp and Katie Sherman (duet acting “Anna and August”); Sara Sligh (monologue “In the Ring/The Guilty Party”); Alana Elward (monologue “Chores/A Place Called Heaven”); and Matthew Steele, Kimberly Martin, Anna Portante, Mica Osio, Eva Catherine Crawford, and Kayla Wiggins (group musical theatre “Beautiful City”).

Throughout Saturday, students enjoyed a main stage production from another school and participated in amazing theatrical workshops. A treat for everyone was the Tech Challenge. Team members Marissa Latham, Allie Picou, Sara Sligh, and Katie Sherman represented OLV as they had a friendly competition against other schools in folding a backdrop, setting props for a scene, and doing quick changes for costumes. The competition was fun and exciting for everyone.

The OLV Troupe was flattered to be the only school from Alabama included in the festivities of Georgia through special invitation based upon the quality of its’ program and commitment to the ideal of Thespian troupes. Mr. Bridges commented, “the national competition in Denver this year was too far away so we were touched when the Georgia delegation extended an invitation to us for their festival. The schools in Georgia have some of the best troupes in the country. Being the only non-Georgia school held in such distinction by their troupe directors is humbling and so appreciated.” One director commented, “We always enjoy your performances and the way your students conduct themselves. We still talk about some of the shows you have done at past festivals, and always look forward to seeing what OLV does at the festival with their Individual Events.”

OLV students were model representatives of the school community, and parents and faculty alike should be proud of these middle school students. “The most heartwarming part of it all was watching how the 8th graders took care of their younger Thespians—without being asked! That is really what this is all about,” Bridges added. Students and parents alike have been very dedicated to this festival and their support has been greatly appreciated. A special thanks to Director Mike Bridges and chaperones who accompanied the students on this trip: Donna Comeil, Angela Elward, Sandra Latham, and Kathy Young. Thank you to Mrs. Comeil, Mrs. Elward, choreographer Mrs Dava Fant, and Musical director Mrs. Kathy Martin who helped Mr. Bridges prepare students for their Individual Events. Thanks to everyone for making this event run so smoothly. A very heartfelt thank you to the OLV PTO who provided funding for bus transportation! And ,we appreciate Mrs. Roden for her unwavering support of our students at this event. OLV students have learned a great deal because of their involvement.

The Junior Thespian Festival is sponsored by the Educational Theatre Association. In addition to performances and individual events, it offers a variety of workshops to expand our students’ theatre knowledge and skills. Participation in the Junior Thespian Festival is a wonderful learning experience for our students!