



Drayton Entertainment Youth Academy National Youth Week Events

Auditions, Academy Open House with Free Classes and Tours, and more!

Wednesday, April 20, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – In honour of National Youth Week, which runs annually in May, the Drayton Entertainment Youth Academy is pleased to present a number of events aimed at connecting young people with arts and culture including auditions, workshops, free classes, family tours, and more.

The Ontario Provincial Consortium on Youth in Recreation has identified seven developmental needs for youth: self-definition, physical activity, meaningful participation, mastery and achievement, positive interaction with adults and peers, structure and clear limits, and creative expression. Drayton Entertainment’s National Youth Week activities will support these important areas of growth.

Celebrations for National Youth Week will start off with youth auditions for Drayton Entertainment’s season production of *The Sound of Music* on **Sunday, May 1** at the new Youth Academy in Waterloo. The not-for-profit professional theatre company is seeking young performers to play the Von Trapp children in two runs of the popular musical at the Huron Country Playhouse in Grand Bend from August 17 to September 4, and then at the Hamilton Family Theatre Cambridge from November 24 to December 24, with an option to possibly extend to December 31. All races and ethnicities are encouraged to apply.

“Auditions are fun, and kids learn so much by just preparing and participating in the process,” says **David Connolly**, Director of Education for the Drayton Entertainment Youth Academy. “We are looking for strong singers who are comfortable with choreography, and kids who just love to be on stage.”

Activities will continue with an *Indigenous Singing, Drumming and Stories Workshop* with Barbara Assiginaak and Richard Moore on **Monday, May 2**. Youth ages 8 to 18 are invited to attend a fun and interactive workshop with First Nation composer, musician and educator, Barbara Assiginaak and drumming specialist and professor, Richard Moore. Assiginaak will teach participants about Anishinaabe traditional singing and the pipigwan/bbigon, and Moore will teach about the rich musical cultural traditions of West Africa and its most popular instrument, the drum.

Next, there will be an *Online Academy Info Night with a Virtual Tour* on **Wednesday, May 4** from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Youth and parents will have the opportunity to learn more and ask questions about upcoming summer and fall programs offered at the Academy. There are 22 different Summer Camps

available over 7 weeks from July 1 through August 12 cohorted into three age categories: Kids (ages 8 to 10), Youth (ages 11 to 13), and Teens (ages 14 to 18). Young performers will meet new friends and expand their theatre skills in singing, acting, and movement by learning production numbers, solos, scenes and monologues from a different, age-appropriate musical each week. The Academy will also offer a “Technical Theatre 101” camp for teens who want to learn more about set construction, scenic painting, props, wardrobe, audio, lighting, running crew, and stage management. There are a variety of Fall Classes for students of all ages including Musical Theatre, Acting, Audition Skills, Singing & Musicianship, Stage Combat, Masterclass Series, Writing, Technical Theatre Production, Show Tune Fitness, and more.

For those who prefer an in-person option, there will be an *Academy Open House with Free Facility Tours and Classes* on **Saturday, May 7** from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Youth and their families are invited to visit the Academy for free 45-minute classes including Improv, Musical Theatre, and Scripted Acting. In addition to the complimentary classes, free facility tours of the Academy and adjacent Drayton Entertainment Production Facility will be offered followed by a website registration demo and Q&A session.

The week’s activities will wrap up with auditions for the Huron Country Playhouse Pre-Professional Program production of Disney’s *Frozen Jr.* on **Sunday, May 8** from 12:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Dance Extreme in London. Junior musicals are condensed, one-hour versions of popular musicals custom-tailored to the needs of young people. Unlike *The Sound of Music*, where youth will play child roles in a professional production with adult actors in the lead roles, this production of *Frozen Jr.* will be performed by kids for kids – all the parts will be played by young actors. All races and ethnicities are encouraged to apply.

The three-week Pre-Professional Production Program gives teen performers practical insight into how a musical is cast, rehearsed and performed while they work with a professional creative team to produce a Junior musical. Drayton Entertainment Associate Artistic Director and Academy Director of Education, David Connolly will direct and choreograph the production. Connolly’s impressive resume includes work on numerous major musicals including *Kinky Boots*, *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*, Disney’s *Newsies*, *Mamma Mia!*, and Drayton Entertainment’s popular panto productions. As the only amputee to have ever performed on Broadway, David is a proud advocate who's deeply committed to matters concerning inclusion in the arts. He is a recipient of the Premier of Ontario's Award of Excellence.

To learn more about or register for any of these activities, please visit <https://www.draytonentertainmentyouthacademy.com/national-youth-week>.

For more about opportunities for youth and the Youth Academy in general, please visit: <https://www.draytonentertainmentyouthacademy.com>

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