



Legally **BLONDE** **THE MUSICAL**

Drayton Entertainment Youth Academy Announces Cast and Crew of Inaugural High School Musical Production Featuring 50 Students from 15 High Schools

Monday, January 30, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – After multiple interviews, auditions and callbacks, the Drayton Entertainment Youth Academy is proud to announce the remarkable cast of talented youth assembled for its inaugural High School musical, both on and off stage. The beloved musical *Legally Blonde* will be on stage at the St. Jacobs Country Playhouse from February 15 to 26, starring 50 high school students from the Waterloo Region.

A fabulously fun musical based on the adored movie, *Legally Blonde: The Musical* follows trailblazer Elle Woods as she tackles stereotypes and scandal in pursuit of her dreams. Action-packed and exploding with memorable songs and dynamic dances, this musical is so much fun it should be illegal!

This exciting new High School Musical Production Program allows students across the Waterloo Region to learn valuable life skills gained by participating in a fully-staged Drayton Entertainment Youth Academy Production.

The award-winning not-for-profit theatre company has been steadily growing its training offerings for young performers over the past several years, including launching its new, state-of-the-art training hub, the **Drayton Entertainment Youth Academy**. Its mission is to provide performing and technical arts training opportunities anchored in the Drayton Entertainment brand of live theatre excellence, facilitated by professional industry mentors. The program is designed to cultivate community, incite leadership, ignite imagination, and boost confidence in a socially aware, inclusive environment.

The High School Musical Production Program will offer 100% barrier-free access, including financial, emotional, and physical, to unite students from different backgrounds, identities, cultures, abilities and interests, completely free of charge. Drayton Entertainment is committed to diverse, inclusive casting without regard to disability, ethnocultural identity or gender.

Associate Artistic Director **David Connolly** will direct and choreograph. Connolly's impressive résumé includes numerous Drayton Entertainment productions including *Mamma Mia!*, *Kinky Boots*, *Annie*, *Hairspray*, *Disney's Newsies*, and the popular family pantos *Wizard of Oz*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, and *Cinderella*.

"Arts education enhances creative problem-solving, strengthens critical thinking and communication skills, and helps to develop confidence, collaboration, perseverance, focus, and more," says **Alex Mustakas**, Artistic Director of Drayton Entertainment. "We know there are not enough opportunities for young people interested in theatre to develop and practice their skills, so we are excited to offer this unique opportunity for students to work together to put on a show guided by professional mentors. There is a wealth of young talent in this area, and we feel it is our responsibility to help nurture the artists and leaders of tomorrow."

Evlyn O'Toole from **St. Michael Catholic Secondary School** is Elle Woods.

Mitchell Cruickshank from **Kitchener-Waterloo Collegiate Institute** is Emmett.

Sevile Schryer from **Eastwood Collegiate Institute** is Vivienne.

James Wright from **Eastwood Collegiate Institute** is Callahan.

MacKenna Van Massenhoven from **Strathroy District Collegiate Institute** is Paulette.

Rounding out this exceptional youth cast are **Addi Butchart** from **Eastwood Collegiate Institute** as Brooke Wyndham, **Lainey Schyven** from **Eastwood Collegiate Institute** as Serena, **Joyce Sun** from **Eastwood Collegiate Institute** as Margot, and **EmmaLea Thomas** from **STEAM Academy** as Pilar.

Students from across the region will be backstage in all departments including lighting, sound, the running crew, stage management, wardrobe, and the band, along with the respective Drayton Entertainment Department Heads.

The following is a complete list of cast and crew involved in creating the inaugural High School Musical Project: *Legally Blonde The Musical*.

Bluevale Collegiate Institute

Alyssa Panda

Zakia Selim

Eowyn Ford
Eastwood Collegiate Institute

Joyce Sun
Addi Butchart
Isabella Castillo
Leah Coupal
David Cunningham
Megan Dart
Caleigh De Vito
Lauryn Hayden
Emma Hortie
Elias Poulin
Sevile Schryer
Benji Schyven
Erin Tell
Aspen Walsh
James Wright
Alastair Yantha
Favour Arisekola-Ojo
Logan Miller
Megan Haas
Miles Shephard
Zoe Mcwhirter

Forest Heights Collegiate Institute

Emery Oudshoorn
Emma Van Dijk
Paige Moulton

Grand River Collegiate Institute

Naomi Lofft

Kitchener-Waterloo Collegiate Institute

Kaitlyn Kuiper
Mitchell Cruickshank
Megan Hill

Resurrection Catholic Secondary School

Emily Buchanan
Maddie Young
Sydney Kedmenecz

Rockway Mennonite Collegiate

Ariba Imran Idrees

St Benedict Catholic Secondary School

Charleigh Perry
Olivia Silva

St Davids Catholic Secondary School

Connor Foran
Lucas Coutts

STEAM Academy

Emmalea Thomas

Strathroy District Collegiate Institute

Mackenna Van Massenhoven

Waterloo Collegiate Institute

Alex Caldarelli
Carter Johnston
Kyri Friedman
Anna Castro
Lauren Roth
Noah Snow

St. Michael Catholic Secondary School

Evlyn O'Toole
Guelph Collegiate Vocational Institute

Waterloo Oxford District Secondary School

Ella Way

The inaugural Drayton Entertainment High School Musical Production is on stage from **February 15 to 26** at the St. Jacobs Country Playhouse.

The major sponsor of this initiative is **Brad Carr** of West Montrose, in honour of his high school drama teacher, **Mr. Gord Davis** (Elmira District Secondary School). Additional support is generously provided by **TD Bank**, and the **Region of Waterloo Arts Fund**. The Season Sponsor of all Drayton Entertainment Youth Academy Programs is **Heffner Group of Companies**.

Tickets are \$40 for adults, \$30 for youth under 20, and \$35 for groups of 20 or more. HST is applicable to all ticket prices. Tickets may be purchased by calling toll free at **1-855-drayton (372-9866)**, or online at <https://www.draytonentertainment.com/>.

-30-

For more information, please contact:
Justine Fraser, Marketing and Development Associate
(519) 621-5511 ext. 239
justine@draytonentertainment.com