

The Inter-Mountain

Old Brick Playhouse celebrates 33 years of programming



Submitted photo A group of the Old Brick Playhouse Apprentices get into the holiday spirit of ‘Elfkings.’ The Apprentices are currently rehearsing the musical ‘Mean Girls.’

ELKINS — The Old Brick Playhouse is celebrating 33 years serving the community, and our continuing their tradition of offering holiday fun and

a lavishly decorated front window for the season.

“Each year, we work urgently to fill our holiday windows with delight and surprise,” OBP Executive Director Missy Armentrout McCollam said. *“We strive to remind passersby of the enchantment and love of the season.”*

Decorating windows is just a portion of the shenanigans that take place at The Old Brick Playhouse, which remains dedicated to create positive change and to provide joyful experiences to their community and state, using art as the vehicle of engagement.

The Playhouse is well-known for the the OBP Apprenticeship program for middle and high school students. The OBP conducts two sessions throughout the year and produces two mainstage productions showcasing the talents of every student.

Currently, the OBP Apprentices — 58 strong — are rehearsing *“Mean Girls,”* a musical that opens at the end of January and is sponsored by Holiday Inn Express and Dr. Lamarr Weese.

“The exciting news is that though the Apprenticeship legacy is steeped in tradition, we are happy to collaborate with the Sisters of Saint Joseph’s Foundation for Health and Wellness to add two new components to our curriculum,” said OBP Assistant Director Phil Smith. *“Apprentice students will have the opportunity to learn and participate in functional fitness programming as well as experiential workshops in nutrition and gardening.”*

Also, for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic, the OBP has partnered with the Augusta Heritage Center to write, produce and tour a children’s play to elementary schools throughout the region. The play, *“A Garden Fable,”* is designed to teach students social and cultural tolerance, while reinforcing the idea that being an artist in West Virginia is a viable career.

If it’s holiday cheer you are seeking, make certain to see the OBP staff production of *“Elf the Musical”* in mid-December. This play, aimed to provide a wholesome family event, will also be made available to students throughout the region due to the OBP’s strong collaboration with Davis & Elkins College and Randolph County Schools.

The OBP not only provides programming for children and youth, but also conducts bi-weekly workshops with residents at the Elkins Rehabilitation and Care Center.

“Working with ERCC has been a fulfilling experience for the OBP team and our dedicated participants,” McCollam said. *“It’s a mutually*

beneficial experience, and we as artists have grown through the kindness and support that we share. Also, ERCC has been one of the strongest partners in OBP's history."

Artists from The Old Brick team will also be participating in a myriad of events, from Elkins Spooktacular to Christmas parades, to summer camps and to onboard Murder Mysteries.

The OBP's scope and impact have both grown from year to year, and the OBP team attributes that to their ever supportive community, students, families and collaborators.

"If we didn't have such faithful scholarship support, nearly 50% of our students would be unable to participate," McCollam said.

Anyone who would like more information or to contribute to the OBP can do so at www.theoldbrick.org.

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