

College Students Learning and Helping Behind the Scenes of "The Music Man"

October 12, 2018

The St. Marys Children's Theatre is performing the renowned musical "The Music Man" by Meredith Wilson at the College of Coastal Georgia Camden Center beginning Friday, October 12 and running through Sunday, October 21. Behind the scenes, students from the College of Coastal Georgia have been helping to ensure the show's success.

College of Coastal Georgia English Lecturer Emily Boyle serves as Director of Community Support and College of Coastal Georgia Camden Campus Liaison for the St. Mary's Children Theatre. She and students from her literature and composition class are working with the Children's Theatre production team as part of a service-learning partnership. Service-learning courses at the College allow students to participate in community activities in which they can apply their skills and knowledge acquired in the classroom in real-world situations to gain a deeper understanding of the course content.

"The goal of our service-learning partnership with the St. Marys Children's Theatre is to explore the role the arts can play in building community. We began by reading and reflecting on an article about the social value of art," Boyle said.



College of Coastal Georgia student Edith Gonzalez decorates one of the many vibrant hats that will be featured in "The Music Man" performed by the St. Mary's Children's Theatre.

Students did critical studies of drama and community art, and were visited by the directors of the Children's Theatre. The directors discussed how they operate the theatre, shared their overall vision of engaging children in creative activities, and invited students to volunteer with theatre productions. For the production of "The Music Man," Coastal Georgia students are selling tickets and concessions, sewing costumes, working with student actors, and helping with technical projects.

"St. Marys Children's Theatre participants and volunteers do everything from acting and set design to marketing," Boyle said. "They are demonstrating to my students that working towards a common goal can inspire authentic cooperation and resourcefulness. If they sew on a button, calm a nervous actor, or help program a stage light, they have done something meaningful to help the final product."



College of Coastal Georgia student Paige Mack prepares to sell tickets to attendees of the musical at the Camden Center auditorium.

Boyle enjoys seeing her students get involved in theatre, even if it's only happening in the classroom. Students have read and analyzed plays through specific points of view, read aloud to relate more to the story and characters, and will be researching how art builds community and how artists have furthered social change.

"Working with the Children's Theatre is rewarding in so many different ways. We are analyzing the arts and thinking about how they can enhance not just our experience at the College of Coastal Georgia, but also in our community," Boyle said. "We are learning that even small contributions matter. I'm proud of my students for sharing their talents with the St. Marys Children's Theatre and I am looking forward to this partnerships growing in future semesters. I

would love for students to sign up for a designated service-learning class simply because they want to be a part of this collaboration!"



Lisa Allen, vice president and choreographer for St. Mary's Children's Theatre, Megan Friese-Kaufman, president and founder and music director, and Jan Shiff, treasurer and operations director, visit Emily Boyle's literature and composition class to talk about how they operate the Children's Theatre.

Coastal Georgia students will have the opportunity to work with future productions of the Children's Theatre, including "The Complete Works of Williams Shakespeare" performed by the adult Saltwater Players in November, "Elf, Jr." performed by the younger thespians in December, and "Into the Woods" next semester.

"The Music Man" will premiere Friday, October 12 at the College of Coastal Georgia Camden Center auditorium at 7 p.m. For more information on tickets and performance dates, visit www.stmaryschildrenstheatre.com.