

# Sunset Hills Drama Club

## CAST & DANCE TEAM AUDITION PACKET

### THE SHOW

Disney's Newsies Jr.

### AUDITIONS

Ensemble Cast (Grades K-8) - September 19 (Video Auditions Due)

Featured Cast (Grades 5-8) - September 19-21

Principal Cast (Grades 5-8) - September 19-21

Dance Team (Grades 5-8) - September 20-21

Callbacks (selected students) - September 22-23

### PERFORMANCES

February 24-25 (Friday-Saturday) at The Vista Center for the Arts

### PRINCIPAL ROLES

*Jack Kelly:* The charismatic leader of the Manhattan newsies, is an orphaned dreamer and artist who yearns to get out of the crowded streets of New York and make a better life for himself out west. Fiercely protective of his best friend, Crutchie, and very loyal, Jack isn't afraid to use his voice to attain better conditions for the working kids of New York City. The actor in this role must command the stage with ease, possesses strong vocal abilities, and can exude Jack's tough-guy exterior and his big heart.

*Crutchie:* Jack's best friend and a dedicated newsie with a "bum leg" from polio that causes pain, but helps sell more papes. Walking with the assistance of a crutch doesn't define the ever-positive newsie, so look for an actor who can portray Casey's goofy-sweet sense of humor and optimistic resilience.

*Katherine Plumber:* An ambitious young reporter, works hard to make a name for herself as a legitimate journalist in a time when women aren't taken seriously. Quick, funny, resourceful, and confident, Katherine should be a strong singer with excellent diction, especially for her show stopping number, "Watch What Happens." This actress should have excellent stage chemistry with the actor who portrays Jack.

*Joseph Pulitzer:* A pompous businessman through and through, owns the World newspaper and is concerned solely with the bottom line (money and profit). Pulitzer doesn't sympathize with the strikers, but he does eventually – and grudgingly – respect Jack. For this non-singing role, we need a strong actor with a sharp and imposing presence.

*Davey:* The brains of the resistance, he starts selling newspapers to help his family earn a living but becomes swept up in the fervor of the strike. A leader in his own right, who is learning to use his voice to uplift others, we need a strong actor and singer who can lead "Seize the Day." This actor must have good stage chemistry with the actor who plays his younger sibling, Les.

*Les:* Davey's cheeky younger sibling, is excited by the newsies' freedom and loves their independent lifestyle. This pint-sized charmer should look younger than the other newsies, but have a giant stage presence and personality.

*Medda Larkin:* Inspired by the vaudeville performer, Aida Overton-Walker, she is a big-voiced singer and star of the Bowery Theater. A proud supporter of the newsies, she offers her theater as a safe haven for their revolution. This performer must portray this astute entertainer with great comic delivery, while standing firmly behind the newsies in their fight for justice.

## **FEATURED ROLES**

Featured Newsies: *Race, Albert, Muriel, Nancy, Specs, Pigtails, Hazel, Buttons, Tommy Boy, Romeo, Jo Jo* -- all are featured solo singers and have individual spoken lines.

*Mr. Wiesel* (a.k.a. "Weasel"): A disgruntled paper-pusher who uses the Delancey brothers as his muscle, runs distribution for the World newspaper and has little patience or sympathy for the newsies.

*Delancey Brothers*: Morris and Oscar are "toughs" who work for the World newspaper, and are known to use their fists to make a point.

*Snyder*: The crooked warden of The Refuge (the filthy and horrible juvenile reformatory) who is concerned only with catching enough kids to keep their government checks coming. We need an actor who can evoke an imposing and sinister presence.

*Darcy*: A newspaper photographer who works with Katherine.

*Dorothy*: Katherine's upper-class friend whose parents own the New York Tribune newspaper and helps the newsies print the Newsies Banner.

*Bill*: Katherine's upper-class friend whose parents own the New York Journal newspaper and help the newsies print the Newsies Banner.

*Seitz*: The editor of the World newspaper who advises Pulitzer, but ultimately admires the kids' newspaper.

*Bunsen*: Pulitzer's bookkeeper who helps him come up with the idea to raise the newsies' price per paper.

*Hannah*: Pulitzer's secretary who is a clever advocate for the newsies.

*Pat*: An efficient stage manager who introduces Medda before her performance.

*The Bowery Brigade (Ava, Olive, and Ethel)*: A group of vaudeville performers in Medda's act. While only three performers have solos, this featured ensemble group can be as big or small as best fits our production.

*Scabs*: These three newsies threaten to ignore the strike to get work for themselves.

*Police Chief*: A corrupt officer, he intimidates the newsies, and arrests Crutchie.

*Spot Conlon*: Leader of the Brooklyn Newsies with an intimidating reputation.

## **DANCE TEAM**

Due to the heavy focus on dance in this show, we are excited to offer experienced dancers at Sunset Hills the opportunity to perform special choreography and dance features throughout the show; no acting or singing required. While dancers of all genres are invited, special consideration will be given to those who can demonstrate a variety of skills.

## **ENSEMBLE ROLES**

Newsies, newsies and more newsies: We will need students from all grade levels to round out the cast, give our song and dance numbers some serious punch and support our many additional principal and featured cast! As part of our characterization exercises, each ensemble member will get to choose a name and develop a backstory for their character.

## **AUDITIONS**

Students will be required to audition using materials from the show. Students who have not prepared the required musical selection and script excerpt will not be allowed to audition. The only way to access audition and rehearsal materials this year is through Dysart's learning management system, Schoology. Once you

have begun using this resource via computer or smartphone, accessing information and resources while staying up-to-date will be easy!

***This year's audition procedures will be similar to last year. Please read the following information closely to ensure your student will be able to participate.***

As with last year, the audition panel will not allow for personal audition selections to be used for auditions (e.g. no self-selected songs or monologues). Students will be required to audition using provided song and script excerpts, as the audition panel wants to hear each student's best singing and acting interpretation in the context of this show. The required audition materials are provided in our Schoology Group created specifically for the show. You and your student can access this group online through a computer or mobile device. Please see below to learn how to access this great online resource. From the Group page, students can access audition materials organized by character using the Group Resources tab. All PDF and MP3 files can open directly within Schoology, or you may download them to your computer/mobile device for quicker, repeated access.

**For ENSEMBLE roles: Video Audition DUE MONDAY 9/19 (GRADES K-8) via Flip (formerly Flipgrid)**

The *Newsies, Jr.* production has a variety of ensemble roles for which K-8 students will be assigned based on components of their auditions. Part assignments within the Ensemble will be determined by the audition panel. Once your student has decided to audition for the ensemble, please join the official Schoology group (instructions below), and fill out the online form linked there. Then, you will receive an email with the link to Flip to record them singing the required song excerpt with the provided recording. Submit the audition video AND this audition packet. **All videos must be submitted online and packets must be turned in to the front office submitted by 1pm on Monday 9/19.**

**For FEATURED roles: MONDAY, TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY 9/19-9/21 (GRADES 5-8 ONLY)**

The *Newsies, Jr.* production has elevated ensemble roles for which **students in grades 5-8** can audition. These roles include additional Newsies, The World newspaper employees, Bowery Theater performers, and others who have some solo lines to recite or a very short singing feature in a song. Specific part assignments will be determined by the audition panel. These roles are excellent for budding performers who may be preparing to take on a principal role in the future, or who may just want to have a more prominent role in the show without making a commitment to a principal role. Once your student has decided to audition for a featured role, please visit our Newsies Auditions Online Sign-Up using the link provided in our Schoology Group to reserve a time slot for an audition. Students who audition for featured roles may or may not be invited to Callback Auditions. If your student is not invited to Callbacks, it does not mean your student did not earn a role. *Students auditioning for a featured role are encouraged to attend the Audition Workshop on Tuesday 9/13 from 3:15-4:15.*

**ALL completed audition packets should be turned in to the front office by Monday, September 19th at 1:00PM.** At the audition time, your student will enter the gym for a short interview and perform the required music and script (posted in the Schoology group). **Completed audition packets must be submitted in order to audition.**

**For PRINCIPAL roles: MONDAY, TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY 9/19-9/21 (GRADES 5-8 ONLY)**

**Students in grades 5-8 ONLY** are eligible to audition for principal roles. Once your student has decided on the character(s) for which he/she would like to audition, please visit our Newsies Auditions Online Sign-Up using the link provided in our Schoology Group to reserve an audition time. Students may have a favorite character

for which they want to audition, and the production team will ask about this, however they will identify the character for which he/she may be best suited given aspects of their audition, personality, and chemistry with other performers. *Students auditioning for a principal role are encouraged to attend the Audition Workshop after school on Tuesday 9/13 from 3:15-4:15.*

**ALL completed audition packets should be turned in to the front office by Monday, September 19th at 1:00PM.** At your audition time, your student will enter the gym for a short interview, perform the required music, and run lines from the required script excerpt with the members of the production team. Based on the scoring of the audition, the panel will identify students for Callback Auditions on Thursday and Friday of that week. Students not selected for Callbacks will be assigned to Featured or Ensemble roles when the final cast list is posted. **Completed audition packets must be submitted in order to audition.**

**For DANCE TEAM members: TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY 9/20-9/21 (GRADES 5-8)**

Students with prior dance and/or gymnastics training and experience are invited to audition for the Newsies Dance Team. Day 1 of auditions will be learning a piece or choreography. Day 2 of auditions will be a quick review of the choreography and then performing it and being scored by a panel of judges. Students should wear clothing that allows for movement and closed toe or dance shoes.

**ALL completed audition packets should be turned in to the front office by Monday, September 19th at 1:00PM. Completed audition packets must be submitted in order to audition.**

**CALLBACKS: THURSDAY & FRIDAY 9/22-9/23**

These auditions are for Principal and Featured Cast members with whom the production team would like to audition further. Callback Auditions will be **the same day** after school, and will include a cold reading from the script (i.e. unprepared), and a dance audition component (please dress appropriately) on the first day. On day two, the process will focus more on chemistry between actors and identifying acting choices and ability based on the provided script excerpts. Students not given a Principal role will be assigned a Featured or Ensemble role. The Callback Lists will be posted on Schoology and on the music room door on Thursday and Friday mornings of audition week. Please keep these afternoons clear if your student is planning on auditioning for a principal role; a callback audition can not be done at an alternate time.

*Auditions are performed in front of a panel consisting of the production team and school staff. Students are scored on various technical aspects of their performance using a rubric. These scores are considered in conjunction with unscorable qualities, including elements such as personality and vocal timbre which may lend themselves to specific characters in the show.*

**FOR ALL ROLES, the FINAL CAST LIST will be posted on MONDAY, 9/26 on Schoology and the Music Room door.**

**MANDATORY PARENT, CAST & CREW MEETING**

For your convenience, the production team has scheduled two separate meetings with the same content to accommodate busy schedules. Both meetings are scheduled on **Tuesday, 9/27 at 3:30 and 5:30pm**, and cast/crew members are required to attend one of these meetings with a parent/guardian.

## **SCHOOLGY**

Schoology is Dysart's Learning Management System. ***Please note this is our only method of group communication for our production. If you do not wish to check Schoology regularly, you should still be able to receive an email with updates to the address associated with your Parent Portal account once you join the group (you can confirm this in your Schoology settings). Students will be required to access Schoology regularly to access audition and rehearsal materials, and important information.***

**Instructions for Accessing Schoology on Computer** - Go to dysart.org, click the "PARENTS" header, and in the "TOOLS" section, click "SCHOOLGY." Once you are logged in with your Parent Portal credentials, click on the "GROUPS" tab, click "MY GROUPS", then click "JOIN GROUP" to enter the code below. Students will be added automatically when they submit their Audition Packets (parents must request access). Students must also gain direct access to our Group using their regular school login credentials.

**Instructions for Accessing Schoology on Mobile Device** - Download the free Schoology app. When opening the app on your smartphone for the first time, you will not create a new account. Instead, choose to login using an existing organization, and search/select Dysart. Then you will use your Parent Portal credentials to login, and follow the same steps from the "On your computer" procedures above. If your student has their own mobile device, they can access Schoology in the same manner using their regular school login credentials

**CODE FOR NEWSIES SCHOOLGY GROUP (include the dashes):  
K644-THHB-PB9JK**

## **REHEARSALS**

Table Read (or "Read-Through Rehearsals") with the full cast and crew will occur after school on **Wednesday, 9/28 AND Thursday 9/29** (from 3:15-4:30 both days). ***All cast and crew members must attend these rehearsals.***

Regular rehearsals will take place after school beginning on Friday 10/3. Not all cast members will be required to be at every rehearsal, though Principal and Featured cast may expect to rehearse frequently after school. Rehearsal schedules will be posted on the music room door, shared in Schoology, and sent home on paper. *It is the Cast and Crew members' responsibility to make sure they follow the rehearsal calendar and attend all rehearsals for which they are on the call sheet.*

**ENSEMBLE CAST** will attend the first two table reads in the first week of rehearsals, and then will rehearse only one afternoon per week (Tuesdays 3:15-4:30) until December. Daily home practice (using our resources in Schoology) is expected to help them learn and memorize their music and choreography that is learned in these rehearsals. In December through February, they will be on the call sheet more frequently, sometimes as many as four afternoons per week.

**DANCE TEAM** will attend the first two table reads in the first week of rehearsals, and then will rehearse with our Choreographer, Mrs. Lynch, on specific days through the fall; likely one or two afternoons per week. In December through February, the team will be on the call sheet more frequently, sometimes as many as four afternoons per week.

**FEATURED CAST** will attend the first two table reads in the first week of rehearsals, and then can expect to attend afternoon rehearsals on various afternoons throughout the week (3:15-4:30). Daily home practice (using our resources in Schoology) is expected to help them learn and memorize their music and

choreography that is learned in these rehearsals. In December through February, they will be on the call sheet more frequently, sometimes as many as four afternoons per week.

**PRINCIPAL CAST** will attend the first two table reads in the first week of rehearsals, and then can expect to attend afternoon rehearsals on various afternoons throughout the week (3:15-4:30). Daily home practice (using our resources in Schoology) is expected to help them learn and memorize their music and choreography that is learned in these rehearsals. It is not uncommon for Principal Cast members to be on the call sheet four days per week. Occasional morning rehearsals from 7:30-8:00 may be required.

**Production Week is February 20-25. All cast members** must attend all evening rehearsals for that week for their full duration. If you are unable to attend rehearsals and shows this week, ***please do not audition for the show***. More details about these rehearsals will be given as the premier date approaches.

## **ABSENCES**

Regular attendance at rehearsals is a key component of any production's success. If students/families cannot commit to the rehearsal schedule, they should not audition for our show. Please indicate all anticipated or regular absences on the provided Conflict Calendar. If a future absence is unavoidable, please email Mrs. Blunier at [keri.blunier@dysart.org](mailto:keri.blunier@dysart.org) as soon as possible to have them excused. Multiple excused absences may require a parent/student conference, if the cast/crew member is not keeping up with learning the show. Unexcused absences (e.g. "I forgot," "I didn't know I was supposed to be there," "I just didn't feel like going," etc.) will be addressed as follows:

- 1 unexcused absence: verbal warning
- 2 unexcused absences: conference with student & parent
- 3 unexcused absences: removal from cast/crew

Generally, students may participate in other after-school activities (e.g. clubs, sports) and split their time (50/50) with rehearsals on days where there are conflicts. Featured and Ensemble Cast and Crew members are still responsible for the material they miss. *Principal Cast members must be able to attend all rehearsals in their entirety for which they are on the call sheet.* No conflicts or time sharing is allowed for any rehearsals indicated as "No Conflict" on the rehearsal calendar for all Cast and Crew members.

## **PRODUCTION DETAILS**

### **REQUIRED FEES:**

- **Cast & Dance Team:**
  - **\$65 to Community Education due October 7th (paid online). Families with more than one sibling in the show will only be required to pay \$35 for each additional child.**
  - **\$35 Production Fee due November 4th (cash or check to Sunset Hills PTO). This includes a show script, show t-shirt, and costume/makeup.**

**Students with fees not paid in a timely fashion will be unable to participate in our production. Payment plan options may be available on a case by case basis (please speak to a member of the production team to inquire). All fees are non-refundable.**

**SCRIPTS:** All cast members will receive a script for the show. Scripts must be brought to every rehearsal. Any cast member who loses their script will be required to purchase a replacement for \$10.

**COSTUMES:** Our costumes will be purchased or rented using production fees, though some basic elements may need to be provided by each family (e.g. shoes, under clothing such as leggings, etc.). More details will be available at our mandatory parent meeting.

**MAKEUP:** All cast members must wear makeup on stage in order to balance the effects of the stage lights. Please note any skin sensitivities our hair and makeup department should be aware of.