

Producing “*How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying*” Teaches Students About Success On-Stage and Off

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There’s one thing about producing a musical that middle school students at Independent Day School-Corbett Campus (IDS-CC) would emphatically agree with: while an ambitious and irrepressible window washer named Finch may be able to succeed in business at the World Wide Wicket Co. without really trying, producing a successful musical requires months of hard work, effort and commitment.

It involves meeting challenges head on, and working through them. Memorizing lines. Perfecting dance steps. Getting into character and remembering where to stand. Managing school work and rehearsals. Working as a team by asking for help and offering help. Being a leader when needed, and allowing others to lead.

Sixth, seventh and eighth grade students who had been enrolled in the IDS-CC middle school’s musical theater elective class since the beginning of the school year performed the Frank Loesser award-winning musical “*How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying*” during the second trimester. The production involved three casts, 40 students, three teachers, numerous parents, and countless hours of preparation and rehearsal.

According to drama teacher Seth Travaglino and music teacher Barbara McBride, what made this production unique was that three separate casts performed. Each student had a leading or supportive role and a feature or minor role, as well as worked behind the scenes as part of the technical crew. “

“It was more complicated with three casts,” said Travaglino, “but doing it this way gave all of our students the opportunity to shine, in addition to teaching them about responsibility and the importance of being self-less. They had the opportunity to succeed on stage, themselves, as well as to help someone else succeed on stage. If you’re moving a prop or setting up a new scene, you have someone else’s success in your hands. That’s an awesome responsibility.”

“The life skills it takes to put on a production encompass so much and will be so valuable for the rest of their lives,” said McBride. “These skills will help them create real and lasting success no matter what field of endeavor they pursue.”

Eighth grader Michelle Newberger agrees. “One thing I learned by participating in this experience was how to work well with others,” she said. “The teamwork I learned will help me a lot in the future.”

For sixth grader Nicolas Winston, personal responsibility was the key lesson. Remembering his script and being on time were important because they affected the entire team. “In a production, every person counts and the smallest job can make the show,” said seventh grader Ben McBride.

And, of course, there’s the lesson involving what most people consider their number one fear: speaking in front of a group.

“Stage presence helped me learn how to talk in front of a group of people,” said Sara Dobish. “It helped me overcome that fear. Now I can do it confidently!”

Founded in 1968, Independent Day School-Corbett Campus is a fully accredited, independent school located in northwest Hillsborough County with 550 students from Pre-K3 through 8th grade. At IDS, all children experience learning in a nurturing and highly academic environment focused on excellence and developing a positive self-concept. IDS-CC has become recognized as an exemplary school with over 2,000 visitors observing and learning from and with IDS-CC teachers. For more information about IDS visit www.idsyves.com.