



COURTESY PHOTO

Kids helping kids thanks to 'Pride'

Cottage Grove teens raise thousands of dollars to help babies, and young patients at RiverBend

The curtain will rise soon for Cottage Grove High School's annual Lion Pride Pageant, a popular and much-anticipated fundraiser for Children's Miracle Network. For months, students have been practicing their opening dance number and skits for Lion Pride Pageant — The Musical, which will open at 7 p.m. on Saturday, April 27.

"It's hilarious," said Lorri

Hanson, the pageant's co-advvisor. And touching, too, she added, noting the segment of the show when contestants appear with their parents.

Over the past 23 years, Cottage Grove High School students have raised more than \$300,000 for Children's Miracle Network.

Children's Miracle Network is a program of the PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center Foundation. It helps fund services and treatments for sick and injured children at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend in Springfield. All funds raised by the pageants are donated to Children's Miracle Network, which then gives 10 percent of the proceeds back to each school for student-health programs.

Cottage Grove is among 16 area high schools partic-

ipating in the Foundation's Kids Helping Kids program, which includes a tour of RiverBend's pediatrics floor and neonatal intensive care unit. Students in the program have raised \$6.3 million for Children's Miracle Network since the first pageant was staged in the 1992-1993 school year.

"Kids Helping Kids, a group of enthusiastic, compassionate teens, is the single-largest donor to our local Children's Miracle Network," said Alexa Sharps, the Foundation's pediatric program director of development. "The money they raise enables babies and kids in our region to get specialized treatment and services closer to home at RiverBend, instead of having to travel to Portland or San Francisco."

Very Little Theater's 'Hello, Dolly!' continues this weekend

The Very Little Theatre continues its landmark 90th season with one of Broadway's classic musicals, "Hello, Dolly!" With lyrics and music by Jerry Herman and the book by Michael Stewart, the musical follows the story of Dolly Gallagher Levi, a strong-willed matchmaker, as she travels to Yonkers, New York, to find a match for the miserly, well-known, unmarried, half-a-millionaire Horace Vandergelder. In doing so she persuades his niece, his niece's intended, and Horace's two clerks to travel to New York City and find romance.

"Hello, Dolly!" was first produced on Broadway in 1964, winning 10 Tony Awards, including Best Musical. This set a record, which the musical held for 37 years. The show's Original Cast album was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2002. The show has become one

of the most enduring musical theater hits, with four Broadway revivals and international success. It was also made into the 1969 film, which won three Academy Awards.

VLT director Gerald Walters says "Hello, Dolly!" is a family friendly musical that will keep an audience laughing and entertained from beginning to end."

The VLT production features: Sue Schroeder-White as Dolly Gallagher Levi; Michael P. Watkins as Horace Vandergelder; Cody Mendonca as Cornelius Hackl; Sheldon Hall as Barnaby Tucker; Josie Thomas as Irene Molly; Kenady Conforth as Minnie Fay; Lily LaChapelle as Ermengarde; Chad Lowe as Ambrose Kemper; Becky Major Hope as Ernestina Money; and Michael Walker as Rudolph Reisenweber. The ensemble cast includes: Rob Roberts, Donovan Seitzinger, Jim Arscott, Josh

ua Sayre, Matt Arscott, Sasha Berenstein, Timothy Bouwhuis, Darcy Rust, Mandy Conforth, Tessa Donangaphaivong, Amber Hagen, Colleen Gaskill, Hailey Eckhart, Lois Stark and Laura Gage-Hunt.

Music director is Chris Holt, with Keri Davis serving as vocal director. Set design is by Michael Walker and costume design is by Nancy Boyett.

Performances, which began March 29, continue this Thursday through Saturday, April 11-13. Curtain time is 7:30 p.m. (except for the 2 p.m. Sunday matinees.) Adult tickets are \$25; seniors and students are \$21; Thursday performances are \$21 for everyone.

Tickets are available through the Box Office from 1:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Wednesday through Saturday, by calling 541-344-7751 or online at TheVLT.com.

Poet Laureate reschedules visit to CG

Oregon's Poet Laureate, Kim Stafford, will visit Cottage Grove April 16 for a day of speaking, reading and discussion with the town's youth, writers and lovers of literature.

Stafford was named the state's ninth poet laureate by Gov. Kate Brown in 2018, a role which fosters the art of poetry, encourages literacy and learning, addresses central issues relating to humanities and heritage, and reflects on public life in Oregon.

"Poetry is our native language," he said. "We begin with imaginative experiments as children, and lyric language can be a realm of delight throughout life. For adults and communities, poetry can help us be more open to new ideas, emotionally

informed, and buoyant in responding to challenges. In a society of diverse backgrounds and perspectives, poetry builds community."

Stafford was born and grew up in Oregon. He is the author of a dozen books of poetry and prose and edited half a dozen others. His book, "Having Everything Right: Essays of Place," won a citation for excellence from the Western States Book Awards in 1986.

Stafford has received creative writing fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Governor's Arts Award, and the Steward Holbrook Award from Literary Arts for his contributions to Oregon's literary culture. His work also has been featured on National

Public Radio.

Stafford holds a Ph.D. in medieval literature from the University of Oregon, and has worked as a printer, photographer, oral historian, editor and visiting writer at a host of colleges and schools, and also offered writing workshops in Italy, Scotland and Bhutan. He lives in Portland, Oregon, with his wife and children.

Stafford's itinerary in Cottage Grove will include meeting with high school students from 9 to 11 a.m., a no-host writers' group lunch at the Brew Station from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., a visit to London School from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m., and finally a reading from his work at 7 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church.

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'Sound of Music' continues at Cottage Theatre this weekend



COURTESY PHOTO

Cast members portraying the von Trapp family in *The Sound of Music*

Cottage Theatre's spring musical this year is *The Sound of Music*, the inspirational story of Maria von Trapp. Winner of the 1959 Tony Award for Best Musical, *The Sound of Music* features music by Richard Rodgers and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II. The book, by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse, is inspired by the Trapp Family Singers by Maria Augusta Trapp. This iconic musical will be onstage for four weekends at Cottage Theatre beginning Friday, April 5.

The story behind *The Sound of Music* is well-known thanks to the 1965 movie version starring Julie Andrews. In 1930s Austria, a troublesome postulant named Maria proves too high-spirited for the discipline of religious life, so the Mother Abbess sends her away to care for the children of a widowed naval Captain. As Maria's world turns upside down, she rises to the challenge of befriending the seven youngsters, who have driven away countless prior governesses. Maria's generosity of spirit and her love of music gradually win the children's, and eventually the Captain's, affections. When Austria is invaded by the Nazis, the family flees over the mountains to Switzerland, providing the thrilling finale to this inspirational story.

Cottage Theatre's production of *The Sound of Music* is di-

rected by Joel Ibáñez, with music direction by Chris King and choreography by Janet Rust. Costume design is by Rhonda Turnquist, set design by Tony Rust, and lighting design by Amanda Ferguson. The production stars Sabrina Gross as Maria and Nathan Blakely as Captain Georg von Trapp. The seven von Trapp children are played by Hanna Foshay (Liesl), Maia Wilhour (Friedrich), Kira Carver (Louisa), Nicole Wilhour (Brigitta), William Blakely (Kurt), Audriahna Jones (Marta), and Zoe Goings (Gretl). Other featured actors include Tracy Nygard (Mother Abbess), Brittany Dreier (Elsa Schraeder), Blake Nelson (Max Detweiler), and Oshen Parris-Austin (Rolf).

The Sound of Music runs for four weekends at Cottage Theatre from April 5-28. Performances are Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings at 8 p.m., and Sunday afternoons at 2:30 p.m. There is no performance on Easter Sunday, April 21.

Tickets are available online at www.cottagetheatre.org, by phone at 541-942-8001, or in person at the Cottage Theatre Box Office, 700 Village Drive, Cottage Grove. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$15 for youth (age 6-18). Box Office hours are Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and one hour before performances.

All seating is reserved. Advanced purchase for seating is recommended.

The Sound of Music will be the final production in Cottage Theatre's current auditorium. The theatre will be closing temporarily in May for a major remodeling project that will add 50 seats. A variety of technical and safety features will also be upgraded. Cottage Theatre will resume its 2019 season in October with *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (abridged).

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