

# Play explores teen issues



Jessica Selby-Daily Times

Students at Coventry High School rehearse the play "Reviving Ophelia". The play is socially relevant to teens these days since it deals with problems most kids face. The play will run Wednesday through Friday this week.

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**COVENTRY** — Growing up overweight, being in an abusive relationship, finding out that you are adopted, faced with peer pressure and battling with faith, are just a few of the struggles that the girls in "Reviving Ophelia" are faced with.

Each of the girls will present their struggles with those challenges in the spring play that the drama students will be presenting this week at Coventry High School.

Myke Wilkinson, the drama instructor at Coventry High School, who is also the director of the school plays, selected the production "Reviving Ophelia," which is based on the book by Mary Bray Pipher, a physiologist.

Wilkinson said that Pipher details her work with various adolescent girls that fall prey to the many issues faced by youngsters in society in her book. He said that he felt the book, which details why American adolescent girls are falling prey to things like

depression, eating disorders, suicide attempts, and dangerously low self-esteem, was very appropriate for the times.

The girls, too, who will be acting out the roles of the girls from the pages of the book, said that the issues are "very relevant to today's times."

"Each one of the girls have their own difficult problems and I think that no matter who you are if you are in the audience watching this, you will be able to relate to one of us because the problems that each of them have are very relatable," Erika Rethorn, one of the student actors in the play said.

Preparations for the production began months ago with auditions. Wilkinson said that close to 80 students from the high school auditioned for the ten spots that he had for this production. Selecting those final ten, he said, is never an easy process, but in the end Sara Kingsborough, a regular on the stage at the school, Debbie Ceroni, Erika Rethorn, Jodie Desrosiers, the first freshman to ever be cast for the

lead role, Zach Cocroft, Kyrysta Ryan, Nina Morelli, Justine Ferrara, Mike Boisvert, Mathew Prince and Ryan Vigneau were cast for the parts. He said that he had "so many students with such talent" he even decided to add another character to the play to accommodate those that he felt "really should be" in this production.

Once the cast was selected, he said that those students have been working tirelessly to learn their lines, create the set and props that will be used in the performance, and rehearse the production. The student actors said that one of the real challenges for this production is that the actors never leave the stage. In fact, they said, even costume changes occur right on the stage.

This play is also somewhat less elaborate than what this theatre group typically delivers. The only backdrop to the scenes acted out by the students are hand-made coat rack type objects that have been designed to resemble trees and small brown cubicles on

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# Coventry High play will also be performed for the Spring Theater Festival this weekend

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wheels, all of which never leave the stage.

Wilkinson and the students explained that the design had to be such because the students will be delivering a performance of their rendition of the production for the Spring Theatre Festival being held this weekend at Westerly High School. Wilkinson said that the festival plays can only be one hour long complete with set up. Because of that, he said, there is no way that the students could

have ever had as elaborate a set as they have had in the past.

Props set and other objects, he said, have little relevance in terms of delivering a good performance anyway. That, he said, all comes down to the acting and he said he is extremely confident in the group of actors that he has cast for this production.

"This is a really talented group of students here and they all work very hard for these performances," Wilkinson said. "Our audiences from past shows know, this is not just your typical high school per-

formance."

Anyone interested in catching the Coventry High School rendition of the book which held the number one spot on the New York Times bestseller list for several weeks can do so this week. The play will be presented on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evening at 7 p.m. at Coventry High School. Tickets to the play will be sold at the door to the auditorium.

Anyone with questions should call Coventry High School at 822-9499 during school hours.