

# The Miracle Worker



Jessica Boisclair Daily Times

"The Miracle Worker" is the story of Anne Sullivan (played by Isabella Regine, far right), who comes to live with Helen Keller and teaches her to overcome her handicaps and communicate with the world around her.

## CHS Drama telling a classic success story

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COVENTRY— The story of Helen Keller is known throughout the world and students at Coventry High School will perform their fall play, *The Miracle Worker*, for parents, friends and drama fans alike.

The *Miracle Worker* is a famous movie and Broadway play about Helen Keller, a blind, deaf and mute southern girl. Her parents receive a young girl named Anne Sullivan, who works with Keller and teaches her ways to communicate with world.

"I chose this play because I always knew when I decided to teach high school that this was one play I would do," said Coventry High School Drama Program Director Myke Wilkinson. "I was just feeling the right time, the right talent pool perhaps. She's [Helen Keller] one of the most inspirational, if not the most inspirational, women in America."

The play, which takes place during the Civil War, portrays conflict as a northern girl is brought into the home of a southern family to help

tutor their daughter.

He explained that approximately 50 students tried out for the fall play, and only 18 were chosen to perform.

The students chosen range from freshmen to seniors, veterans to newcomers.

Wilkinson said typically the main roles of the play are played by students who have performed in past plays, but this year, the role of Anne

Sullivan, Keller's tutor, is played by freshman Isabella Regine.

"When she tried out, I didn't know who she was to be frank," he said. "I knew her brother from 10 years ago but I thought she was a senior, but her acting was so convincing for this part. Only once before have I casted a freshman for a main part."

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# Miracle worker hits stage tonight

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Regina said prior to getting the part of Sullivan, she "had no confidence but I tried out and got the part and I just love the drama family."

Sophomore Jonathan Hart said he tried out for the play last year but did not make it.

"When I was little I acted and I loved it and wanted to join in high school," he added. "I didn't make it as a freshman but I joined crew and this year I had to try out and I made it."

Veteran performer, sophomore Paige Costigan, explained that after working on *Rent* last year with Wilkinson, she saw how hard he pushed the students to be their best.

"And I loved how the drama family is crazy and weird," she laughed. "We're like a family."

During the past four years, Wilkinson said, the drama club has performed plays such as "Hairspray," "Dracula," "Rent" and "Almost, Maine."

"I'm trying to give my students as much experience in different genres," he said.

This year, the students were given an extra week to rehearse for *The Miracle Worker*, because of the difficult task of using southern accents throughout the play.

He said the students began practicing a week after school started in September.

"There are a lot of scenes with Southern accents so the students have had to work hard to ensure they could do those correctly," he reiterated.

Although the students worked extremely hard throughout the eight weeks, many of them said they would not change a thing.

"With all the hours Mr. Wilkinson demands we act like professional actors," said junior Nick Ianiero. "We're not treated like students or amateurs. It's hard but it's definitely rewarding and we've come so far. I'm speechless on how everything came together."

Junior Magaera Polk, who agreed with Ianiero, said if she had not tried out for drama she would probably be doing no extra-curricular activities. Even though



Tonight through Saturday night the Coventry Drama Department will present "The Miracle Worker" with shows beginning at 7 p.m.



it's exhausting, she added, it's "rewarding."

"We spend a lot of time together during 'hell week' and even though we get on each others nerves we always come back and we love each other," said junior Rebecca Green.

Because the play takes place in the 1880s, Wilkinson was able to receive donations from parents to make the set more realistic.

He said many parents who live in Coventry had old furniture tucked away

in barns and attics, which they donated towards the show.

The costumes, he said, were rented from The University of Rhode Island's theatre department as a way to save the high school money.

"The Miracle Worker" can be seen in the Coventry High School auditorium tonight, Nov. 14, Friday, Nov. 15 and Saturday, Nov. 16 at 7 p.m.

Doors open at 6 p.m.; tickets are available an hour before show time for \$10.