

They're off to see the wizard and they hope you are too

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COVENTRY — They weren't in Kansas, but it didn't appear that they were in Western Coventry anymore either.

A select group of students, along with the help and guidance of their teachers, administrators and parents, transformed the cafeteria at Western Coventry Elementary School from a lunch room to, the Land of Oz.

There was a yellow brick road, an emerald city, a witch with ruby slippers on and a little dog named Toto too — all this materialized at the school yesterday afternoon.

The drama club, an after school extra curricular club supported through the PTA, delivered their rendition of the renowned story of the Wizard of Oz.

Every year the club forms after Christmas break. Different teachers take on the role of director, select a play and audition students interested in joining the club.

This year close to 30 students from third and fourth grade auditioned for roles. All of the students were assigned parts and provided their lines.

Together the group met twice a

week after school since January to rehearse their lines, run through the play and help to prepare for the big day.

Carla Paquet, a fourth grade teacher at Western Coventry School, directed the play with Anna Fitzgerald, a second grade teacher at the school, Andi Mellor, the retired school nurse, and Sherri Arnold, Western's reading instructional assistant.

Each person offered something different to the play, Paquet said, but that is the way it has to be because the club is not funded through the school, it is sponsored by

Hannah Dazzeo
Student

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the PTA. Because the funds are limited, she said, everyone from the community helps out to support the program and to help continue to make it successful.

"The costumes were all made or purchased by parents," Paquet said. "The props were made by our teachers. Our art teacher made the house, our music teacher helped with the singing, everyone, absolutely everyone is a part of making this club's plays a hit.

"It's like all you have to do is ask and our people are right there to help — it really is wonderful," she said.



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Kayla Murray, a third grader, is a member of the Lollipop Guild in Western Coventry Elementary School's Wizard of Oz.

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Audrey Buffi performs as Dorothy and Lauren Gil performs as Toto alongside their third and fourth grade schoolmates in Western Coventry Elementary School's version of the Wizard of Oz yesterday. Additional performances will be given today, tonight and Thursday night.

'Oz' a group effort for school

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The performance was just as wonderful, she said. The students worked extremely hard on this show, coming for hours every week to perfect their performance.

The students delivered a performance yesterday afternoon and this morning to their peers and will repeat do a repeat Tuesday and Thursday evening for their parents.

The students all said they were "very excited" about the show.

"There is a lot of pressure to learn and remember your lines because you want to get them right, but all of our friends were doing it too so

it was fun at the same time," said Hannah Dazzeo, who played the role of one of the tornadoes in the play.

On Monday, the students who were in the audience applauded the performance. They laughed when the trees threw apples into the audience, they cheered when tin man walked and the scarecrow sang and they giggled when the house fell on the wicked witch.

"We choose this play because it is so known to the kids and we knew that all of the children no matter what grade level would be able to relate," Paquet said. "And that is important because we are always trying to encourage the arts into our curriculum."