



Tony Sanders, Chief Executive Officer

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 11, 2019

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District Actors Dance to the Beat with Summer 'Hairspray' Production

Performances scheduled for July 18-20 at Larkin H.S.



ELGIN – High school students from across School District U-46 came together this summer to participate in the Summer Theatre production of “Hairspray.” The musical opens at 7 p.m. on Thursday, July 18 in the auditorium at Larkin High School. Performances will continue through the weekend.

Larkin graduate Bella Cwik returns to the stage in the lead role of Tracy Turnblad. Cwik competed in the IHSA State Theatre finals in poetry reading and dramatic duet acting. She will be attending New York University’s theatre program this fall.



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The main cast is rounded out by Bartlett graduate Luis Martinez performing as Link Larsen, Elgin rising junior Arianna Mendez portraying Penny Pingleton, Larkin graduate Jeremiah Hubbard as Seaweed J. Stubbs, South Elgin graduate Marcus Pallan as Edna Turnblad, Streamwood rising junior Joshua Lindahl as Wilbur Turnblad, and South Elgin rising junior Nicholas Domschke as Corny Collins.

Many of the actors in lead roles and the ensemble cast were part of Bartlett High School's and Streamwood High School's Group Interpretation theatrical productions that were presented at the IHSA Group Interpretation State Competition in March.

Director Jennifer Prise and Musical Director Meagan Zahora chose the musical for its themes and message of racial equality that are still relevant and applicable to today's society, as well as the call for a racially diverse cast, which is also representative of U-46's student population. Students were thrilled when they learned that "Hairspray" was to be the summer production.

The Summer Theatre program has grown exponentially these past four years, said Prise.

Karen Brhel of South Elgin High School, Hector Hernandez of Streamwood High School, and Michael Miserendino of Bartlett High School started the program in the summer of 2016 with the production of "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" performed at the Steel Beam Theatre in St. Charles.

Approximately 30 students were involved with the production in its inaugural year.

In the summer of 2017, the team produced "Almost, Maine" and performed it at Bartlett High School. In the summer of 2018, the team produced "Les Miserables," and performed it at Larkin High School.



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Now with "Hairspray," the program has expanded to involving more than 110 students in the cast, crew, and pit.

"Students are thrilled to be participating in the summer musical, and we saw a record number of students audition for the production," said Priese. "We're hoping that the momentum will continue for years to come."

- **Who:** School District U-46 Summer Theatre
- **What:** "Hairspray"
- **Where:** Larkin High School Auditorium, 1475 Larkin Ave., Elgin
- **When:** 7 p.m. on Thursday, July 18, Friday, July 19 and Saturday, July 20, with a matinee performance at noon on Saturday, July 20
- **Tickets:** Seating is general admission. Tickets are \$10 and are available at the door. The box office will open 30 minutes before each performance.
- **For more information:** The Facebook event can be found [here](#).

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School District U-46 serves families in 11 communities: Bartlett, Elgin, Hanover Park, South Elgin, Streamwood and Wayne, as well as portions of Carol Stream, Hoffman Estates, St. Charles, Schaumburg, and West Chicago. In total, the District encompasses 90 square miles within the Fox River Valley and includes communities within Cook, DuPage and Kane counties. Nearly 39,000 pre-K through twelfth graders attend the 57 District schools and programs. To learn more, visit the U-46 [website](#), or like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).