

**Children's Theatre of Winnetka
620 Lincoln Avenue
Winnetka, Illinois 60093**

September 2010

Dear Auditioning Actors and Parents:

This letter will explain some of the history, auditioning and casting policies and rules of the Children's Theatre of Winnetka.

Children's Theatre of Winnetka was founded at the Winnetka Community House in 1974, with the intent to provide an overall theater experience for the children of New Trier Township. Auditions are open to all New Trier Township children in grades 4-8. Our goals remain the same: 1) we teach all aspects of theater arts - producing, directing, acting, singing, dancing, lighting, sound, stage management, crewmanship, props, make-up, special effects, ushering and other disciplines which are needed to create a show; 2) we produce two shows a year that are aimed at appealing to young audiences; and 3) we work to maintain a high standard of professionalism. Since 1974, our shows have ranged from fairy tales to modern classics to Broadway musicals. Over the years our popularity has grown - both among the children who wish to be in our casts and on our crews and among the adults who seek to lend us their talents. Our Board is an all-volunteer, working board.

Auditions and callbacks are CLOSED which means all non-auditioning children and parents **may not** watch auditions. We have instituted this policy to provide your child with the privacy needed to be comfortable and the opportunity to be their creative best. Please feel free to wait for your child in the lobby area of the Community House or return home until your child calls for pick up when their audition is completed. Pay phones are available throughout the Community House. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

The casting committee consists of the directors of the production, plus any other production staff that the directors wish to include. Normally, the choreographer and the vocal coach are included. At least one casting committee member must be a Board member. Casting is by consensus, with the Director having the final say in case there is no consensus. When there are co-directors, consensus must be reached.

With the increased popularity of our productions, the number of children auditioning has risen enormously. It has been necessary for the Board to constantly review casting policies and to establish a casting philosophy. Rules of thumb have been established over the years, some of which are Board policy and some of which are common sense, to aid casting committees in cases where there are a great many talented children available.

BOARD POLICY:

1. The philosophy of the Children's Theatre is that we will cast the most talented child for each role.
2. Board members' children and children of non-board members who are working on the production will be called back as a matter of courtesy.
3. The Director(s) must have the freedom to choose those children that they deem most fit to play all acting roles.
4. When, and only when, talent is equal, a Board member's child will be chosen over a non-Board member's child.
5. All members of a casting committee must keep these policies in mind while casting.

COMMON SENSE:

- 1. The choreographer is the best judge of dancers.
- 2. The vocal coach is the best judge of singers.
- 3. The Director(s) is the best judge of actors.
- 4. A grading system will be used to break ties.

All children who try out are graded on acting, singing and dancing. In each case, grading is subjective. There is no scientific way to grade these talents. Directors frequently have pre-conceived ideas of how they want the characters to look, act and sound; therefore, it is entirely possible that a child with exceptional talent might be turned away because he or she does not fit the Director's concept. Frequently, children who are not cast in one production will win a part in the next one (based upon the different needs of that show.)

An important factor that enters into casting is a child's size. Every show has different size requirements and the Directors select their leading characters first and build their cast around them to create a believable cast. For example, a boy might be "born to play" the part of the father, but if he is no taller than the actor selected to play his son, he will not work out as that character. The audience would not believe him in the part. By the same token, Annie cannot be taller than Daddy Warbucks, and so on. Sometimes a child cannot be cast because of size, despite enormous talent. Other times children of lesser talent must be cast because of their size-appropriateness, in order to make the play believable to the audiences.

Our crew system is designed to allow those children who are not cast and those who are interested in developing backstage skills to be involved in its actual production. It would be very easy to use adults as crew, but we have chosen to use children for all crews and to teach backstage disciplines as well as onstage ones. We are proud of our crew system. We always have some children who do not wish to act but only to do crew and we make every attempt to give them their first choice of crews. Our goal in all productions is to give crewmembers as much responsibility as possible.

CTW is a non-profit, volunteer organization. Our producers, directors, vocal coaches, choreographers, stage managers, etc. all donate their time for the love of Children's Theatre. We pay only our musicians, adult sound crew and professional lighting crew.

Scholarships are available for the production fee. Call Jack Austin at 312.476.6902. All inquiries and scholarships are kept confidential.

We request that parents of cast members participate in some capacity during the show. There are a variety of opportunities that will fit both your interests and time constraints. A parent meeting will be held after casting is complete to describe these opportunities to you. Thank you for taking the time to read this and thank you for your children!

THE BOARD OF THE CHILDREN'S THEATRE OF WINNETKA

The "Good News" Production Team

Directors

Cathy Hirschmann
 Toby Nicholson
 Rose Colella – Music Director

Producers

Julie Africk
 Laura Egerter
 Kelly Horne

NOTE: THE CAST LIST WILL BE POSTED ON OUR WEBSITE BY 5:00 PM AT THE LATEST ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4TH AND STAY UP FOR SEVERAL DAYS.

GIRLS AUDITION FORM – GIRLS AUDITION FORM – GIRLS AUDITION FORM
Please Bring a Recent Photo which will not be Returned

CHILDREN’S THEATRE OF WINNETKA AUDITION FORM – “GOOD NEWS”

ACT DANCE SING
DO NOT WRITE ABOVE THIS LINE

NAME: _____

PARENT’S EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Street and Number Village Zip Code

PHONE: _____ **PARENT’S CELL PHONE:** _____

SCHOOL: _____ **GRADE:** _____ **AGE:** _____ **HEIGHT:** _____

1. Our rehearsals will be EVERY Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday and some Fridays. Most Saturday rehearsals will be in the morning. PLEASE DO NOT AUDITION IF YOU CANNOT REHEARSE ON TUESDAY, THURSDAY AND SATURDAY.

Please circle times with which you MAY have a conflict:

Tuesday after school - Thursday after school - Saturday AM - Friday after school
(Very limited)

2. I am interested in (Circle ALL in which you are interested)

ACTING SINGING DANCING TAP DANCING GYMNASTICS CREW

3. I have experience in the following:

ACTING _____

SINGING _____

DANCING _____

TAP DANCING _____

GYMNASTICS _____

CREW OR TECHNICAL _____

4. Have you ever auditioned for a Children’s Theatre of Winnetka production?

YES _____ **NO** _____

If YES, which show(s)? _____

5. Have you ever been cast in a Children’s Theatre of Winnetka production?

YES _____ **NO** _____

If YES, which show(s)? _____

IF YOU ARE CAST, THERE WILL BE A PRODUCTION FEE OF \$300.00

(Confidential scholarships are available)

If you are interested in **CREW**, complete question #6. Signing up for CREW will not increase or decrease your chances of being cast. Sign up if you really want to CREW.

6. Please circle below any crews that you would be interested in working on, even if you would rather be in the cast. Cast members are selected before crew assignments are made. Indicate your 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices. Some areas may not be available for this show. You will be notified in a few weeks if you have been selected for CREW.

Set Painting Set Construction Stage Crew Props
Sound Ushers Make-Up Lighting Special Effects

IF YOU ARE SELECTED TO CREW, THERE IS A PRODUCTION FEE OF \$25.00

BOYS AUDITION FORM – BOYS AUDITION FORM – BOYS AUDITION FORM
Please Bring a Recent Photo which will not be Returned

CHILDREN’S THEATRE OF WINNETKA AUDITION FORM – “GOOD NEWS”

ACT DANCE SING
 DO NOT WRITE ABOVE THIS LINE

NAME: _____
PARENT’S EMAIL ADDRESS: _____
ADDRESS: _____
Street and Number Village Zip Code
PHONE: _____ **PARENT’S CELL PHONE:** _____
SCHOOL: _____ **GRADE:** _____ **AGE:** _____ **HEIGHT:** _____

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SINGING _____
DANCING _____
TAP DANCING _____
GYMNASTICS _____
CREW OR TECHNICAL _____

4. Have you ever auditioned for a Children’s Theatre of Winnetka production?
 YES _____ NO _____

If YES, which shows? _____

5. Have you ever been cast in a Children’s Theatre of Winnetka production?
 YES _____ NO _____

If YES, which show(s)? _____

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CHILDREN'S THEATRE OF WINNETKA
PARENT AND CHILD COMMITMENT INFORMATION

August 2010

Rules for participation in "GOOD NEWS!":

1. All children will treat each other with respect and kindness. There will be no harassing or teasing of other children or adults.
2. All cast members will arrive on time for rehearsals. If ill, the parent must call Cathy Hirschmann at (847) 767-2709 before 3:00 weekdays, 7:30 AM Saturdays.
3. Pre-arranged absences such as family travel or special events must be approved by Cathy Hirschmann immediately after the Parent Meeting. No pre-arranged absences are allowed after Spring Break.
4. Children must obey the adults in charge of the show or working on the show and show respect for all adults that they come in contact with. The adults are all volunteers who do this for the love of children and the theater.
5. Parents should pick up children promptly after rehearsals. Once a rehearsal is over, children are no longer a responsibility of CTW.

For insurance purposes, we are required to have a signed parental permission release before your child can participate in a CTW Production at the Winnetka Community House. These forms will be handed out at the Parents Meeting.

Additionally, your child, as a cast or crew member of "GOOD NEWS!", must agree to abide by the rules shown above, and understand that if he or she breaks the rules, he or she may be expelled from either the cast or crew.

Children's Theatre of Winnetka
PARENT PERMISSION FORM

Dear Parents of Cast Members of "GOOD NEWS!":

For insurance purposes we are required to have a signed parental permission release before your child can participate in a CTW Production at the Winnetka Community House.

Please read the following carefully and return the bottom portion NOW or at the next rehearsal.

My child and I understand that all rehearsals should be attended. **Pre-arranged absences such as family trips must be approved by Cathy Hirschmann immediately after the Parent Meeting. No pre-arranged absences are allowed after Spring Break including Tech week and for all performances.** I agree to notify Cathy Hirschmann (847-767-2709) if my child is ill by 3 PM on weekdays and 7:30 AM on Saturdays.

I am enclosing the **Production Fee of \$300**, which I understand includes a logo T-shirt for my child, and his/her free admission to the cast party after the final performance.

(Scholarships are available. Call Jack Austin 847-446-6902. All inquiries are confidential.)

(Please make check payable to the **Children's Theatre of Winnetka**).

-----**Tear and return**-----

I give my permission to my child _____
to participate in the Children's Theatre of Winnetka's production of **"GOOD NEWS!"**

A **"GOOD NEWS!" Logo T-Shirt** is included in your production fee.

T-shirt size (Circle One) Adult **S M L XL** Youth Large

Please order me _____ extra T-shirts at \$15 each, size _____

PARENTS' NAMES _____

PARENTS' ADDRESS _____

PARENTS' HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____

PARENTS' CELL PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

My child and I have or will discuss the **importance of being at every rehearsal** as well as the **need to maintain their best behavior** at all times and abide by all the guidelines as stated in the rehearsal schedule. Children or adults who are abusive to others in the show may be removed from the cast.

PARENT'S SIGNATURE _____

Please sign and return with your **\$300** check NOW . Thank you.

(Scholarships are available. Call Jack Austin 847-446-6902. All inquiries are confidential.)