

PRESENTED BY



It's a
Wonderful
CHRISTMAS CAROL

Created By Joel Bennett
Story by Joel Bennett and Jeff Cook
Written by Jeff Cook

'It's A Wonderful Life' was based on the story 'The Greatest Gift' by Philip Van Doren Stern, which story is the exclusive property of The Greatest Gift Corporation. This production is presented with the permission of The Greatest Gift Corporation, which is not responsible for, and does not endorse, the production's content.

NOVEMBER 14-30
WOODSTOCK OPERA HOUSE

THEATRE 121

PRESENTS

It's a Wonderful Christmas Carol

Created by Joel Bennett
Story by Joel Bennett & Jeff Cook
Written by Jeff Cook

Produced by
KAREN COOK

Technical Directed by
ERIK FREIMAN

Stage Managed by
SPENCER WHITE

Directed by
JOEL BENNETT &
JEFF COOK

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**ANY VIDEO AND/OR AUDIO RECORDING OF THIS PRODUCTION IS
STRICTLY PROHIBITED.**

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The story of *It's A Wonderful Christmas Carol* begins with a friendship. We first met in a production of *Guys and Dolls* in 2012 and it was quickly apparent that we were kindred spirits, with a shared sense of humor and a fondness for film. On our first project together, *Upstaged The Series*, we discovered that we could meld those passions to create entertainment that appealed to audiences across the spectrum. A partnership was born.

Then came an experiment which began when Joel viewed *It's A Wonderful Life* for the first time and wondered what became of Henry Potter at the end, and if there was any chance that he could be redeemed. It seemed a fun exercise in creativity, and we spent many hours talking about Potter, and what his life might have been like, what his connections to Bedford Falls were, and how much like Ebenezer Scrooge he was. An idea was born.

Tonight, we present the result of that exercise, six years in the making. *It's A Wonderful Christmas Carol* is a story steeped in the world of Bedford Falls, peopled by characters both familiar and new, filled with the humor, drama, pathos and, ultimately, the message of hope imbued in the original holiday classic.

Our thanks go out to the board of Theatre 121, who took a chance on a new, world premiere play. This production utilizes to the fullest the Woodstock Opera House's recent audio and video upgrades, employed to immerse audiences in the worlds we've borrowed from Frank Capra and Charles Dickens. Our partnership with the Opera House's dedicated, helpful staff has been invaluable, as has the commitment and creativity of the talented cast, crew and production staff who bring this story to life. We are grateful to them all, as well as to you, the audience, for supporting local theatre at a time when every dollar is stretched to the fullest. Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts.

Enjoy the show!

Jeff and Joel

CAST

(Alphabetical Order)

Uncle Billy/Caldwell/Patient	CHRIS BROUTON
Molly Potter/Irene Bailey	NORA BROWN
Young Henry Potter/Tommy	RAFAEL CARRION
Jennings	DAVID GASIOR
Henry Potter	FRANK GAUGHAN
Wendy Pettit.....	SIERRA GODDARD
John Potter/Peter Bailey/George Bailey	J. THOMAS GRAF
Teen Wendy Pettit.....	LUCY HAGEN
Katherine Bailey/Mary Bailey	LAUREN KRELLE
Teen Henry Potter	JOSHUA MOLDOVAN
Young Peter Bailey/Young Petey Bailey.....	NOLAN PAULSON
Teen Peter Bailey.....	ELIJAH PIERCE
Zuzu/Youth Understudy	FAYE RADENI
Walter Miller	SKYE SCHOEN
Adult Henry Potter	JAKE SEELYE

This production is presented as a 2 Act Play with a 15 minute intermission.

Please be aware that this show does use strobe lighting, smoke, loud sound effects and images of war.

RUN TIME IS APPROXIMATELY 2 HOURS

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Woodstock North High School

PRODUCTION STAFF

Directors	JOEL BENNETT, JEFF COOK
Stage Manager	SPENCER WHITE
Assistant Stage Manager	AMANDA UTTECH
Technical Director	ERIK FREIMAN
Producer	KAREN COOK
Marketing	MARISA SNOOK
Scenic Design	BILLY SEGER
Properties Design	JUSTIN CHARLES
Master Carpenter	JASON BLUMENTHAL
Set Dressing	BILLY SEGER, JUSTIN CHARLES
Scenic Artist/Set Painter	LISA DAWSON
Set Painting Assistants	FRIENDS OF THEATRE 121
Costume Design	KRISTI GEGGIE
Costume Assistant	JOANN MAY
Wig & Make-Up Design	RACHEL CAHILL-NEDZA
Lighting Design	DAN FRANK
Sound Design	JOEL BENNETT
LED Wall Design	STEVE FIRAK
Original Music Composition	STEVE FIRAK
Light, Sound, VX Board Technicians	WOODSTOCK OPERA HOUSE STAFF
Fight Choreographer	LAUREN KRELLE
Production Crew	FRIENDS OF THEATRE 121
Load-In Crew	CAST, STAFF, FRIENDS OF THEATRE 121
Publicity & Production Photographer	CHRISTY STURM
Headshot Photographer	ZERO SNOOK
Publicity Videos & Videographer	FINE LINE PRODUCTIONS
Poster Design	MARISA SNOOK
Program Coordinators ...	KAREN COOK, MARISA SNOOK, KELSEY WAUGHON
Theatre 121 Board Liaison	TRACY PARR

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WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST



Chris Brouton (he/him) - Uncle Billy/Caldwell/Patient: Chris is excited to be a part of this world premiere holiday show. Chris last appeared on this stage in *A Few Good Men* a couple of years ago. Some of his more recent shows at a variety of theaters include roles in *Clue* as Murdered Cop, and *And Then There Were None* as the Butler, Mr. Rodgers. Chris's life includes being a Dog Dad to Poppy and his passionate love for his amazing wife, Julie. Enjoy the show.



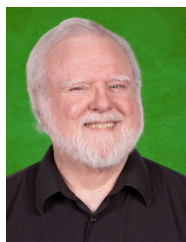
Nora Brown (she/her) - Molly Potter/Irene Bailey: Nora is thrilled to be back on stage for the debut of a truly magical show. She was last seen in *The Three Musketeers* (Adele) and her first show ever was *Annie* (Orphan) back in 2006. Other favorite credits include *Groundhog Day: The Musical* (Doris), *Steel Magnolias* (Annelle), *Mamma Mia!* (Ensemble), and *Cabaret* (Kit Kat Club Girl). She would like to thank the production team and the cast for making the start of this holiday season something truly special.



Rafael Carrion (he/him) - Young Henry Potter/Tommy Bailey: Rafael has been acting since 2022. He has starred in 3 school plays. He has worked with Woodstock Children's Summer Theater and starred in *Matilda Jr.* as Nigel and with Theatre 121 in *Beetlejuice Jr.* as Death by Fireworks. He is always looking to improve his skills and is currently taking acting and vocal lessons at The Vocal Academy. He also loves music and is taking drum and piano lessons at Jimmy's Music.



David Gasior (he/him) - Jennings: Actor/Director David Gasior is thrilled to be a part of this new holiday classic. David has been a part of regional theater in Illinois for decades, and is happy to return once again to the Opera House stage. A few of David's favorite productions are *I Hate Hamlet* (John Barrymore), *Elgin*, *39 Steps* (Richard Hannay), *Antioch*, *The Drowsy Chaperone* (Man in the Chair), *Woodstock*, *UrineTown*, *The Musical* (Senator Fipp), *Woodstock*. What's next? This December, David becomes Ebenezer Scrooge, in the White Pines Dinner Theatre's production of *Scrooge, The Comedy*. Thanks to my lovely wife, Kelly, for supporting my habit.



Frank Gaughan (he/him) - Henry Potter: Frank has worked as an actor and director in drama, comedy and musical productions for over 50 years. Some of the more recent shows include: *1776*, *Druid*, *Rocky Horror*, *Fantasticks*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *She Loves Me*, *Married Alive*, *Love Letters*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Murder on the Orient Express*, *Hands on a Hardbody* and *Death of a Salesman*. Frank is forever grateful to his trophy wife for tolerating the many rehearsal and performance days he has been absent. I hope you enjoy this wonderful new holiday classic, *It's a Wonderful Christmas Carol*, created by Jeff Cook and Joel Bennett.

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST



Sierra Goddard (she/her) - Wendy Pettit: Sierra is a new face to the Theatre 121 stage and she couldn't be happier to be a part of this new play! She has called Illinois home for 9 years now and has performed with The West Side Show Room, Pec Playhouse, Winneshiek Playhouse, [usual] Suspects, and Highland Community College in that time. She would like to thank Jeff and Joel for giving her this wonderful opportunity and the rest of the cast and crew for being such a joy to work with!



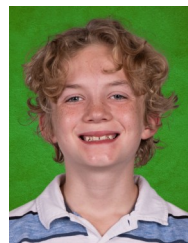
J. Thomas Graf (he/him) - John Potter/Peter Bailey/George Bailey: J. Thomas Graf has been an active member of Theatre 121 since 2022's *The Sound of Music*. During that time he has worked both in front of and behind the curtain, helping to build sets, make props, and put on shows. Mostly, he's just happy to get out of the house.



Lucy Hagen (she/her) - Teen Wendy Pettit: Lucy is excited to return to Theatre 121. Previously, Lucy played Esther Jane in T121's *A Christmas Story the Musical*. Other credits include: *Frankenstein* (Young William) at MCC, *Matilda* (Big Kid Ensemble) at WCST, *Shrek Jr.* (Little Bo Peep) at WCST, *SpongeBob* (School Fish) at WCST, *Beetlejuice Jr.* (Dead Cheerleader) at CMS. Lucy enjoys dancing with the Woodstock Dance Academy and sings with the Creekside Choir. Up next, Lucy will make her debut as Clara in *The Nutcracker*. Lucy would love to thank her directors, castmates, teachers, family and friends for all their support!!



Lauren Krelle (she/her) - Katherine Bailey/Mary Bailey: Lauren is thrilled to be a part of her very first Theatre 121 production! Lauren started in the Woodstock theatre scene this summer with the Woodstock Shakespeare Players as Tybalt and Tamora. Lauren is due to graduate from Illinois State University this December with degrees in Acting and Theatre Education, with a minor in Stage Combat! Her favorite roles during her college career were Greta Ohlson in *Murder on the Orient Express*, Kenny in *Fuddy Meers*, and Martha in *Arsenic and Old Lace*.



Joshua Moldovan (he/him) - Teen Henry Potter: Josh is thrilled to be making his theatre debut! Josh is no stranger to performing, however, as he plays flute in the band at Northwood Middle School and has spent many years performing tap and ballet with Full Circle Dance Center. In his free time, Josh enjoys playing chess and learning Chinese as well as physical activities such as soccer and parkour. Josh would like to thank his parents for encouraging him to try something new!

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST



Nolan Paulson (he/him) - Young Peter Bailey/Younger Petey Bailey: Nolan is a 6th grader at Creekside Middle School, and is excited to be making his Theatre 121 debut in *It's a Wonderful Christmas Carol*. He was most recently seen as Eric in *Matilda Jr.* and Young Shrek in *Shrek Jr.* with WCST. Nolan loves playing soccer, studying flags and geography, and hanging out with friends.



Elijah Pierce (he/him) - Teen Peter Bailey: Elijah is excited to return to the Opera House stage with Theatre 121's *It's a Wonderful Christmas Carol*. This is his 7th theater production. His favorite past roles include Bruce in WCST's *Matilda Jr.*, Otho in CMS's *Beetlejuice Jr.* and as Schwartz in Theatre 121's *A Christmas Story*. He attends Creekside Middle School as an 8th grader where he is involved in chorus, drama club and Challenge Corps. Elijah enjoys being outdoors, talking with friends, playing video games and spending time with his family and dog, Arlo. Elijah wants to thank everyone involved with putting this amazing production together and he hopes you enjoy the show! Happy Holidays!



Faye Radeni (she/her) - Zuzu/Youth Understudy: Faye is so happy to be performing with Theatre 121. Faye has been a part of many shows at the Raue Center, and this is her third show at the Woodstock Opera House. Her favorite role was ensemble in *A Christmas Story* with Theatre 121 here at the Opera House! She'd like to thank her mom and dad, grandparents, aunts and uncles, teachers and friends for supporting her!



Skye Schoen (he/him) - Walter Miller: Skye is thrilled to be back on the Opera House stage after last being seen in Theatre 121's *Groundhog Day the Musical* as Gus. Other recent credits include: *Present Laughter* (Roland Maule), and *Romeo & Juliet* (Nurse), both at McHenry County College, and in several productions with Woodstock Shakespeare Players. He hopes you enjoy the show!



Jake Seelye (he/him) - Adult Henry Potter: Jake is elated to be a part of a unique and fulfilling production! This is Jake's 5th production with Theatre 121, including a Lou Award-nominated performance as Garry LeJeune in *Noises Off!* Jake's last performance on the Opera House stage was as the Sheriff in *Groundhog Day: The Musical*. Jake has also performed with The Black Box Theatre at McHenry County College, Improv Playhouse, Wheaton Drama, and most recently with Silverstage Theatre Company. Jake would like to thank the cast for their kindness and patience, the crew for their hard work and due diligence, the creative team for their vision and the honor to help be a part of it, and lastly his loved ones and friends for helping remind him that he's never as lonely as he feels.

WHO'S WHO IN THE STAFF

Joel Bennett (he/him) - Co-Director/Sound Designer: Thank you for coming out and allowing us to do what we so love to do! This is Joel's directorial debut and it is an honor to be co-directing with Jeff Cook. Joel could last be seen on stage as Ned Ryerson in *Groundhog Day: The Musical*. William Street Rep: *All Shook Up*, *Sylvia*, *Home for the Holidays*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Picasso at the Lapine Agile*, [title of show], *Death of a Salesman*, *Plaid Tidings*, *Streetcar Named Desire*, *She Loves Me and Sweeney Todd*. Notable performances: *Urinetown* (Officer Lockstock) with Theatre 121; *A Gentleman's Guide To Love And Murder* (Monty), *Les Mis* (Enjolros) with LZP; *Young Frankenstein* (Igor), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Seymore), *Crazy for You* (Bobby) with WMTC; *Shrek* (Lord Farquaad) with Big Deal Productions and WMTC; *Mr. Burns* (Mr Burns), *Present Laughter* (Garry Essendine) with MCC; and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (Tom Sawyer) with St James Theater. Olive Juice!

Jason Blumenthal (he/him) - Master Carpenter: This is Jason's second show building for Theatre 121. Previously he built the set for *White Christmas* and is excited to return. He is beyond grateful for Joel and Jeff tasking him with bringing their script to life. When Jason is not helping with sets, he is a practicing attorney.

Justin Charles (he/they) - Properties Manager/Co-Set Dresser: Justin is thrilled to be back designing for Theatre 121 after designing Props for *A Christmas Carol*, *Murder on the Orient Express*, *Steel Magnolias* (Lou Award Winner), and *Sweeney Todd*; his scenic designs for *Steel Magnolias* and *The Prom*; and his performances in *The Prom*, *Murder on the Orient Express*, *Puffs*, and *The Sound of Music* (Lou Nominated). He holds the rank of Knight in the French Order of the Academic Palms and founded Round Lake High School's Ghostlight Readers Theatre, which received the Ann Flagg Multicultural Award in 2019.

Jeff Cook (he/him) - Co-Director: Jeff has been involved in the Woodstock theatre community since 2005. In addition to playing more than a dozen roles on stage, he has directed *Young Frankenstein* (WMTC), *Legally Blonde - The Musical* (TSP), and *A Christmas Carol* (T121), which he also adapted. He could not be prouder and more excited to share this journey with Joel. Jeff would like to thank his wife, Karen, for all her loving support and endless encouragement. He dedicates this and every performance to his sons, Max and Phil.

Karen Cook (she/her) - Producer: Karen made her stage debut 20 years ago this year right here on the Woodstock Opera House Stage as Miep in *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Since then she has performed in over 20 shows around McHenry County. Favorite roles include Suzy (*Wait until Dark*), Pamela (*Fox on the Fairway*) & Claire (*Rumors*). In addition to being on stage, she has produced, assistant directed or done props on over a dozen more shows. Thank you to the cast and production team for all their hard work to make this a special show, to her family and friends for always supporting her love of the arts, and as always to her husband, Jeff, for all his love & encouragement.

Lisa Dawson (she/her) - Scenic Artist/Sound Engineer: Lisa was first introduced to theater at the age of eight and quickly became involved with the "behind the scenes" aspect of productions. Lisa was also privileged to travel around the world for over a year with the organization "Up With People" performing, doing community service and sound engineering. Over the last ten years, Lisa has been Scenic Artist, Sound Designer and Engineer, Set Designer and Technical Coordinator. Her shows include *White Christmas*, *Mary Poppins*, *Shrek*, *Legally Blonde*, *Little Women*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Sound of Music*, *Rent*, *The Prom* and all non-musical shows. For this production, she is once again Scenic Artist and Sound Engineer. Lisa would like to thank her family for all their support and encouragement.

Steve Firak (he/him) - Original Music Composer/LED Wall Designer: Steve was born some time ago; the day is lost to time. He became an adult after receiving a wallet, as is the tradition in his family. Steve's family was a musical one. His fondest memories were of learning chords from songbooks and scribbles, and singing folk and rock songs at the local family music scene. He spent his high school days in choir and theater, continuing the discipline of singing and playing wherever possible. An incredible choir teacher and his family's musical motivations crafted his love of music theory and his appreciation for the hard work applied in music. Steve would have gone to college for music, but his love of recording music and audio arts tapped into a creativity undiscovered at that point, yet, as it turns out, always along for the ride. Steve is now living the American Dream with his amazing and beautiful wife and children, a confused dog, and the joys of home ownership and its costs. *It's a Wonderful Christmas Carol* has given Steve the opportunity to share his music, hone his craft further, and be a part of an incredibly talented team. One day, he hopes that his children can listen to the music of this show, find a part of their father in it, and continue on a musical journey themselves.

WHO'S WHO IN THE STAFF

Dan Frank (he/him) - Lighting Designer: Dan is excited to be back designing lights at the historic Woodstock Opera House. Previous lighting designs include *Mary Poppins A Staged Concert* (Metropolis Performing Arts Center), *Groundhog Day The Musical* (Theatre 121), *Dracula a Feminist Revenge Fantasy, Really* (Grand Valley State University), and *RENT* (Theatre 121). Dan works full time as the Head of Lighting and Electrics at Metropolis Performing Arts Center in Arlington Heights, IL. He also works part time as a Stage Technician at the Historic Woodstock Opera House. In Dan's free time he... does more theatre. He would like to thank Jeff and Joel for granting him the opportunity to work on this one of a kind production. Dan would also like to thank Spencer for being a nuisance.

Kristi Geggie (she/her) - Costume Designer: Kristi began helping with Woodstock Children's Summer Theater costumes in 2008 when her youngest child was in *High School Musical*, and has been at it ever since. She continues as the costumer for that program every summer, and has been the costumer for Woodstock High School Theater for the past 10 years. Kristi has also worked on shows with McHenry County College, RCLPC Theater, and Theatre 121. She especially enjoys working with high school kids teaching them the costuming process and how to sew. It's been a pleasure working with the *It's a Wonderful Christmas Carol* cast and production team!

Joann May (she/her) - Costume Assistant: Joann is excited to be back at Theatre 121 for *It's a Wonderful Christmas Carol*. Previous collaborations include Costume Designer for *Urinetown*, Costume Assistant/Wardrobe Mistress for *Murder on the Orient Express*, *White Christmas*, and *Steel Magnolias*. Many thanks to the amazing Costume Designer Kristi Geggie, and to Joel Bennett and Jeff Cook for the invitation to be part of this production.

Billy Seger (he/him) - Set Designer and Co-Set Dresser: Billy is honored to be working on this heartwarming new holiday play with such an incredible team. No stranger to local audiences, Billy has directed, choreographed, designed or performed in well over 30 productions at the Woodstock Opera House (he's lost count). He currently co-directs for Blue Streak Theatre at Woodstock High School (his alma mater), serves as the music and theatre instructor for Crystal Lake Montessori School, and teaches private voice for The Vocal Academy. Much love to Bubba, Mom, Colton, and fur baby Bella. Enjoy the show!

Marisa Snook (she/they) - Marketing Coordinator: Marisa is the CEO of a national marketing firm and the co-founder of Woodstock Shakespeare Players. It is an honor and a privilege to be a part of this incredible group of artists who created the show. May this only be the beginning of the journey. Marisa can next be seen performing in *Harold Pinter's Betrayal* as Emma at Silverstage Theatre Company in February.

Spencer White (he/him) - Stage Manager: Spencer would like to thank his amazing family and friends for all their support during this process. Special thanks to Erik Freiman and Dan Frank for being fantastic collaborators from start to finish.

Rachel Cahill-Nedza (she/her) - Wig Designer: Rachel is excited to be part of the *It's a Wonderful Christmas Carol* staff. She most recently was the costume designer for *Beetlejuice Jr.* Previous costume credits include *Puffs* (Theatre 121), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Silverstage Theatre), *No Exit* (Silverstage Theatre), and Woodstock Shakespeare Players, as well as wigs for *Present Laughter* (MCC).

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To learn more about our planned giving options, discuss the impact of your potential gift, or explore the various ways you can contribute to Theatre 121's future, please contact the Theatre 121 board via the website theatre121.org, or connect with board member, Emily Kunash, at emilyk.theatre121@gmail.com.

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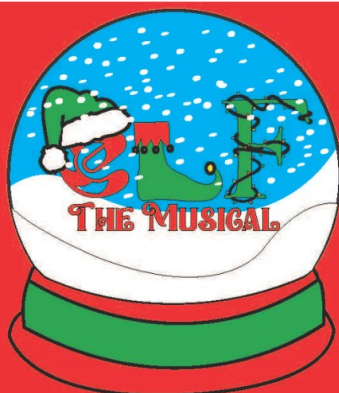
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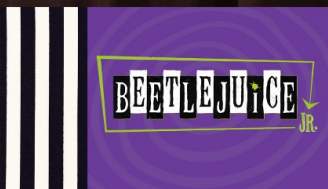
FEBRUARY 14TH-22ND, 2026



May 9th-24th, 2026

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