

Reflections from Shelley Brown

Executive Producer, FREDDY® Awards

After our all-virtual 2020 FREDDY® show, we expressed our prayer that 2021 would be a “normal” year. Unfortunately, Covid-19 had other plans for us. Once again we faced the challenge of celebrating our high school musical theatre students without our traditional in-person, full-house fanfare. Not what we hoped for.

The good news is that we are blessed with a talented and tireless creative team that just won't take “not possible” as an option. We knew by January that we would not present awards in 2021, but as the months went by we determined that an opening number for our seniors just might be possible if we used our outside spaces. That meant singing and dancing, in masks, socially-distanced, on our parking deck, sidewalks, and under the marquee. It seemed surreal to be sitting on a Zoom call checking the Almanac about how much daylight we'd have to rehearse and shoot television in late May. We prayed for fair skies and late sunset. Our Musical Director, Frank Anonia and Choreographer, Stacey Higgins-geniuses both- said no problem. Our TV Director, Joel Keeler, bravely agreed to tackle the challenge...what could possibly go wrong?

If you saw the final product on May 27, you saw happy students dancing and singing their hearts out with drone cameras buzzing about in perfect weather. Probably the first time in 19 years we could make that claim. Ok, we froze the first couple of rehearsals and baked in unusual spring heat for the rest, but those were small problems in the greater scheme of things. What was accomplished was an in-person event for 50 FREDDY® kids, and the opportunity for all of the schools to send us their own video messages that aired throughout a 90-minute televised special. It wasn't what we wanted, but it was way more than seemed possible as our date approached. As with all matters of the FREDDYs, our mantra remains “Do what is best for the kids”. Our sponsorships remained in place, as did our scholarship awards. The faith and loyalty of our supporters continues to motivate and humble us. And we are determined that next year, our 20th anniversary, will be something truly special!

We know that the community of theatre students that has been connected by the FREDDY® Awards is essential for the Lehigh Valley. We believe that it has changed the world for so many of “our” kids. And healthy kids benefit us all...they are the future!



2021 Scholarship Awards



Over \$1.8 million awarded since 2003!

Alumni Spotlight



Nick Flatto, Liberty '06 and Joel Dommel, Whitehall '07

“We have so many great memories from the FREDDY® Awards, both being nominated for leading actor and working together on the opening number.

I will never forget playing Tevya on that stage in front of our peers. Joel did in fact take home the prize, but we knew even then that the FREDDY® Awards was never about competition and all about community.

You already know the power of theatre and what it can do to build community, which we all desperately need right now. And I know for us, the FREDDY® Awards have become part of who we are and how we show up in the world.

So welcome to the community.”

WE THANK OUR SPONSORS WHO HELP MAKE THE FREDDY® AWARDS POSSIBLE!

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Signature Sponsor:



Education and Community Impact Sponsor: Air Products

Marquee Sponsor: BB&T, now Truist

Premier Sponsors: Capital Blue Cross,

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Credit Union, R. Richard Knauss Foundation, The Lehigh Valley

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“Lehigh Valley Health Network was once again proud to serve as a Signature Partner of the FREDDY® Awards, continuing its commitment to student performers and schools in the greater Lehigh Valley. We applaud all who made this year's virtual production possible in both a safe and entertaining way, and we look forward to the better days ahead when we can celebrate in person together.”

~Erin Ludwig

Director, Community Engagement Marketing & Public Affairs



pennsylvania

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The State Theatre is an approved Educational Improvement Organization through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program. Please consider directing EITC program credits to support the FREDDY® program!



Cheers to Charlie!

After 42 years and more than 80 productions, Muhlenberg College's Professor of Theatre and Dance, **Charles Richter**, will be retiring. The State Theatre is ever-grateful to Charlie for his efforts to provide a \$20,000 scholarship to a FREDDY® participating student every year since 2009. We wish Charlie well and thank him for his passionate dedication to theatre students! We asked Charlie for his thoughts on the arts and the FREDDY® program...

As a local theatre and dance educator, what do you see as the greatest impact of the Freddy program? *The FREDDY® program has given great visibility to the work of high school theatres in the community and has given recognition to the many talented teen performers in the area.*

Why and how are the arts important in schools? *Working in the theatre and other artistic disciplines teaches young people how to think creatively, be effective collaborators, how to work on a deadline, and to confront important social issues in a sane, rational way. These are important skills that are needed in any kind of work environment. School arts programs train students to be more effective participants in our communities.*

What advice might you have for students who are looking to pursue the performing arts at the collegiate and/or professional level? *Be sure to get a well-rounded education that will teach you how to understand the world in a sane rational way. Performance training is important, but developing a strong understanding of how society works will allow you to create significant artistic work. You need to know what you are singing and dancing about.*



Charles Richter during rehearsals for the 2014 production of "A Chorus Line"
Photo by Ken Ek published in The Muhlenberg Weekly



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2021 Participating Schools

- Allentown Central Catholic** - *Medley*
- Bangor Area** - *The Secret Garden*
- Belvidere** - *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*
- Bethlehem Catholic** - *The Spitfire Grill*
- Catasauqua** - *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*
- Dieruff** - *FREDDY® Flashback*
- Easton Area** - *The Addams Family*
- Emmaus** - *Tuck Everlasting*
- Freedom** - *Pippin*
- Hackettstown** - *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*
- Liberty** - *Urinetown*
- Nazareth Area** - *The Theory of Relativity*
- North Warren Regional** - *Emma: A Pop Musical*
- Northampton Area** - *Songs from Season's Past: A Musical Review*
- Northern Lehigh** - *Nunsense: A Musical Comedy*
- Northwestern Lehigh** - *Mary Poppins*
- Notre Dame** - *Medley*
- Parkland** - *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*
- Phillipsburg** - *School House Rock, Jr.*
- Salem Christian School** - *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella*
- Salisbury** - *Opening Number*
- Saucon Valley** - *Little Women*
- Southern Lehigh** - *RENT*
- Warren County Technical School** - *Zoom Rehearsals*
- Warren Hills Regional** - *Chicago (High School Edition)*
- Whitehall** - *Shrek The Musical*
- William Allen** - *FREDDY® Flashback*
- Wilson Area** - *Radium Girls*



Photo Credits: FREDDY® Awards Photographers David Dabour & Thomas Kosa



2021 Community Impact Report