

Camp produces stars year after year

By Viola Brown

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Over the summer, veteran theatre kids attend Summer Stage Performing Arts at the Riverdale Rising Stars with the hopes of becoming better performers and meeting new friends.

Trevor Scott, 14, has been acting with the group for about four years. He attended the camp two summers ago and values the experience for the skills and friendships he gained.

"The acting classes and the voice classes certainly improved my voice and acting," said Trevor. "Working with a different cast and crew is always a good experience just because it's something different and the more you do of something, the better you get at it."

Kelly Lavery, 16, and Abby Fisher, 14,

recounted similar experiences at camp. Both have been acting since a young age and said they have applied lessons from camp to other parts of their lives.

"I learned that hard work pays off," said Kelly, who attended the camp when she was 14. "The whole session at camp, we were working on the show and then at the end, the whole thing comes together."

All three attend the Riverdale Rising Stars' teen program year round and are currently rehearsing for a multi-generational production of "Gypsy."

The camp ranges from ages seven to 13 and gives children and teens the opportunity to engage in musical theatre opportunities as well as standard electives like karate, swimming, photography and improv.

"I got more confident because I was with really kind people who helped build

my confidence," said Abby.

She attended the camp for three summers. Last year, she worked as a counselor for the first time. The student hopes to continue doing so in the future.

Summer stage camp director Shawn Renfro encourages parents to sign their children up with the Rising Stars, recounting a range of skills kids will gain.

"We do teach how to speak clearly, how to speak loudly, how to make eye contact," said Mr. Renfro. "I always think that we are training young professionals instead of young performers because the two skill sets are kind of the same."

He emphasized that the camp can be beneficial to previous campers since it changes every year.

"Every camp every year is different," he said. "Every play is different, and that transfers to the overall camp."