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By Monica Scalf
 Contributing Writer

This past July, more than 120 kids from all over the region auditioned for a part in Acting Up's upcoming production of "Grease," playing Oct. 6-8 at the Mason High School and Community Center Theater. Fifty-five made the cast and have been rehearsing and perfecting their show ever since.

But, it takes more than just actors to pull off a musical of this caliber. Volunteers working behind the scenes, both children and adults, have dedicated abundant amounts of time and energy to help the actors produce a high energy, family friendly show.

"We are very lucky to have very talented kids

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participating," said Brahm Corstanje, director of the show and adult volunteer for the young performers community theater group. "But we're also very lucky to have the adults involved. Particularly in this show, they've all just been tremendous."

Actors can have rehearsals up to four times a week depending on their part. Kaye Korb, of West Chester Twp., is the mother of Kristen who plays the female lead, Sandy. Korb said parents are involved in many aspects of the show from marketing to costuming.

"Everyone's there to pitch in. We become one big family. Everybody's close and everybody's there to make a success of the show," she said. "One of the fun parts is to see how the kids and the show evolve."

Students also work behind the scenes and are integral to the success of the show. Josh Branch of Mason, with a student at St. Xavier High School, is doing the lighting design for the show. He said his responsibilities include placing all the lights, putting color in them and programming them into the lighting board.

"I take charge of the lighting crew and make sure they know what to do for the show. I'm working just as much as the actors and director. I take a lot of notes so that I can go just as fast as the actors."

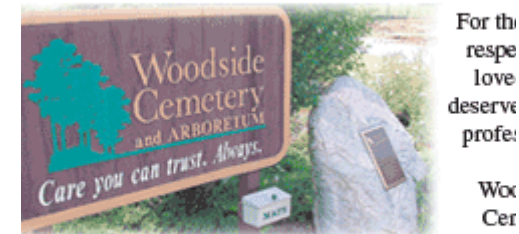
Mason's Corstanje pointed out that theater is just like many other team sports.

"It's never about one person. It relies on everyone working together. We've made a tradition of bringing out all of the kids who work on the show as well as the actors. Those actors aren't going to look good on stage if the backstage crew doesn't have their act together."

He is quick to point out that the actors do a fantastic job too.



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"I'm amazed at how this group of kids has created such a chemistry on-stage and off-stage. Even the chorus has a personality," he said. "The show is full of music. The Greaser boys and Pink Ladies provide a lot of entertainment. Adults won't be bored either."

Because the show is performed by children and teens, the script has been altered to remove more adult content. The changes were approved by the original writers.

"It's a very high quality show," said West Chester Twp.'s Kristen Korb, who plays the lead role of Sandy. "People will love the music and the costumes and the dancing."

Ian Hill, of Mason, who most recently appeared as the lead role of Ugly in Acting Up's "The Ugly Duckling," has a much smaller part in "Grease" playing the role of Eugene. That doesn't stop him from working hard on the role.

"Even if you have one line or one scene, you should give as much as if you are the lead," he said. "People won't expect that teenagers will put on this good of a show."

Becky Corstanje, president of the Board for Acting Up, encourages the community to come see the show and bring their families. "It's a fun show, a trip down memory lane and exciting for the kids."

For more information or to find out about auditioning for Acting Up's spring show, visit www.actingup.com.

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