



# *Shrek, JR.* Continues Streak of Middle School Musical Hits!

-David C. Hannon, Director of Development

One of the great traditions at Pine Point is the middle school musical. On so many levels, it highlights what defines the School's program and the philosophy that drives the curriculum. Putting on a successful production depends on creativity and collaboration, two key components of Pine Point's mission that are central to meaningful and deep learning. In fact, it is in efforts like the musical that the skills of creativity and collaboration are strengthened, making possible even greater successes for the students during their time at Pine Point and later in their adult lives.

While there is an unmistakable joyousness in being a student at Pine Point, there's no denying that the work becomes more demanding with each year as a student moves through the grades. The musical requires the participating middle schoolers to commit themselves to a four-month effort. The organizational abilities necessary to do so are atypical of what most middle schoolers are developmentally capable of producing. Classes, homework, special projects, sports, and off campus experiences continue without interruption. The bar is set high and the students respond magnificently!

As well, the support given by a core group of adult volunteers is also a key factor in the musical's enduring excellence while arts department members Jean Williams, Julie Wright DelPrado '89, Maria Iacoi, Jean Martin, and Beth Bromley bring out the best in everyone.

Most importantly, the musicals are so successful because they're fun. All of the work, the late afternoons and weekends, and the bumps along the road make the effort and the end result all the more satisfying and sweeter for everyone associated with the show.



*The Captain of the Guards attends to Lord Farquaad*



Anyone who has been involved in a theatrical production knows that there is never enough time to attend to every detail. The white board in one of the art rooms provided a snapshot of work that needed to be accomplished, helping to keeping everyone focused and on task.



Young Shrek



Shrek tries to explain to Donkey that like an onion he has "many layers."

**"Look, I'm not the one with the problem, okay? It's the world that seems to have a problem with ME! People take one look at me and go 'Aargh! Help! Run! A big stupid ugly ogre!' They judge me before they even know me... You know, Donkey, things are more than what they seem, hmm?"-Shrek**

As people watch a performance of the middle school musical (if not a second or a third) many find themselves thinking: "This is the best one ever!" Part of that is a familiarity with the musicals that have been offered in recent years (think *Beauty and the Beast*, *Mulan*, *The Lion King*, etc.) The stories are timeless, the punchlines well known, and young and old know the words to nearly every song. But more than anything, the musicals hit you emotionally. You know every student on stage and you delight in their performance. You watch students delivering their lines on cue, singing with everything they've got, and dancing with both precision and fluidity and you find yourself thinking back to when they arrived at Pine Point. You're amazed at their growth, and you realize that everything they're doing is the result of the efforts they've made over the years in an intentionally designed program that allows them to flourish at that moment, to literally step into the spotlight, and just nail it!

This year's middle school musical, *Shrek, JR.*, was captivating from the moment we see a Young Shrek sent off on his own by his parents at the tender age of seven to the high energy number *Let Your Freak Flag Fly*. We loved Shrek and we rooted for him all the way. The show's message of inclusion, acceptance, respect, and love hit just the right note in an unsettled time.



*The musical has benefitted from having a returning group of students who make up the ranks of the tech crew and then become its leaders. That was the case again this year.*



*The Dragon*



*Shrek and Fiona compete with each other in song (I Think I Got You Beat) bragging about which of them has had a rougher life.*

*Shrek's showdown with Lord Farquaad is sparked when the Fairy Tale Creatures come to live in his swamp.*



*The Ginger Bread Man and Lord Farquaad*



*The Three Princesses*



*Belting out Let Your Freak Flag Fly*



*Donkey tries to work his magic to get Shrek to declare his feelings for Fiona*

## An All-Around Great Show!

*A new fifth grade student was seeing her first middle school musical. We asked her to review the production.*

In 2016-2017, the middle school at Pine Point presented the musical, *Shrek JR.* It was an all-around great show, with substantial takeaway meanings. The show wouldn't have been complete without the tech crew. They helped painting sets, moving them, and more. The acting was very professional, and looked to have been practiced many times. The singing was clear and delivered well. The donkey was filled with humor, and quite energetic, always cracking a joke. All of the Fairy Tale Creatures were full of laughter, when they weren't protesting against Lord Farquaad.

This production has many takeaway messages, but the one that rose to the top was "people hate what they don't understand" in the first scene. Another is, "looks do not matter." This message is portrayed when Lord Farquaad is asking why Princess Fiona would rather marry Shrek, than him. He told how he had good hair, and how he was a king. But Fiona did not care. She sets the example and raises the bar for the rest of the characters, and us, the audience. One of the least serious messages was to have fun. The donkey showed this through the traveling song in Scene 6. The donkey sings about friendship and fun on the journey even if the journey is hard. Overall, the musical was very enjoyable and fun for viewers of all ages.



*An unhappy Fiona prepares to be wed to Lord Farquaad by the priest.*



*Closing out the show with the finale*



*In the days after the musical, an exhibition of elements from the show was curated by Mrs. DelPrado in what has become known as the Campbell Building Gallery. Every time you walked through the gallery it brought back wonderful memories of a magical performance!*

*Photos by Pat St Germain*