

North Shore **&** Children Families

FREE!

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What Are Your Kids Doing This Summer?

See pages 8-11 and the back cover for great summer options for North Shore kids!

MARCH 2017

Marching Into Spring • Making Plans for Your Kids' Summer



by **Suzanne Provencher,**
Publisher/Editor

Hello again, dear readers! Are you ready for spring? After the recent frigid temperatures, I look forward to

the end of winter and the beginning of spring.

March is a good time of year to start thinking about more sunshine, the impending arrival of spring and for

starting seedlings with your kids. By April or May – you'll be able to plant your sprouts in the outdoor garden. And by summer, your family can enjoy the fruits (or vegetables, in this case) of your labor. There is nothing better than picking a fresh-off-the-vine tomato or cucumber that you grew from seeds – and taking a bite!

March is also the time to start thinking about Summer Camps & Programs – and we have lots of great ideas to get you started on pages 8-12 in this issue in our 10th Annual Summer Camps & Programs Showcase – Part 2 of 5! Many camps & summer programs offer early sign-up, sibling and friend discounts – so sign up by April 1 and save! And check back with us again next month for more summer camps & programs for your children. Link directly to our camps online at

www.northshorefamilies.com!

If you have a summer camp or program and would like to appear in our April camp showcase, please contact suzanne@northshorefamilies.com by noon, Wednesday, March 15, for camp advertising rates and sizes. Save 5% if you appear in our 3 remaining camp showcases for this upcoming summer season! In most cases, one enrollment will cover the cost of your ad(s) – and your camp or summer program will be featured in the largest distribution camp showcases in print on the North Shore! Reach over 50K Moms & Dads in print each month – and more online, where each current issue also appears at www.northshorefamilies.com. We've got the North Shore covered since 2007!

In closing, I'd like to wish my sister, Sharon, a very Happy St. Patrick's Day 50th Birthday! May this be your best year ever. You are off to a great start!

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Happy 50th Birthday Sharon!





DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS

And finally, don't forget to set your clocks one hour ahead at 2 a.m. on March 12 (or before you go to bed the night before) – when our daylight hours increase and we can finally see that spring truly is just around the corner.

Until Next Time ~ Suzanne

Managing the Challenges of March

by Dr. Kate Roberts

March is one of the most, if not *the* most, trying months for mental health. It's a time when stress increases and depression and anxiety in children increase. March is a time of limbo and yet it's very busy. It's a time when academics and out of school life is at a lull. Parents need to be aware of how children are coping with the stresses at this time of the year. For many, March signifies the coming of spring and ending of winter. But for some, spring does not lead to better feelings and because of this, the person actually feels worse while watching those around them blossom while they feel stuck.

For students, March is also the beginning of real school stressors. Standardized testing begins and the climate of schools goes from one of learning to one of test taking and achieving. Students don't feel comfortable under this pressure and it impacts their mood and view of school. Parents, educators and most of all, students, need to recognize these challenges and be prepared to face them.

Here are some suggestions of how to help children cope during March:

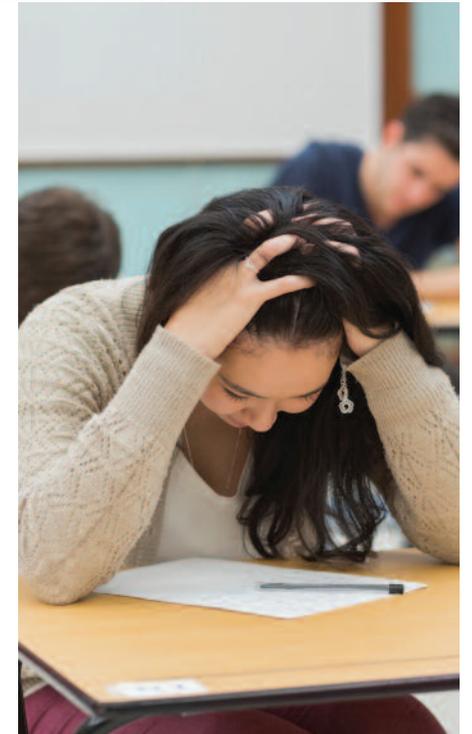
See it for what it is: March is not fun. Accept it. School sports as a stress relief are missing, and tests are rampant. Help kids get through it by reminding them it's time limited and that they have more to look forward to in April, when tests are over and sports and other spring time activities are in full force.

Acknowledge the problem when it's there. If a child is struggling, don't avoid it. Get a child help if they need more than you can provide.

Accept the reality that academics will be substantially more difficult between now and the end of year than during the previous part of the school year, much of which was review. Encourage your children to become comfortable with tests and pressure during March. It's not going to change, so they have to learn to adapt.

Don't overreact. If your child gets a bad grade or if they are not performing well, discuss it with them and together find solutions to their problems. Often times, enduring the challenges of March is enough punishment for kids, and parents don't need to add to it.

Be supportive. If your child is down and seems bored by the lack of fun



Continued on page 4

North Shore Children & Families



www.northshorefamilies.com
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Please see page 3
for our upcoming deadlines.

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PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

Issue	Ad Space Deadline
April	Noon, Wed., 3/15
May	Noon, Wed., 4/19
Summer (June/July)	Noon, Wed., 5/10

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is Our April Issue!**

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Managing March Challenges

Continued from page 3

activities, try to fill in the gaps. Get more involved and be a buffer, until life gets to a better place for your child.

Remember that grades and success at class work are really important regarding a child's self-esteem and not in and of themselves. Look at the bigger picture and teach your child to think this way as well.

Be active. March tends to be a bad weather month in Massachusetts, with dreary and rainy days and it's often raw and cold. Find ways to get out and be active, despite the miserable weather. Doing outdoor activities such as walks or jogs with your children will help promote this as a healthy way of coping.

Don't isolate. Insist that your child be around others and this will help your child to see the importance of people

and social life as a way of overcoming stress and the blues that follow stress.

Have humor. Put on funny movies and try to laugh, because laughter makes even those who are feeling miserable feel better.

Plan for the future. Try to plan activities that will be done in the later spring and summer and give you all something to look forward to. Pick a summer camp together. There will be light at the end of the tunnel and you can decide together what that looks like.

Recognize your own doldrums. It's hard for parents to be cheering on kids when they are down in the dumps themselves. If March beats you down, find ways to recover so that you can take care of yourself and your children.

Dr. Kate Roberts is a licensed child and school psychologist and family therapist with offices in Salem and Wenham. She specializes in cognitive-behavior therapy, family therapy, anxiety and learning disabilities. She can be reached at kate@drkateroberts.com and www.drkateroberts.com.

Ask Dr. Kate

Q&A for North Shore Parents

Helping Kids Maintain A Healthy Weight

by Dr. Kate Roberts

Question: Every winter, my children struggle with staying active and maintaining a healthy weight. This year they are 10 and 12 years old, and they gained weight during the winter! What can I do to help them be active and keep their weight down?

Answer: You are right to be concerned about your children's activity levels and their weight. The winter adds a degree of challenge to keeping children active and healthy. Overweight children have increased more than 30 percent in the last thirty years. In addition, activity levels are down considerably and screen time is up.

Unfortunately, the days are gone when parents can tell children to "go outside and play". Instead, children want to be in front of screens (TV, computer, phone) and snacking when they have down time, all habits that undermine a healthy lifestyle. The antidote to this is physical activity and the burden is on parents to manage their children's activity levels. Here are



some ways that you can help your children live healthier lives:

First, as parents you must role model being fit and eating healthy. Limit your own TV and screen time, and eat the right foods.

Remove TV and computer devices from your child's bedroom. Limit screen time to 30-60 minutes at the end of the day or during week days. When parents first hear this, they think I am unrealistic for suggesting such limited amounts of screen time



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and yet most often when they begin to implement these guidelines, their children accept them.

Make physical activity a routine for the entire family. Think about ways that you can all get at least 30 minutes of activity a day. It's acceptable and realistic to begin with a goal of 10 minutes a day and work up to 30 minutes. For example, race them somewhere to get a jump start, walk together to the store to buy something and learn to use a jump rope or take them sledding. Bigger projects can be more social and fun like organizing group games such as hoops, floor hockey, soccer or lacrosse at a local gym, or take a group ice skating or swimming at the YMCA. You can also enroll children in these activities in your community, but if they are resistant to participating, then you have to participate with them and role model the activities to engage them.



Model self-improvement by measuring your time and distance when exercising; kids will see this and want to do it as well. Make spending time outside a priority, as this increases mental health exponentially. Walks on the beach, short nature

hikes or exploration at the local Audubon are all ways to engage children outside.

Regarding nutrition, avoid sugary drinks that are loaded with calories. Introduce a water drinking challenge to see who can drink the most water in a day and challenge children to drink more water each day. The more water one drinks, the more water the body craves – so use this positive cycle. Focus on what you and the children should be eating, and not on what you shouldn't be eating. For example, find recipes with healthy fruits and vegetables and fill up on healthy foods, and you'll become less inclined towards eating unhealthy foods.

Studies indicate that sleep is tied to weight maintenance. Make sure that your children are getting 10-12 hours of sleep a night, which decreases stress and the tendency towards food cravings.

Stay away from measuring weight on the scale. This adds an evaluative component and emphasizes losing weight, rather than being healthy.

If your children's school participates in "eating healthy" programs, refer to this and let your children know that everyone is working towards the same goal of being healthy.

Finally, expect initial resistance. However, within a week of consistent activity, good nutrition and behavioral management (limited screens), you and your children will see results. Do not expect your children to have the same level of discipline that you have. Children will follow you – the leader, motivator and participator – in this new program towards overall family health, both physically and mentally.

Here's wishing you and your family good health!

Reference for parents: *Fit Kids for Life: A Parent's Guide to Raising Healthy Children*; [paperback], Brandon McIntosh (Author), Chrisoula Kiriazis M.D.

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Dr. Kate Roberts is a psychologist and parent coach on the North Shore. Questions can be directed to www.drkateroberts.com, [www.twitter.com/DrKateParenting](https://twitter.com/DrKateParenting), www.facebook.com/Dr.KateRobertsParenting or www.pinterest.com/DrKateParenting. We may anonymously publish your question and Dr. Kate's answer in a future issue.

Raising Compassionate Children



Teaching Kids to Give Brings Happiness, Healing and Purpose

by Leah Okimoto

This year, we have been fortunate to receive funding support from the following foundations and we just wanted to thank them for making so many of our kids' projects possible! Thank you to The Lenny Zakim Fund (2nd year), Greater Lowell Community Foundation, Boston Bruins Foundation, Theodore Edson Parker Foundation, Horne Family Foundation, Merrimack Valley General Fund (Essex County Community Foundation) and Saab Family Foundation! Without their support, and the support of individual and business donors, we could not possibly carry out the individualized mentoring and cover the cost of all of the materials and supplies needed for each project (well over 100 this year!). This support enables our young participants to focus their energies and brainpower on planning and carrying out their kind, positive ideas, like this one from this past month:

Cupid's Army

8th graders Werlys, Yeribel and Arihesly, from the Wetherbee School in Lawrence, had a dream of throwing a Valentine's party for the 1st graders at their school, and applied back in October. The weeks and months went by, and in January, the planning started to kick into high gear. They met with the 1st grade teachers and put together a plan, brainstormed activities that would be fun and new for the kids and made a list of needed decorations and supplies.



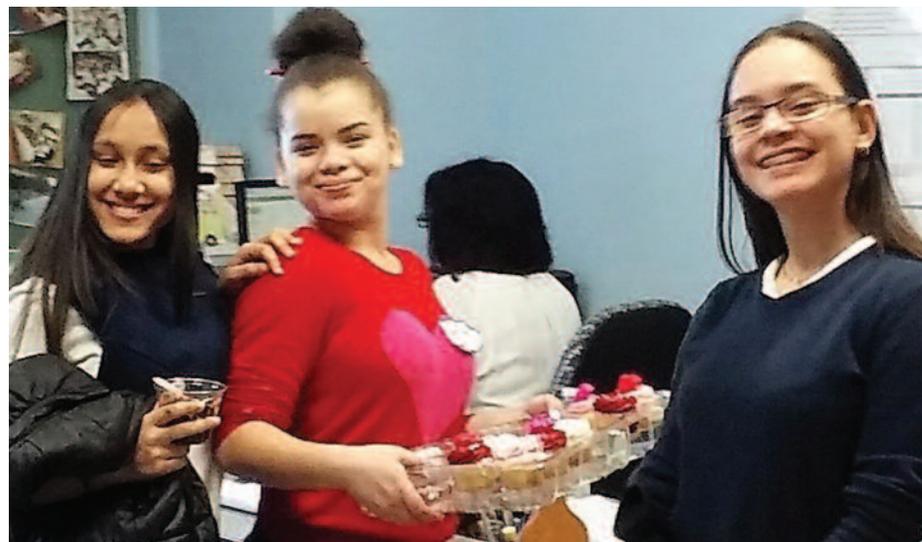
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The girls got permission from their own teachers, and the snowstorms took a break just in time for school to be in session on Valentine's Day! Arihesly came up with the idea to make and give cupcakes to all of the teachers in the school, so she and Werlys got together over the weekend to make and package them themselves, and then they delivered them when they got to school.

They recruited a few more peers as volunteers and got to work. In half an hour, the cafeteria was transformed into a Valentine's wonderland, music was playing and the 1st graders arrived for their surprise, completely planned and given to them by 8th graders, whom they see in the hallways and look up to. The room felt light and was filled with pure joy. The girls introduced themselves to the kids and explained what was happening, and then for the next 50 minutes, they made dirt cups, played with Legos and kinetic sand, made bead necklaces and cards for their parents. Everyone had a blast!

This is the type of event that does not often cross people's minds when they think of "service". But for us at *Aaron's Presents*, seeing 6 teenagers feeling so proud, empowered and good about the gifts, time and happy experiences they just gave to others, compounded with the happiness of 80 1st graders and the chance for them to see positive 8th grade role models and dream of doing something like this themselves one day, is exactly the type of outcome we are after!

Our passion is giving kids an experience with giving from the heart that they will not soon forget, and to let them feel firsthand how good and valuable their ideas (and therefore, they) are. We believe that what these girls felt that day, they will want to feel again and again. And our hope is that they will start to make the connection between those feelings and positively impacting/serving others. We want "service", caring for others and collaboration to become not an obligation or something done for credit, but a way of life and a way to build community and trust.

Please visit www.aaronspresents.org to learn more about how a child you know can apply to participate or to get involved in some way. We would also like to hear from people on the North Shore who are interested in serving on our board (an amazing, collaborative group of community members!) and helping us plan strategically for the future. Thank you for your generosity and for helping us to reach more kids!



Leah Okimoto is the Executive Director of Aaron's Presents, a 501(c)(3) youth development organization providing a unique child-initiated, child-led and non-competitive program that inspires and empowers children in 8th grade and below to give of themselves for the benefit of others in their own way. She founded Aaron's Presents in memory of her infant son, Aaron. Kimberly LaBonte-Kay is the North Shore Regional Director. Feel free to contact Leah at lokimoto@aaronspresents.org or (978) 809-5487 or Kim at kimberly@aaronspresents.org with any questions or to schedule a presentation for your school, youth program or group.

Preaching to the Chickens

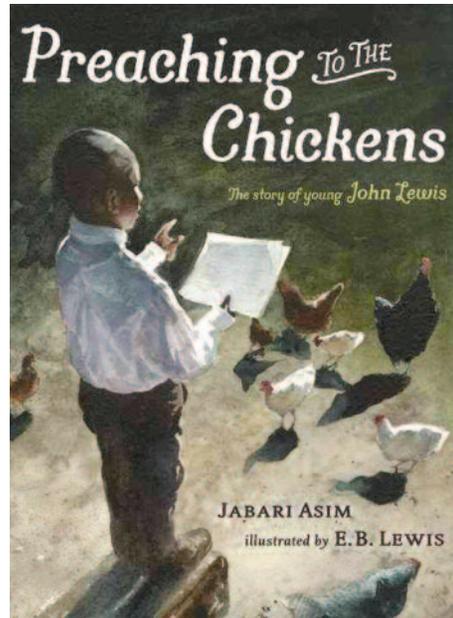
Written by Jabari Asim;
illustrated by E.B. Lewis
by Michelle Mullet

Kids tend to dream big; like intergalactic big. So, when I saw this beautiful book about little John Lewis called *Preaching to the Chickens*, I had to pick it up.

The title itself is hypnotizing and hilarious at the same time. I knew about the story of Georgia Senator John Lewis and his humble beginnings from reading his recent graphic novel trilogy, *March* [Top Shelf Productions, 2015].

For parents who've grown fatigued by reading boring, brightly colored picture books, this softly painted, watercolor masterpiece offers sweet relief.

Young John Lewis always wanted to be a preacher when he was growing up on a small farm in Alabama. As he learned to read and memorize verses from the Bible, he started preaching to the chickens that he took care of everyday. This book and all its wonderfully subtle illustrations make it easy for parents to linger on cute farm scenes and count chickens.



The soft, fluttering edges of simple, country living offer city kids a chance to see what it was like to live in another time when things moved slowly – a time when there were no such things as computers or smart phones or [gasp] the internet.

Artist E.B. Lewis, whose previous work includes a *Caldecott Honor Book*, paints gentle watercolor pictures of little John Lewis tending to the flock with wonderfully playful shadows and exquisite attention to light as it shines down upon his subjects.

Nicknamed “The Preacher” by his siblings, John Lewis believed whole-heartedly in his ability to move others by his voice and his determination to be heard. This book says so much about the importance of a child’s dreams when they have the tender loving care of parents who acknowledge and nurture fledgling ambitions.

His family could have easily dismissed his preaching to the farm animals as just another quirky kid phase, but they didn’t. And because his family encouraged him to read and practice his speaking abilities, that little boy who loved talking to chickens became one of the most articulate and evocative voices of the Civil Rights Movement. He would go on to

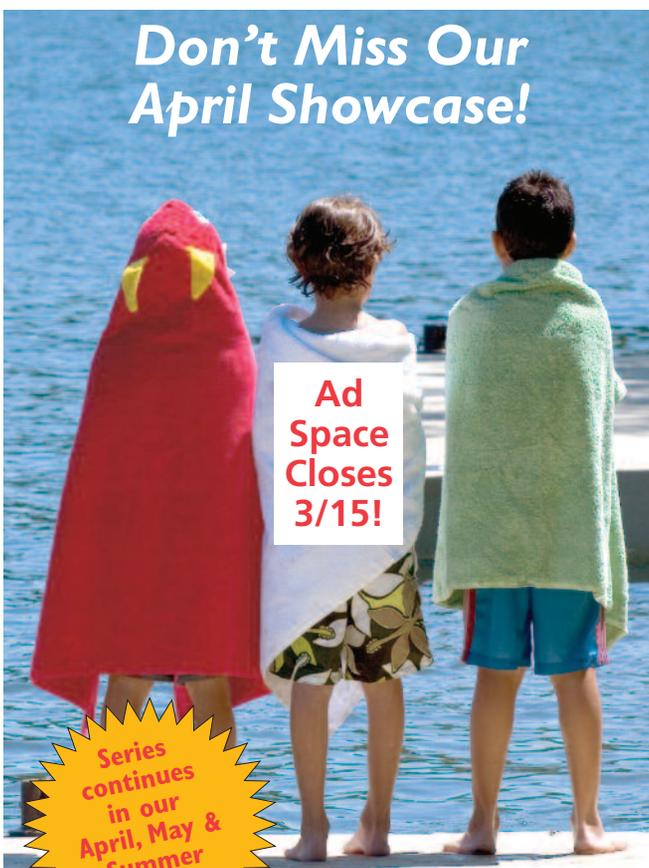
become a United States Senator and a published author – all because his parents believed in him.

At the end of the book, we see a perfectly graceful and uplifting scene of John Lewis with his hands up in the air, standing above his feathered followers. It’s the picture of a born leader and the writer leaves readers, young and old, with a sense of humbleness with this last passage: *John’s henhouse sermons became so regular that his brothers and sisters took to calling him Preacher. He didn’t mind. He knew that someday he’d speak before thousands. He hoped that his words would stir people’s souls and move them to action. For now, though, he had his own church right here among the pine trees and rolling hills of southern Alabama. Morning would find him in his usual place, preaching to the chickens.*

For more information about Jabari Asim, visit www.facebook.com/jabariasimwriter. And to find more books illustrated by artist E.B. Lewis, visit www.eblewis.com.

Michelle Mullet is a North Shore mom of 2 young boys whose work has been published in Haiku Journal, The Puffin Review and the New England Seacoast Writers’ Association Journal. She has a degree in journalism and is working on her first children’s chapter book. You can follow Michelle for book reviews, essays and blog updates @bunnycones.

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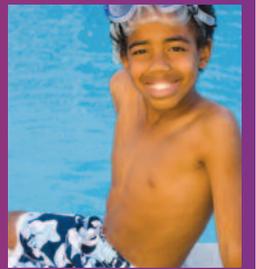
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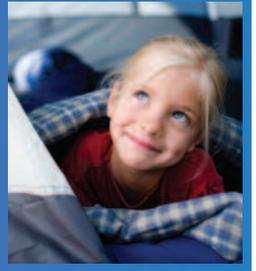
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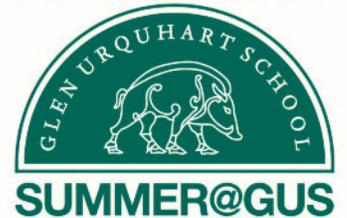
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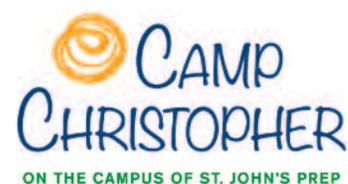
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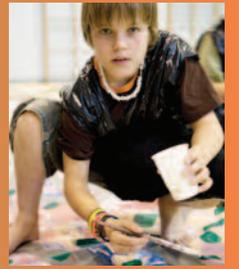
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10th Annual - Part 2 of 5

Series continues in our April, May & Summer issues.



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DISCOVER SUMMER CAMP COUNTDOWN TO FUN

OPEN HOUSE / DISCOVER PARTY

MARCH 11 | 11AM-1PM
150 Andover St, Danvers, MA
Danvers Indoor Sports Building 2

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SUMMER SESSIONS

FOR CHILDREN OF ALL SKILL LEVELS • AGES 7 - 18

JULY SESSION 1

JULY 3 - JULY 7

Morning Classes - 9:00am to 12:45pm

Ages 7 to 10: **Triple Threat I**

Ages 11 to 14: **The Fundamentals of Stage Acting**

Ages 15 to 18: **Audition Techniques**

Afternoon Classes - 1:15pm to 5:00pm

Ages 7 to 10: **The Fundamentals of Acting**

Ages 11 to 14: **Beginner Dance Techniques**

Ages 15 to 18: **Building Stage Characters**

JULY SESSION 2

JULY 10 - JULY 14

Morning Classes - 9:00am to 12:00pm

Ages 7 to 10: **Beginner Dance Techniques**

Ages 11 to 14: **Music theory for the Stage**

Ages 15 to 18: **The Fundamentals of Stage Acting**

Afternoon Classes - 12:30pm to 3:30pm

Ages 7 to 10: **Music Theory for the Stage**

Ages 11 to 14: **Audition Techniques**

Ages 15 to 18: **Movement for the Stage**

JULY SESSION 3

JULY 17 - JULY 21

Morning Classes - 9:00am to 12:00pm

Ages 7 to 10: **Audition Techniques**

Ages 11 to 14: **Building Stage Characters**

Ages 15 to 18: **Musical Theatre Dance Techniques**

Afternoon Classes - 12:30pm to 3:30pm

Ages 7 to 10: **Movement for the Stage**

Ages 11 to 14: **Acting Through Song**

Ages 15 to 18: **Music Theory for the Stage**

JULY SESSION 4

JULY 24 - JULY 28

Morning Classes - 9:00am to 12:00pm

Ages 7 to 10: **Building Stage Characters**

Ages 11 to 14: **Movement for the Stage**

Ages 15 to 18: **Improv for the Stage**

Afternoon Classes - 12:30pm to 3:30pm

Ages 7 to 10: **Acting Through Song**

Ages 11 to 14: **Improv for the Stage**

Ages 15 to 18: **Intermediate Dance Techniques**

AUGUST SESSION 1

JULY 31 - AUGUST 4

Morning Classes - 9:00am to 12:00pm

Ages 7 to 10: **Musical Theatre Dance Techniques**

Ages 11 to 14: **Believable Transitions: Scene into Song**

Ages 15 to 18: **Acting Through Song**

Afternoon Classes - 12:30pm to 3:30pm

Ages 7 to 10: **Believable Transitions: Scene into Song**

Ages 11 to 14: **Musical Theatre Dance Techniques**

Ages 15 to 18: **Intermediate Acting**

AUGUST SESSION 2

AUGUST 7 - AUGUST 11

Morning Classes - 9:00am to 12:00pm

Ages 7 to 10: **Intermediate Dance Techniques**

Ages 11 to 14: **Intermediate Acting**

Ages 15 to 18: **Believable Transitions: Scene into Song**

Afternoon Classes - 12:30pm to 3:30pm

Ages 7 to 10: **Intermediate Acting**

Ages 11 to 14: **Intermediate Dance Techniques**

Ages 15 to 18: **Voice and Dialects for the Stage**

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