

Bristol Central puts talent at center stage

By MIKE CHAIKEN
EDITIONS EDITOR

In the time honored tradition of "America Idol," "The X-Factor," and "America's Got Talent," Bristol Central High School once again will be presenting its annual talent show.

The students at the school recently attended auditions to see who had the chance to step on stage and perform for not only their peers at Bristol Central but the community at large. Several of them were interviewed to talk about the upcoming event.

"(The show) is going to be better than ever," said Connie Harkey, the advisor to the Class of 2012, which is sponsoring the show. "We have had more students audition than ever before."

"I think the community outside of Central will like to come see us perform... (It will) show the community that we do have talent that goes above and beyond what people think of us," said Felipe Garay, a freshman who was trying to earn his slot on stage for the show.

"(The show) shows that talent can be found anywhere," said Schae Beaudoin, a sophomore who intended to sing and accompany himself on guitar.

"I want to make people laugh," said Erin Cyr, a sen-



TAMMI KNAPIK

Elizabeth Pelletier performs a monologue, 'What Goes Through My Head in First Period Class,' at the recent auditions for Bristol Central High School's talent show.

ior who was going to do a stand up comedy routine.

Angela Garcia-Clark, a freshman who intended to sing, said the community should turn out for the show to offer "moral support" to the students. And, she said, they'll enjoy themselves as

well.

For the students, the show is a chance to strut their stuff before an audience.

"It gives (the community) an opportunity to see the talents the youths have (at Central," said Phil Andrews,

a freshman who will play the drums."

"People will hear about the show and I think they'll be interested in seeing the talent in today's teenagers," said sophomore Grace Gagnon, who intended to sing."

"We all see these students every day, but we don't really know what make them tick until we see their talents," said Elizabeth Pelletier, a senior who intended to perform a monologue.

"There's a lot of great talent at Central and it will be an entertaining show," said Madeleine Anderson, a sophomore who was going to sing and play guitar.

"This show offers the community an opportunity to see the wonderful talent that BCHS has," said Harkey, who is also serving as coordinator for the talent show. "There is a lot of school spirit and pride, which is reflected in the performances."

There is some trepidation for the students as they leave themselves a bit vulnerable by standing alone on stage before a crowd.

"It scares me," said Sarah Bugryn, a sophomore who will sing. But, she added, "I love it."

"I get nervous," said Rachelle W., a junior who was going to perform. But at the same time, performing leaves her "very excited."

Other students are pumped and have no fear.

Senior Steve Drouin, who was going to offer up some stand up comedy, said performing makes him feel "awesome."

Asked what they liked

about their chosen talent, students offered a variety of answers.

"I feel that my talent, singing, makes people rethink me because they tend to judge me because of my family," said Danniell Turner, a freshman. "When they see that I can sing, they understand I am a good person. And I know that with this determination, I will get somewhere in this world."

"I think God gave me a gift to show others that anything is possible in life," said junior Joshua Soto.

Kayla Acevedo, a sophomore who was going to sing, said she likes that her talent, "relaxes me."

Not everyone stepping on stage for the show this year is a student. Chuck Dreger, an employee at Central, will be singing. "I find it an honor to perform with and for the community around me." He explained, "I enjoy singing, all my siblings played musical instruments throughout school and beyond. I didn't start till a later age."

The talent show is Saturday, Jan 28 at 7 p.m. at Bristol Central High School (snow date is Saturday Feb. 4.) Tickets are \$5 at the door. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Bristol Chapter of Special Olympics.

Getting ready to 'Brrrrrrrrrrrr!' at Penguin Plunge

By MIKE CHAIKEN
EDITIONS EDITOR

You think the air is cold in Connecticut in January? Imagine how the water must feel.

Well, Bristol's Kellie Lacko and her friends... as well as a myriad of other participants... won't have to imagine how cold the water is at Winding Trails in Farmington. They'll find out first hand on Sunday at the annual Penguin Plunge to benefit Special Olympics Connecticut.

Kellie, who is Miss Forestville's Outstanding Teen, has organized a team for the event. The team is called Divas for the Dive.

"I wanted to take part in the Penguin Plunge not only for the experience, but



Kellie Lacko

to raise money for a cause that is very special to me, the Special Olympics," said Kellie.

The event ties into her platform as a contestant for Miss Connecticut's Outstanding Teen (which will be crowned in June), said Kellie. "My platform for

the year is 'Spread the Word to End the Word: Teens Educating About Special Needs.'"

Kellie has been soliciting pledges for her team in preparation for the plunge into the icy waters. "The goal for my team, Divas for the Dive, is to raise \$1,000 by the date of the plunge. So far we have put a good dent in our fund raising but we are still looking for more donations," she said.

People can help a couple of ways, said Kellie. They can join the team. (The team already includes Miss Forestville Molly Westfall, Miss Greater Plainville's Outstanding Teen Allison Owsianko, Petite Miss Forestville Abigail Seaman, Little Miss Forestville

Katelyn Sulvester, Kellie's mother, Lisa, and some assorted friends). In addition, Kellie said, "People can help our team by going online to SOCT.org and by joining or donating to our team. To do so, when you log online on the left side of the page, click on the Penguin Plunge tab. After clicking, choose the Farmington Plunge. Once you are on the Farmington Plunge page, along the top you can choose to donate, register, or join a team. From there on, the choice is yours."

As she prepared to hit the waters at Winding Trails in Farmington on Sunday at 10 a.m., what has Kellie heard from others who have done the Penguin Plunge in

the past?

"The one thing I have heard the most is that the water is freezing," said Kellie. "But I'm willing to endure the cold water to raise awareness and acceptance for all of my special friends."

Kellie said there probably isn't anything she can do to prepare for the cold water "besides purchasing a wet-suit but that would ruin the fun."

And when she hits the water, what does she think will be going through her head. "My initial feelings are going to be, 'Oh man, this water is cold. Where is my towel?!' But once I get out and I am nice and warm, knowing I have done this for the Special Olympics will

make all of my shivers worth it."

And as people consider making their pledges for Divas for the Dive, Kellie said, "I thank you in advance for all of your support. I am so fortunate for all of the support Bristol and Forestville have been giving me throughout my year."

The Penguin Plunge for Special Olympics Connecticut will be held Sunday, Jan. 29 at Winding Trails in Farmington. Registration starts at 8:30 a.m. and the plunge itself begins at 10 a.m.

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