

Communication Arts Speech and Theatre

Part of the educational experience at Julian Middle School since 1985



How many events/productions does your group offer to the children annually?



9 different plays/ 16 performances during Julian schoolyear

2 different CAST Jr. productions Winter/Spring

15
productions annually

1 performance at Day in Our Village

3 different plays/ 7 performances during CASTSummer

CAST productions are **music**, **dance** and **drama** inspired by curriculum and celebrating Oak Park's values and diversity.

A Thousand Cranes
Annie Warbucks
Akeelah and the Bee
Bud Not Buddy
Charlotte's Web
Diary of Anne Frank
Fiddler on the Roof
Having Our Say
House on Mango St.
I Never Saw Another Butterfly

Letters To Lucerne
Little Women
Number the Stars
Pride and Prejudice
Raisin in the Sun
Sarah, Plain and Tall
The Crucible
The Outsiders
Stand and Deliver
To Kill A Mockingbird

"Parents agree... CAST is an invaluable mentoring teaching and empowering experience for their kids. In the words of one OPRF High school student, CAST saved my life in middle school"

Melissa Black Ford in the Wed. Journal July 13, 2011

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Describe the participation and diversity.

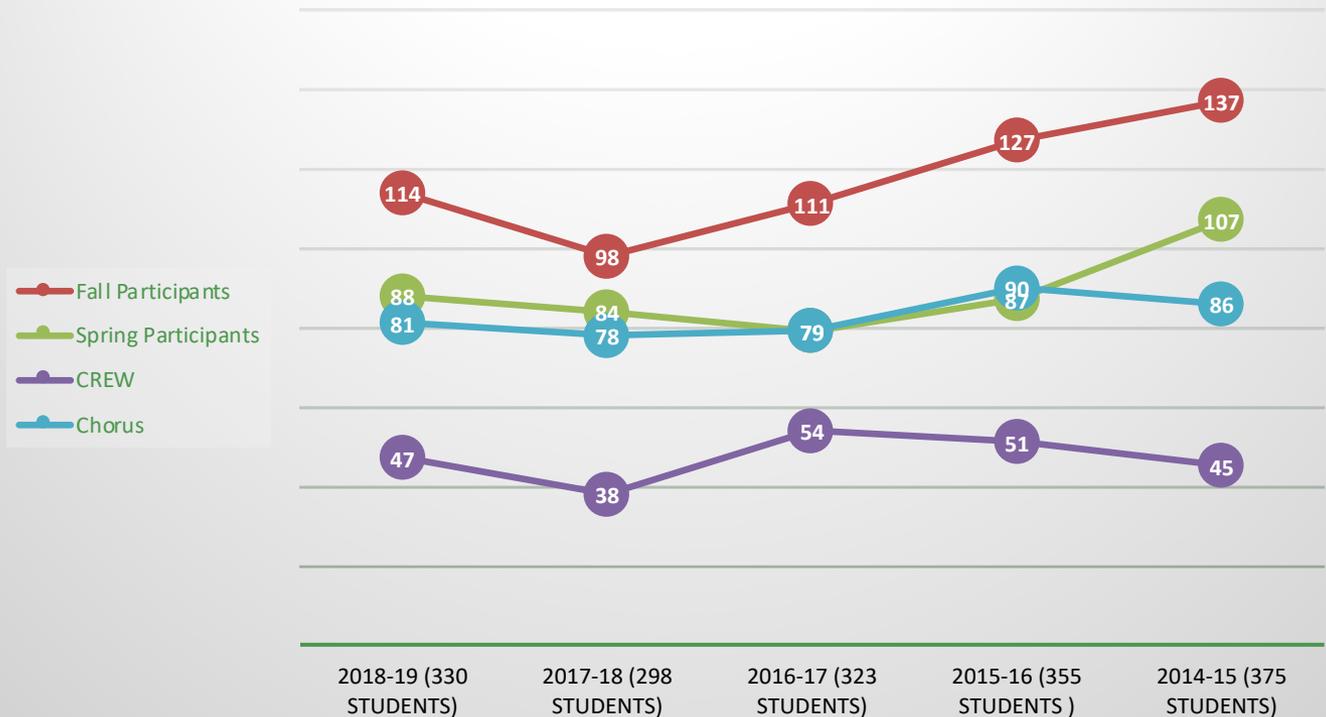


Five charts that help you get to know the students at CAST.



2014-2019 CAST Participation by Activity

NOTE: Chorus students automatically perform in the fall musical.



"Art is sometimes called an elective, but it is the bedrock of a well-educated child and a well-rounded human being. Art is not optional."
Heather McCammond-Watts, parent of CAST member, addressing the District 97 School Board, Jan 12, 2011

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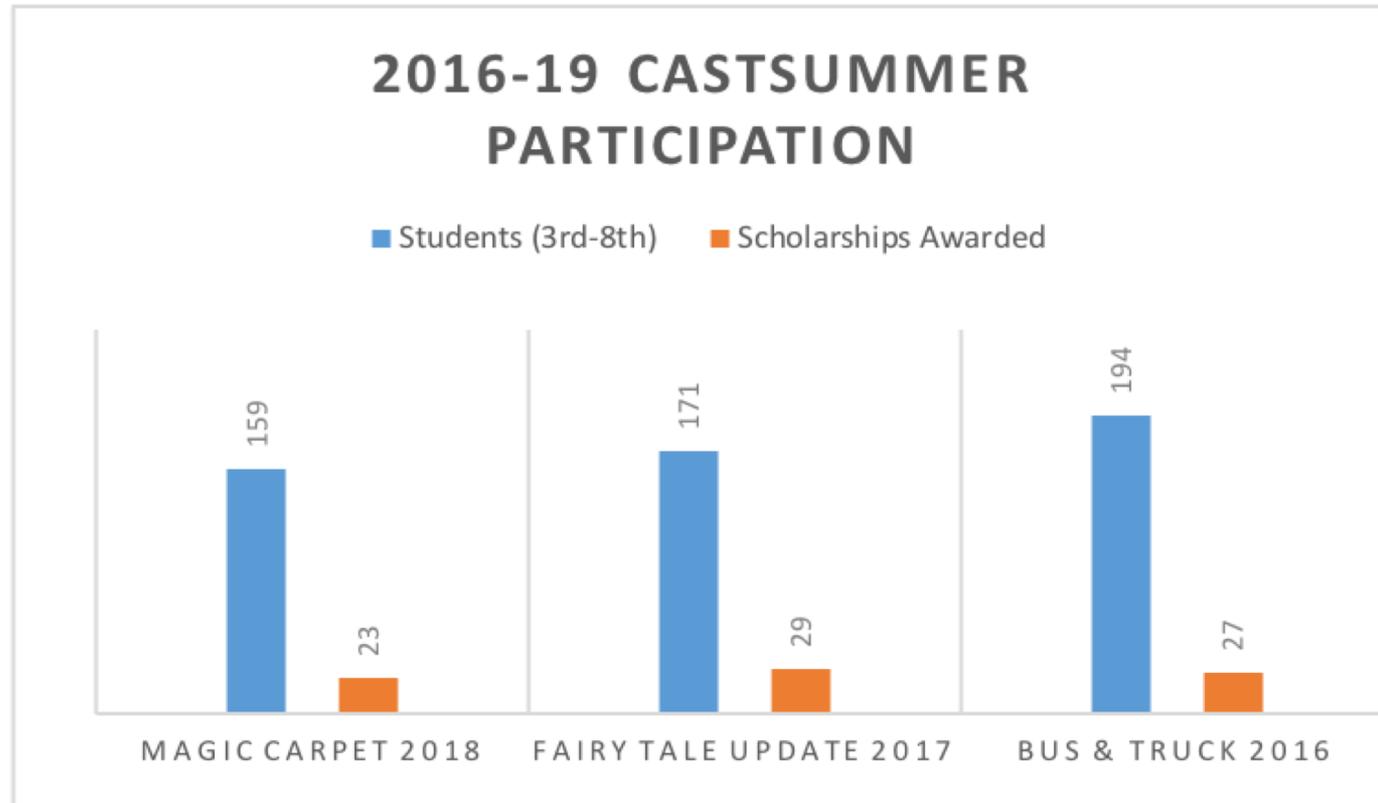


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#2



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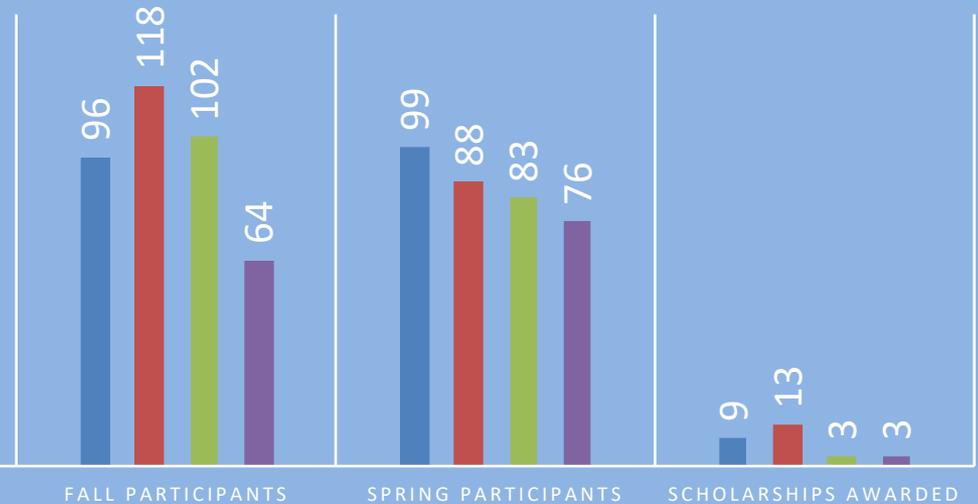
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#3

2015-19 CAST JR. PARTICIPATION

- 2018-19 (195 Students)
- 2017-18 (206 Students)
- 2016-17 (185 Students)
- 2015-16 (140 Students)

CAST Jr is a tuition-based afterschool experience open to all 3rd-5th graders at Longfellow, Irving and Mann.



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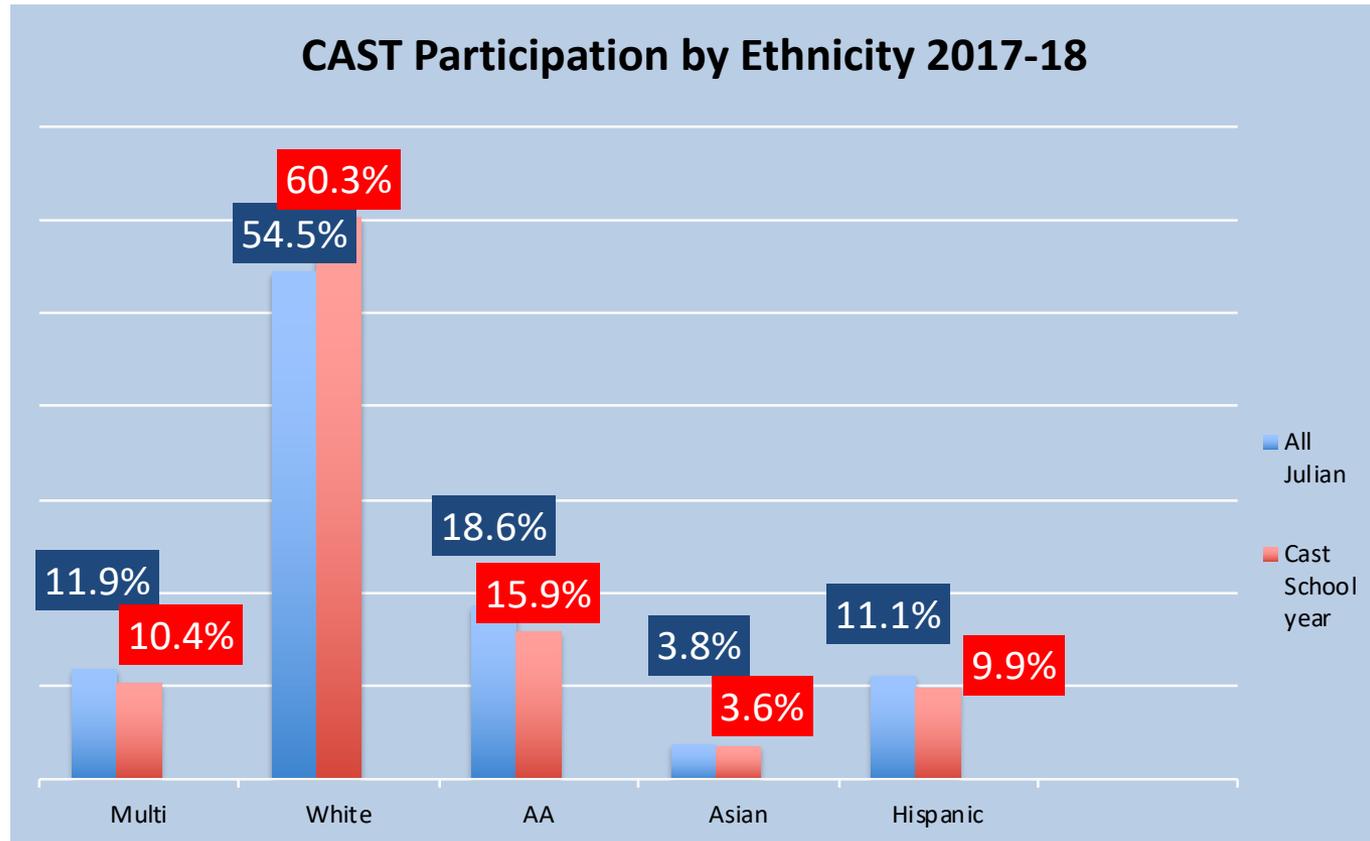


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#4



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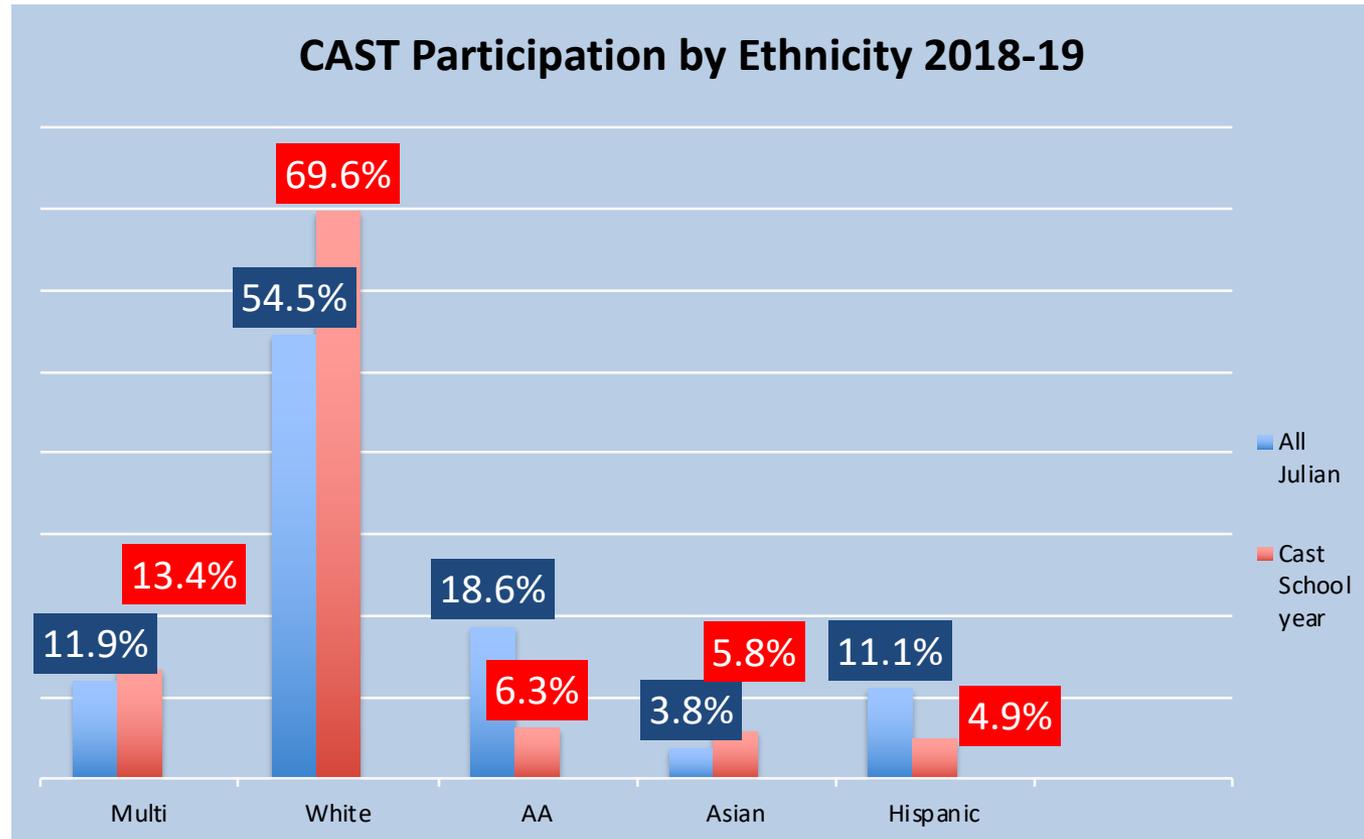
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#5

CAST Participation by Ethnicity 2018-19



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What is the practice/meeting schedule for the students?



CAST at Julian Acting

- 9 different rehearsal companies meet 2-3 times a week for 6-7 weeks.
- 2 auditions each year so students can do both or 14 weeks of afterschool activity.



CASTsummer (2 options)

- The 3rd-4th grade camp is for 4 weeks, M-F from 9-3PM.
- The 5th-8th grade camp is for 6 weeks, M-F from 9-3PM. Students choose **acting** or **crew** concentration.

CAST CREW



Build CREW

- 10 Saturday CREW calls open to all Julian students.

Run CREW

- Build crew students with permission to attend the last 7 days of rehearsals and performances.

CAST JR.



Mann/Irving/Longfellow

- Students meet once a week at their home school for 10 weeks of rehearsal, then perform together at Julian.
- We offer 2 sessions per school year

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CAST Ambassadors is a workshop for CASTsummer scholarship students held the weekend before CASTsummer begins. The students work with CASTsummer staff and alumni to learn more about auditioning and how to succeed in our summer program. The workshop ends with a performance at A Day in Our Village.

"It's really heavy stuff. It developed into a really positive thing that they'll be able to reflect on and draw from in the future. It's an important skill to teach-to put the issues out there and not be afraid of them." Tamara Witzl, principal of Telpochcalli CPS School and mother of Ixtla Arce-Witzl who performed in Looking For Natives, a video project about Richard Wright's book Native Son, Wed. Journal June 2003

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How do the students get **involved** in the group?



CAST CREW

CAST JR.

Schoolyear CAST has been a **NO CUT/NO COST** program for 33 years.

CAST at Julian Acting

- Open to all Julian students at auditions in September and January.
- Students prepare one minute monologue to audition.
- **Each child who auditions, is placed in a play** even if we have to add plays or characters to the script to do it.



CASTsummer

- Open to all 3rd-8th graders. Parents register the students online. There is a tuition. **Scholarships are available.**



Build CREW

- Open to all Julian students. No audition, but attend as many CREW calls as they would like.



Mann/Irving/Longfellow

- Open to all 3rd and 4th graders. Parents register online. There is a tuition. **Scholarships are available.**

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CAST Ambassadors is held the week before CASTsummer begins. All scholarship students are invited to participate in CAST Ambassadors. Alumni mentors are chosen by the summer staff.

"Some schools don't have the chance to have a theater program. Acting itself is fun. You get to meet people and learn new things, not just about acting but also about philosophy. In between auditions, when I'm not in CAST, I'm really bored. I don't know what I would do without it. It's a really good experience whether you like acting or not." Monty Cole, CAST member on performing in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, Forest Leaves April 2003

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What efforts are made by the organization to be inclusive and recruit children who may not initiate joining the activity on their own?

CAST works closely with:

*Julian's Choral Department where all 7th/8th grade students perform in the fall musical and are informed about the many other opportunities CAST offers.

* Julian's Social Workers and Assistant Principals who look for students that might benefit from an extracurricular activity.

* New students at all of Julian's orientation activities, as well as late arrivals who get a personal tour of the CASTlab and a meeting with our Program Manager.

*D97's elementary school principals so that they can inform their incoming families about CAST.



In 2001 CAST Council Parents and Sherlyn Reid created the Henry Reid Memorial Scholarship Fund (named for a beloved social worker at Julian) to help students who couldn't afford CAST tuitions or any other expenses associated with participation.

Since 2014 the Reid Fund has received major support from The Angell Foundation and now offers \$15,000 support annually to students in CASTsummer and CAST Jr program virtually eliminating ALL barriers to CAST activities for students who can't afford them.

PAUL M. ANGELL
FAMILY FOUNDATION

At CAST we believe that our student performers should see themselves reflected in the leadership and creative teams that lead our activities.

To that end we have

- Consciously tried to recruit more artists who are women and/or persons of color.
- Once recruited, we support artists who are new to CAST with
- Partnerships and frequent observations designed to build a lasting relationship.



These are the friendly faces of CAST!

"The performances often leave me misty-eyed because students don't comprehend how difficult the things we demand of them really are, They don't realize the skills they are acquiring, the confidence and fearlessness that will help them later in life. It is so exciting to witness."

Karla Beard, CAST director and Chicago actress, Trib Local, July 2009

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How do Special Education children become involved?

Every Julian student is welcome to participate **fully** in **every** CAST activity, **every** day, right up to the **final** bow!



You don't have to take our word for it, just ask *Savanah* by playing the video.



This is Paul and his "best buddy" Leland behind Mark Twain in CAST's production of Big River last year. Paul and his Mom wrote this script about how much he likes CAST.

PAULS PLAY: ACT I, SCENE 1

MOM: Did you like being involved in CAST?
PAUL: Yes, I liked it a lot.
MOM: What productions were you in?
PAUL: Big River and Annie Warbucks
MOM: What did you like best about being in them?
PAUL: The sets and the people.
MOM: How often did you attend rehearsal?
PAUL: Two days a week
MOM: Did you feel like you were included?
PAUL: Yes, the kids were great.
MOM: Can you give an example of someone helping you?
PAUL: My helper Leland helped me get on and off the stage in Big River. In Annie Warbucks, Carys was really helpful. She also helped me in CAST Jr when we did Jungle Book.

PAULS PLAY: ACT I, SCENE 2

MOM: Paul had a great time at CAST. He felt the other kids were very welcoming and I always saw them giving him a high 5 or a hello or a "great job" or some such greeting. He has Down syndrome and so accommodations needed to be made for his participation to be successful for both him and the production as a whole. He was brought into the production after a few weeks of working out the kinks for a couple of days, which was a comfortable amount of time for him. He is short, and so ended up in the front, which he would have done anyway, because he loves his audience. He had a D97 paraprofessional attend rehearsals and performances with him. In his first musical, the CAST staff found an 8th grade student to help him on/off the stage (his legs are short and he's a big clumsy) and that was very helpful. It was not necessary in the most recent musical. These accommodations were appropriate for Paul and useful for his involvement in CAST. I hope he has the option of participating again in 8th grade (he really only likes big musicals and they are done in the fall). It has been a great experience for him and I hope, as is the case with Special Olympics and Best Buddies, that the other students see a personal advantage in including a person with special needs in their productions.

"Big River has big themes for adolescents, none bigger than the search for identity and freedom.... Good stuff for teens to chew on."

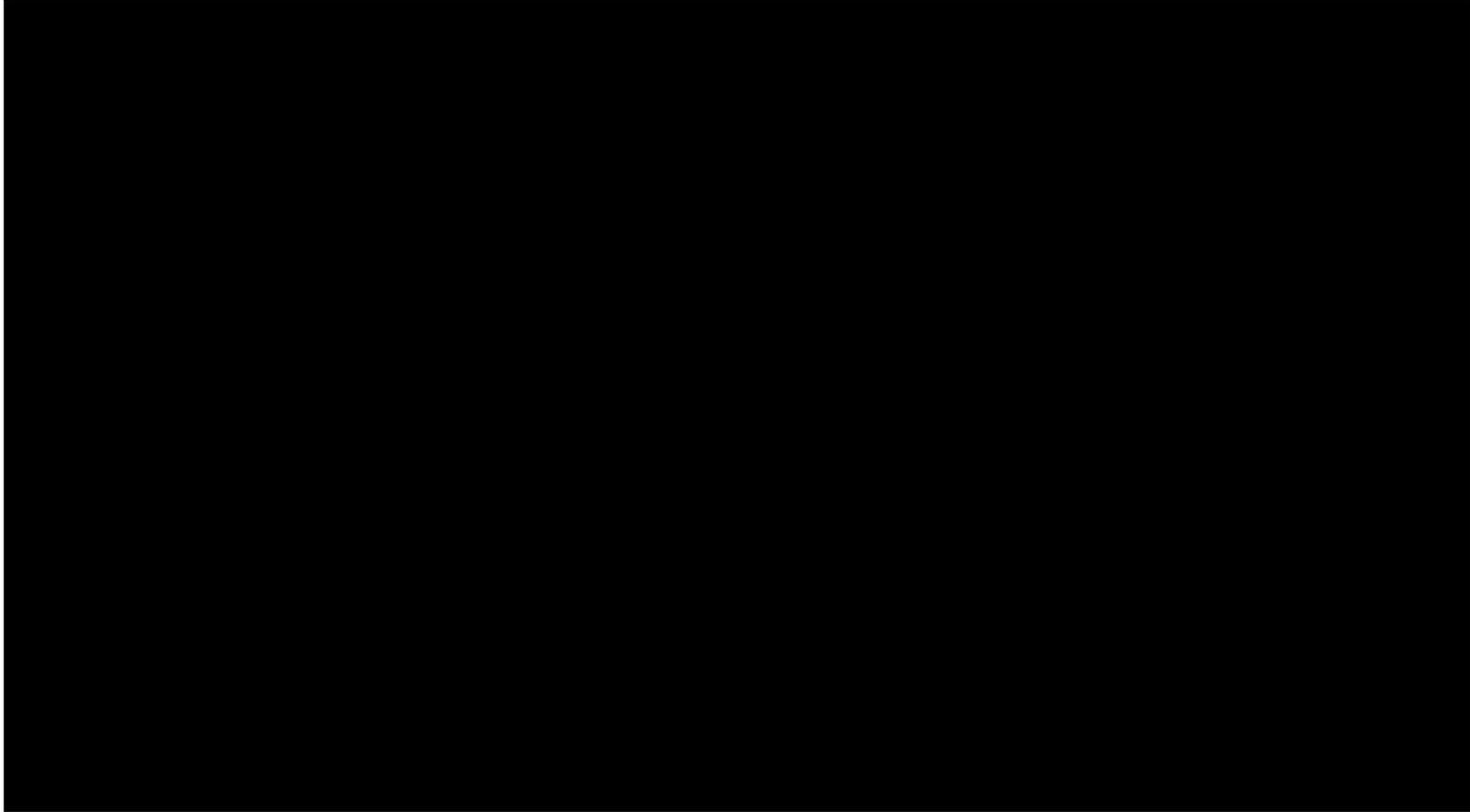
Ken Trainor, editor of the Wednesday Journal in the Wed. Journal May 1999

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Please share an overview of students impacted by both quantity and quality of the experience.



"When I was in CAST, it was a phenomenal period of growth for me-a major awakening. Today, CAST reaches an even wider mass of students...to reach its commitment to education and helping young people find their voices." Jenna White, CAST guest director and CAST alumna, Wed. Journal, January 2000

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Do your personnel have duties in D97 (e.g., teaching any classes or doing any additional work?)

Bill McGlynn
Program Director

Kathy Simon
Program Manager

Josh Prisching
Multimedia Technician

ADDITIONAL DUTIES

- Teaching choral classes about musical
- Offers Speech Drama Debate workshops on selected productions.
- Coaches West40 Speech Team

- Coordinates parent involvement in the lunch program.
- Reconciles assets in close cooperation with D97 Business Office.

- Sets up and maintains elements for all auditorium presentations.
- Helps at all CREW calls and activities.

About 25% of CAST guest directors and theatre artists are also **D97 FACULTY**, those highlighted with yellow *began at CAST* before becoming a full time part of our district family:

John Beck

Malachy Boyle

Max Dykla

Grace Fourman

Diedre Kelleher

Bessie Santos

Andrew Seymour

Art education at the middle school level allows for a different kind of problem-solving and creativity that can be focused on coming up with your own solutions on things.... It also gives them the opportunity to explore those changes that are happening and make them unique, hopefully giving them some sort of positive shape in their lives as well as significance and meaning. " Malachy Boyle, guest director and teacher at Julian,

Wed. Journal, Oct 2008

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Final thoughts you would like to share



CAST was created over 30

years ago by then principal of Julian Junior High, Dr. Ben Williams, who saw a need for a safe, after school activity for students who were not interested in athletics. What began as a couple of afterschool shows has now evolved into a comprehensive program that offers performances at both elementary and middle schools in Oak Park.

CAST has always been an

inclusive program. Every student who auditioned or came to a CREW call, was welcomed and included. But has CAST been equitable as well? We have made many efforts to achieve this goal. We have hired a staff that is diverse. We have chosen plays that speak to many different races and on many different topics.

ART is a difficult medium to

measure, so perhaps we can best summarize the importance of CAST to the Oak Park community by the cold hard fact that each time the Oak Park community has been asked whether or not they want to continue to pay for the CAST program, the community very vocally says, yes!

We can't wait to see you in the audience soon!

I voted Yes for the District 97 referenda because of CAST...a program like CAST helps kids develop good self, esteem, healthy peer relationships, leadership skills and relationships with great mentors. Linda Mosley, mother of CAST member, Wed Journal April 2017 "Why I voted"