

# Spring Musical Takes Center Stage

-The Balding Eagle, March 29-

GCS stands out in the Winston County community in many ways, and one thing our school is known for more every year is our strong Fine Arts Department.

This year, GCS presented the musical *Aladdin, Jr.*, and last week, a year of hard work culminated with several strong performances here on our campus.

Since last fall when school resumed, Fine Arts Director Becky Joy worked with students to develop a cast, learn a script, fine-tune musical numbers, and more. From selecting roles to perfecting the production scene by scene, Mrs. Joy and the students have truly built *Aladdin, Jr.* from the ground up.

And starting last Thursday night, the cast and crew presented the musical to the school and community. Needless to say, the end result was breathtaking from start to finish.

There were two evening performances Thursday and Friday. In addition, there was a special matinee performance Friday morning for any GCS students who wanted to attend.

When asked about the performances, Mrs. Joy said, "GCS's production of *Aladdin* this spring went off without a hitch. It was amazing to see each character come alive in their individual and unique roles, to tell the story of *Aladdin*. During our school-only performance, GCS students were on the edge of their seats, and lots of expressions of excitement were in the air."

I talked a little with Mrs. Joy about all the informal auditions, practices, and events that went into the final product. Again, her department worked on the project since last August. She mentioned, "We don't always have auditions for our roles. I tell my students that they audition for me every day in class. I am always interested in which role my students prefer so I do ask. Often times they receive the role they request. On some occasions, I'm torn when I think multiple students would do well in

one role. In this case I hold mini-auditions during class. This year our show was cast by October of 2021.”

Mrs. Joy added, “Something that I really liked about *Aladdin* for GCS this year, was truly having the perfect cast. I did not have a single leading role that I felt uncomfortable with or unsure about. We fit this musical well.”

When asked about her biggest challenge this year, Mrs. Joy had this to say: “My biggest challenge with making the musical happen is scheduling rehearsals that all cast members attend. It’s nearly impossible to do this because most of our students are very involved in multiple activities, from sports, to school clubs, to church.”

When asked about her biggest blessing in developing and producing *Aladdin, Jr.*, Mrs. Joy talked about enjoying watching particular students fall in love with this art. She is a firm believer that students should be well rounded in arts, athletics, and academics. These 3 A’s are extremely important to her, and she mentioned how our education systems should strive to teach the importance of them.

As mentioned previously, throughout preparation and performances, the cast juggling everything from classwork to other spring activities was, at times, difficult. More than a few of Mrs. Joy’s fine arts students play tennis and/or golf, travel during Spring Break, and even have part time jobs in addition to the challenging academic load here at GCS. Mrs. Joy mentioned that it can sometimes be tough to have “all hands on deck” for the musical simply because our kids are so involved and so busy.

Moving forward, Mrs. Joy also talked about where she would like to see GCS Fine Arts go in the future. “As I write this, our Music and Drama class is heading to Festival Disney to be adjudicated as a choir. Traveling and being adjudicated is crucial to building a successful choir. I’m very thankful that GCS has supported my efforts to provide this awesome experience for our students.”

She added, “My goal this year with my Music and Drama class was to spend 9 weeks on choir (Festival Disney), 18 weeks on musical theater (*Aladdin*), and 9 weeks on drama (*Alibis*). *Alibis* is a classic murder mystery play. I solicited my students for a student director for *Alibis* and got a very competent volunteer. Max Peterson is directing *Alibis*, and it will debut at GCS on May 5, 2022. We have a really solid cast, and I am looking forward to this final endeavor. If you come to our performance, you may be entertained by a pre-show of ‘Forever Motown’ by our Festival Disney group.”

If you were able to come out and see a performance of *Aladdin, Jr.*, thank you so much for your support of GCS Fine Arts. We know big things are in store from Mrs. Joy and these students in the future, and we are already looking forward to the next big project her talented department will produce.