

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

CUE THE LIGHTS, EXIT COVID-19

Battered by COVID-19 and living in the shadow of social distancing for two full years, the kids of our town have an opportunity to finally join together and celebrate with a summer of music, dance and joy.

The Port Summer Show (PSS) celebrates its 50th Anniversary this year. Every summer of the last half century has featured Schreiber and Weber students gathering to put on some of the greatest hits to grace Broadway. With a professional production team and an army of volunteers, PSS gives every kid-onstage or backstage-the chance to feel like a star. And when all those stars come together on the Schreiber High School stage, they light up those summer nights.

COVID-19 dimmed those lights these past two years. In that first fearful summer of 2020, the show couldn't go on and so it became a series of online courses, workshops and video performances. It was a heroic chance for the kids to learn and participate to feel a touch of their well-earned moment of stardom, but always at that necessary yet unfortunate distance. Last year's production of *Grease* brought back live performance as a bit of lighthearted fun in a time still overcast with anxiety. The kids didn't get the reunion they deserved.

This summer looks different. COVID-19 is still around. Variants are a simmering presence. New York's numbers look good. The best medical science suggests that the risk is low and manageable. The kids can be kids again.

The show this year will be Disney's *Mary Poppins*, with music and lyrics by Richard M. Sherman and Robert B. Sherman, additional music and lyrics by George Stiles and Anthony Drewe, and a script by

Julian Fellowes. The musical is based on the children's books by P. L. Travers. It's family friendly and bursting with colorful characters belting classic songs.

Teens will spend all of July working together to build the production into something unforgettable and raise the curtain that first weekend in August. Singing, dancing, acting, setting the scenery and playing the music, the kids will get to feel that spark of creativity by taking a few spare words on a script page and whipping it up into a dream for everyone to see. With high-fives and backslaps, handshakes and hugs, they'll finally put COVID-19 behind them.

The anniversary season will make it all the better. This show will take its place in the extended PSS family that stretches for generations. Those former performers will be coming back to welcome the newest members, cheering from the audience and grounding the production with a special sense of community, our community.

The gears are in motion. The show's producers will tell anyone interested how to get involved when they meet at the Port Washington Public Library on Monday, April 25 at 7 p.m. For parents who can't make the meeting in person, a zoom meeting will follow on that Wednesday. Auditions start about a month after that. Rehearsals begin once the school year ends in June. Then the curtain rises in August.

Our kids need this. Our town needs this. Neighbors joining together with laughter and music and smiles. Let's lift up our kids by bringing the curtain down on the era of COVID-19.

—Submitted by Doug Parker,
Port Washington Resident

