

**Easthampton
Theater Company**



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EASTHAMPTON THEATER COMPANY ANNOUNCES NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH WILLISTON NORTHAMPTON SCHOOL

Relationship includes a production venue in Easthampton and summer youth theater programs

EASTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS - March 27, 2024

Easthampton Theater Company announced today a new partnership with Easthampton-based Williston Northampton School. The school will host ETC's upcoming Spring production in their state-of-the-art theater, and Easthampton Theater Company will run summer youth programs on campus.

"We are so thrilled about this new partnership with Williston, which allows our community-based theater company room to grow after our sold-out first two productions *God of Carnage* and *Torch Song* " said Michael Budnick, President of Easthampton Theater Company.

Williston's theater provides ample parking, spacious, comfortable seating, a large stage with great tech and sight lines, and is centrally located in downtown Easthampton - convenient to restaurants and other entertainment venues. "It is a tribute to our early success that we are now able to establish ourselves in this great location in the city," added Budnick.

"What started as a simple discussion regarding the use of our theater has blossomed into an opportunity that doesn't come along very often," said Kevin Burke, Director of Summer Programming for Williston. "We always do our best to accommodate community requests to use Williston's facilities, but It became apparent very quickly that we have an opportunity to create a unique partnership that benefits everyone involved, especially the young people of the area and the community as a whole," added Burke.

As part of the new relationship, Easthampton plans to establish a Summer Youth Theater program on campus, relying on Williston-provided facilities and the extensive education experience of of ETC's Board members and associates. "As a community theater, it has been one of our goals to offer theater education and encourage the participation of area youth in theater arts," said Eva Husson-Stockhamer, who is the Performing Arts Director at Mohawk Trail Regional, and has also taught theater and dance throughout the Valley. Eva will direct the program in 2024, which ETC anticipates will be supported in part by grants and donations so that underserved kids may participate. "Three of our board members are educators, and we have strong relationships with theater folks throughout the area, so Williston is a great fit for ETC. With their expansive campus and well-appointed theater arts facilities, the school provides the perfect partner and launching pad for ETC's community theater education component," added Husson-Stockhamer.

"Community outreach and involvement have always been a core value at Williston, and our goal is to continue that tradition as we grow and develop our new summer programs initiative," said Kevin Burke. "At Williston, we know access to the performing arts is an important part of a student's journey and can sometimes redefine how young

people view themselves in the world. Partnering with ETC affords everyone involved an opportunity to share their passions for theater and, in whatever small way, help today's young people grow and develop into tomorrow's well-rounded citizens," he emphasized.

ETC's first production at Williston will be the uproariously funny *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, which runs June 20-23. Summer youth programming will be in July - ETC will announce further information later in the Spring.

Easthampton Theater Company is a production group created by Easthampton and nearby residents to bring quality theater productions and related cultural/educational programming to the city. Its founding board and members are dedicated to growing ETC as a premier theatrical venue and destination for the Valley.

The Williston Northampton School is a private, co-educational, day and boarding college-preparatory school in Easthampton, Massachusetts. Williston has a long history of supporting the City of Easthampton. The school's administration and board of trustees remain committed to providing financial assistance to local groups and to sharing the school's facilities with local organizations that can benefit from this use whenever possible.

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