



Reif Theater Arts Handbook

Our Mission

To inspire joy and passion for performing arts and nurture a community of artists through the creative process and performance opportunities.

The Program

Reif Theater Arts aims to inspire imagination, build confidence, and foster creative thinking through quality education and performances. Different sessions provide opportunities for different age groups.

These sessions change from year to year but generally include a fall musical session which runs September-November, a spring musical session which runs January-April, and a summer workshop which runs in late July-mid August.

In addition to these annual events, we often produce additional shows or offer additional workshops throughout the year. Check out our website for upcoming opportunities.

2025-2026 Season



Disney's Lion King Jr.

Our fall production will be Disney's Lion King Jr. for students in 3rd-12th Grade. *The Lion King JR.* tells the story of the epic adventures of a curious cub named Simba as he struggles to accept the responsibilities of adulthood and his destiny as king. Along the way, Simba encounters a colorful cast of characters including spunky lioness Nala, charismatic meerkat Timon, and loveable wart-

hog Pumbaa. To claim his rightful place on the throne and save his beloved Pridelands, Simba must find his inner strength and confront his wicked Uncle Scar. *The Lion King JR.* features classic songs from the Broadway musical and animated feature film, including "I Just Can't Wait to Be King," "He Lives in You," and "Hakuna Matata." Disney's *The Lion King* has captivated the imagination of audiences around the world, and now you have the opportunity to join the cast of this one-of-a-kind musical. Help bring the African savanna to life on the Reif stage. with Simba, Rafiki and an unforgettable cast of characters as they journey from Pride Rock to the jungle and back again in this inspiring, coming-of-age tale.

Disney's The Lion King Jr. is presented through special arrangement with and all materials are provided by Music Theatre International. Registration opens July 28. Register online at www.reifcenter.org

Auditions: Saturday, September 6, 2025

Performances: November 21-23, 2025



The Wizard of Oz Youth Edition

Join Dorothy and her loyal companion Toto as they "Follow the Yellow Brick Road" through the Land of Oz, determined to reach the Emerald City, where the great and powerful Wizard of Oz will help them get home. Of course, along the way, Dorothy encounters witches (both good and

bad), Munchkins, talking trees and winged monkeys. But most importantly, she befriends three unique characters: a Scarecrow with no brain, a Tin Man with no heart, and a Lion with no "nerve." Their journey to happiness – and self-awareness – is a glowing testament to friendship, understanding and hope in a world filled with both beauty and ugliness.

The Wizard of Oz Youth Edition is presented through special arrangement with and all materials are provided by Music Theatre International. Registration opens November 17, 2025. Register online at www.reifcenter.org

Auditions: Sunday, January 4, 2026

Performances: March 27-29, 2026



Summer Theater Workshop 2026

Our summer workshop is designed to give students in 3rd through 12th grade an opportunity to be seen and heard! Unlike the three month productions we offer during the school year, this program is a shorter time commitment and is a perfect place to start for students who want to try theater for the first time. Our education director, Katie Smith, uses scripts that she has written which gives her the freedom to highlight the talents of each student and create enough speaking parts to give every child a chance to shine. This is a unique opportunity as scripts rarely have more than 20 speaking parts. While the lead characters will still have more to say than the ensemble, it is a unique opportunity for every child to have a chance to try out their acting chops.

The title of this season's workshop is undecided. Keep checking for updates as we get closer to registration.

Registration will open in the spring. Register online at www.reifcenter.org

This year's workshop will run July 20-August 9. There will be three performances between August 7 and 9. Times TBD.

Rehearsal Attendance

Please make all rehearsals a priority. Rehearsals cannot be made up. If you miss a choreography rehearsal where a large section of a dance is taught, there may not be an opportunity to reteach the choreography to get them caught up. Time is precious in the rehearsal process.

Upon registering for any Reif Theater Arts session, you must fill out and submit a conflicts form. This form is available on our website as a resource for each show. Please be thorough as you fill this out so the director can plan casting and rehearsals to serve the cast in the best way possible.

e.g. Instead of simply saying "I am in soccer." Please list which days and times you will have a conflict.

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each rehearsal. Out of courtesy to the directors and cast, please notify the education director with as much advance notice if additional absences come up.

*If your child is sick, please notify the education director, keep them home and allow them to recover. Germs pass so easily when kids are singing and dancing in close proximity.

Communication

We have returned to AKADA software for all of our class registrations. The link to AKADA is on our website and will walk you through the simple process of creating your account. Please make sure that your contact information is up to date in your AKADA account. Our main form of communication will be via email. Please list any parent and student emails to which you want our communications sent.

Please also make sure that your account has valid phone numbers for us to contact you and emergency contacts if needed.

Please use email as your means of communication with the director. ksmith@reifcenter.org

Schedule

Rehearsal schedules will be sent out weekly. We try to send it out Friday night for the following week.

People often wonder why we can't send the whole schedule at once. The reason is that we often don't know which space we will have designated for rehearsals on a given week until the Friday before. We have to fit in around choir, band, dance, GR Players, and the high school plays, as well as the touring shows that come through. The Reif is a busy place. On top of that, it is necessary to take in the week's progress to help determine which scenes we need to focus on the following week. Once the parts are cast, some days will be divided up by scene and only the students in the given scenes will have to attend.

Student Etiquette

Theater is meant to be fun but should also teach us focus and discipline. Students studying theater arts are expected to display certain behaviors while at the Reif. Students should not roam the building. They should wait in the area of the lobby outside of the studio theater until they are invited into rehearsal. This will prevent interruptions to the many other activities that take place at the Reif.

While in rehearsal students should be focused on the show, not having their own conversations, playing on their phones, or being disruptive. Please leave your devices in your bags while in rehearsal.

What to Bring

Students should bring three items to every rehearsal.

- Their script
- A pencil
- A water bottle

For rehearsals that last longer than two hours, students should also remember to bring a snack. Snacks should only be eaten in the time and designated place for snack time. The theater is a special place and we need to take care of it. Please only bring snacks that will not make a mess. No red foods, especially tomato sauce. Please no sugary drinks.

Homework

Students will have some homework throughout the process of the show. Students will need to commit time to memorizing lines, practicing music and dance, and working on character development. The performing arts require individual attention and practice outside of group rehearsals. Memorization takes repetition and performance quality comes from exploration after a performer knows the material well. If you wait until the last minute, your performance will not be the best it could be. Parents, please help and encourage your child.

Rehearsal Attire

Students should wear clothes that allow them to move. If students wear skirts, they should wear shorts or leggings underneath in case we are dancing in rehearsal.

Students with long hair should pull their hair back out of their face.

Jazz shoes are always the best option for rehearsals. If you don't have Jazz shoes at the beginning of the rehearsal process, please wear closed toe shoes that will stay on your feet. No crocs or flip-flops. For most shows Jazz shoes will be required. Once casting is complete, you will receive notice of what kind of footwear you will need to acquire for a given show.

Costumes

Students will be responsible for supplying their own footwear for the show. This is often Jazz Shoes or Character Heels. Once casting is complete, you should receive information about what style shoe to order. Order these as early as possible to allow your child the most opportunity to practice in the shoes they will wear for the show.

We do our best to supply costumes for the shows. As our cast sizes have grown, it has become more difficult to supply enough of everything we need for every cast. In addition to footwear, you may be required to supply select items for your character.

e.g. When we produced Madagascar, students brought in their own sweatpants and sweatshirts for their lemur costumes while we supplied the tails, ears, gloves, etc.

Once casting is complete, this information will be communicated early enough to allow you to acquire what you need.

Scholarships

The Reif Arts Council believes that *“quality arts experiences should be accessible to all.”* To that end, we are able to offer limited need-based scholarships for our education programs. Please contact the box office for scholarship applications.

Parent Volunteering

Throughout each production are several opportunities for parents to get involved. We need moms and dads to help out backstage during shows, with our annual fundraisers, sewing costumes and various other projects. We need your help to keep our program great! Can you sew, build, paint, craft, monitor children, etc.? Let us know how you can help!

Fundraising

Producing a show requires the coming together of many pieces. You have the performers who act, sing, dance and communicate with the audience. You have artistic directors, music directors, and choreographers who create and teach the vision for the show. You have set designers, technical directors, stage managers, and more who make the technical aspects of running a performance work. You have costume designers, seamstresses, prop masters, and painters who transform the stage into other worlds. This blending of arts and artists is what makes theater so unique among the performing arts.

We often rely on volunteers and donations to make some of these aspects possible. However, there are many expenses which are unavoidable when it comes to theatrical production. For each show have a specific look we need to achieve and with the growing size of our casts, it is unreasonable to attempt to make all costumes in house. To avoid passing these expenses directly to the parents of our students, we ask for the help of our families and friends to fundraise.

For our fall production this year we will be running a Krispy Kreme fundraiser to cover production costs. In the first weeks of rehearsal you will receive a packet with the details for the fundraiser.

- Our expectation for the fundraiser is that each student sell a minimum of 10 dozen donuts.
- If you would like to opt out of the fundraiser you may make a \$50 contribution to production costs.

For our spring production we will be running a Pancake Breakfast fundraiser to cover production costs. In the first weeks of rehearsals you will receive a packet with details for the fundraiser.

- Our expectation for the fundraiser is that each student sell a minimum of 10 pancake breakfast tickets.
- If you would like to opt out of the fundraiser you may make a \$50 contribution to production costs.

Auditions

In the “real world” auditions can be a very stressful thing. There is the fear of not making it that weighs on an auditionee which can cause them enough stress to affect their performance. The beauty of this educational program is that everyone gets a part! There is no fear of not being cast which should ease a bit of the worry that comes with getting up on stage and auditioning. However, stage fright is real and the more prepared you are for an audition, the more successful you will be.

Each show has audition information which is accessible on our website. This resource includes helpful hints for auditioning and often descriptions of characters and plot points. It is always impressive when students come in to auditions with a basic understanding of the show. It shows they have taken the initiative and suggests that they may be a cast member who will take the process seriously.

Auditions (Continued)

Other resources you will find on the website may include musical tracks and audition sides. The tracks for our musical productions will help you learn the music and be ready to audition well when asked to sing a selection from the show. The audition sides are brief cuts from the script that contain dialogue which can be used in auditions to show how well different actors interact with each other. These do not need to be memorized. However, familiarizing yourself with the material in advance will give you an advantage in any audition.

We know how hard it is to audition. Different people have different gifts and shine in different situations. This is why the casting process will often take more than one day. Depending on how many kids audition, one day of seeing the kids may not be enough to show everyone's strengths. The initial audition may only allow us time to see everyone share a monologue or poem and sing a short excerpt. The first rehearsal may include some scene work or group projects to show how students interact with others or how well they respond to direction. The next rehearsal may involve chorus work to see how well they learn music. Sometimes it will take a week of getting to know a cast before all of the roles have been assigned. Please be patient and use every opportunity to show us what you can do while these difficult decisions are being made.

Casting

While we are committed to creating opportunities for any student who wants to try their turn on the stage, the reality is that plays are not written to give everyone the same amount of stage time. There are often a maximum of 20 speaking parts when we have a cast of 75. This can lead to frustrations and hurt feelings among the cast.

When we cast a show we make choices based on what we see in auditions. We cast people where we feel they will be the most successful so that we are putting on the best show possible. We will not cast someone in a role if they have not demonstrated the vocal requirements or stage presence to represent a role well. Please understand that the directing team has an artistic vision for each production, as well as the education and professional experience to confidently cast, stage, and produce a show that will allow each child to shine.

Managing Expectations

Parents, you can do a lot of good toward managing expectations. The way you speak about casting at home and in the community can have a great impact on how your child will react and their attitude in rehearsal. Please encourage your child to be supportive of their peers even in the face of disappointment, and to be kind and humble if they have been cast in a lead role.

The world has enough negativity without our students trying to steal joy from each other. Being cast in the ensemble does not mean that a student has not done a good job. It just means that they weren't the best choice for one of the principal roles. Being a member of the ensemble is often more rewarding than having a lead role. There is usually more camaraderie and fun to be had as part of a group.

The saying goes, "There are no small parts." This is true. Every person on stage is given responsibilities. The cast comes to depend on each and every member to do their best. Our promise is to challenge the kids to grow as artists and to set them up for success in whatever role they have. The experience of being part of a cast is priceless regardless of what part you play.

In the end we are all here to have fun and create art. Here is to another amazing year with Reif Theater Arts!