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An 'amazing' lesson for St. Raphael students

Musical play teaches children values

DECLAN FINUCANE

Nov 17, 2004

Young Malton students were treated to a theatrical lesson last Wednesday on how they can be "super-awesome-unbelievable-the-most-amazing-you-can-be-amazing."

In simpler terms, some 100 Kindergarten-to-Grade 3 students at St. Raphael Catholic Elementary School were shown, in dramatic fashion, exactly how to fulfill their potential and help others at the same time.

Amazing You Can Be, an hour-long interactive children's show featuring singing, some puppets and a barrel-full of laughs that aims to develop self-esteem in youngsters, played to a full-house inside the gymnasium.

Tricia Dutcher, founder and artistic director of Scarborough-based Kid-Safe Productions, which has been bringing such shows to elementary schools across southern Ontario since 2000, said the message to children is clear.

"We show them how to be super-awesome-unbelievable-the-most-amazing-you-can-be-amazing," said Dutcher, who delivers those exact words a handful of times during the performance.

Dutcher's cast-mate on stage, fellow actor/songstress Lisa Carmody -- who plays the role of a good-hearted, innocent princess throughout the show -- delivers the words as well. Helper-of-all-trades Tanja Bucar, a co-op student, rounds out the three-person production.

The show brings children back in time to a world of princesses, castles, friendly dragons, helpful frogs and a town crier who makes a lesson-filled transformation from a jealous, spiteful person to supportive best friend of the princess right in front of the young audience.

The performers encourage participation from the children throughout the show. With cheers, words of encouragement for the saddened princess, when needed, and a lot of giggles and laughs, the St. Raphael students delivered.

Throughout the performance, several key lessons are brought home to the students: Don't give up, always give it your best (no matter what it is you're doing), ask for help if you're stuck and once you've achieved your goal, the feeling is fantastic -- like having just climbed a mountain.

"We finish off by telling the children to always be a friend. Say nice things to

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Staff photo by Rob Beintema

Tricia Dutcher (left) and Lisa Carmody, part of Kid-Safe Productions, brought a positive message to children when they presented their play at St. Raphael Catholic Elementary School in Malton recently. The show, Amazing You Can Be, teaches children how to fulfill their potential while helping others at the same time.

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THE MISSISSAUGA NEWS

others to show you support what they are trying to learn too. Always give a helping hand," said Dutcher, who worked in children's services before she created Kid-Safe Productions.

"Even though we deal with serious subjects, we believe the entertainment value is number one."

St. Raphael principal Garry Willson said Kid-Safe performed an anti-bullying show last year at the school.

He said that show was a success and Dutcher was asked to bring the production back this year.

Willson said the show was especially important since the St. Raphael student body is also comprised of former St. Michael and Our Lady of the Airways pupils.

Those two schools closed last year.

"We have to rebuild the (school) community and give the children common experiences," said Willson.

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