

Lights! Camera! Cancelled...

By Kyla Kralapp and Dane Marks | September 29, 2020

With the coronavirus pandemic still affecting communities, many schools have cancelled after school activities such as sports and clubs. Students are facing a difficult loss of extracurriculars, but in order to keep everyone safe, they are willing to make sacrifices. An Allendale group that has made such sacrifices are the theater students. Last spring’s musical, *Newsies*, was forced to end rehearsal two weeks before opening night. After months of preparation, this unfortunate end was difficult for many students. And now, they are having to wait a little bit longer to get back on stage.

Ellie Hilliker, the theater director of Allendale High School, explains that “there were multiple factors” when it came to cancelling the fall play. “We looked at health risks... other after school activities... and we also looked at scheduling.” She explained that



they didn’t want to put kids at risk of contracting Covid-19 and it would be difficult to gather an audience while social distancing. Other after school activities have been cancelled and she felt it was “inconsistent to say it wasn’t safe for one group but was for another.” She took scheduling into account, suggesting starting in October or November rather than September. Unfortunately the FAC was booked, meaning there would be no time to reserve for rehearsals and shows. A virtual show was proposed, but with limited budget and resources for students, this option was ruled out as well.

That feeling when theater is cancelled... Senior Madde Hosfelt said about the loss of the program, “I think it’s very unfortunate because that’s how a lot of people escape.” The theater is a place of community, and many students will be hurting without that support this fall. Research by the Australian *Theatre for Youth People* found that, “89% reported that participating in drama had a positive impact on their self-confidence and 94% of respondents said that it had a positive impact on their overall sense of wellbeing.” For theater students who are feeling the effects of losing your creative and social outlet, know that your usual cast members are feeling the same. Even without a show, we are always here for you.



Picture from a *Newsies* rehearsal. L to R: Madde Hosfelt, Virginia Boughner, Kyla Kralapp, Elazar Ossewaarde, Brandon VanWyk, Kai Deboer, Jillian Love, AJ Carter

When asked about the future of the theater program, Director Hilliker said, “I have faith it won’t affect the theater program long term.” She mentioned there will be adjustments since the budget will be lower next year, and they will have to up their advertising game to get people to come, but she assured “we have good students in the program, and a supportive staff at Allendale that backs us. So after a year or two, I’ll have faith we’ll bounce back.”