

**NEW Heights**  
**High School Theatre Collaborative**  
www.NEWHeightsOnStage.org

**NEW  
HEIGHTS**



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **NEW Heights Formed to Continue Summer Musical Tradition, Announces *Legally Blonde* performances at Ashwaubenon Performing Arts Center**

*Student-focused theater group will hold auditions in May; performances set for August*

**GREEN BAY, WI - May 1, 2026** — An expanded performing arts initiative, NEW Heights, has been formed to serve student performers across Northeast Wisconsin. The organization has announced it will present the hit musical *Legally Blonde*, with auditions scheduled for late May and performances taking place August 7-9, 2026, at the Ashwaubenon Performing Arts Center.

NEW Heights was created by a group of dedicated arts advocates in Northeast Wisconsin to ensure that high school students continue to have access to a high-quality summer musical experience. Building on the legacy of previous programs Next Stage and Studio 12, the organization aims to provide an inclusive, collaborative environment where young performers from across the region can come together to create meaningful theatrical work.

The summer 2026 production, *Legally Blonde The Musical*, book by Heather Hach, music and lyrics by Laurence O'Keefe and Nell Benjamin, is a high-energy musical based on the iconic film, following Elle Woods as she defies expectations and proves herself at Harvard Law School. Known for its vibrant contemporary score and humorous dialogue, the show celebrates determination, self-confidence, and staying true to oneself, making it an ideal showcase for student performers.

The production will be led by an experienced creative team, including Kirt Graves (Director), Debbie Drumm (Music Director), Kari Devine (Pit Orchestra Director), and Anna Allen (Choreographer). Together, they bring a wealth of experience creating high-quality theatrical productions and a shared commitment to creating a supportive environment for student performers. Additional information about the creative team is included below.

"*Legally Blonde* is such an exciting and empowering show, and it's the perfect way to launch this new chapter," said Graves. "I can't wait to bring students together from all over the area to create something joyful, challenging, and, hopefully, unforgettable."

Auditions for *Legally Blonde* will be held on Tuesday, May 26, from 6:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. and Saturday, May 30, from 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., with callbacks scheduled for Sunday, May 31, from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Auditions are open to incoming high school students and graduating seniors from across Northeast Wisconsin. Additional audition details and requirements will be made available through NEW Heights' official social media platforms and at [NEWHeightsOnStage.org](http://NEWHeightsOnStage.org).

Performances of *Legally Blonde The Musical* will take place August 7-9, 2026, at the Ashwaubenon Performing Arts Center, located at 2391 S. Ridge Road in Ashwaubenon. Showtimes are scheduled for Friday, August 7 at 7:00 p.m.; Saturday, August 8 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.; and Sunday, August 9 at 2:00 p.m. A separate release will announce when tickets go on sale.

The formation of NEW Heights is rooted in a shared passion for ensuring that young performers in Northeast Wisconsin continue to have access to transformative & educational theatrical experiences. Following last year's lauded production of *Hadestown: Teen Edition*, community members recognized the profound impact it had on students and felt a responsibility to carry forward the legacy created by Next Stage and continued by Studio 12. Under the leadership of Brent Brayko, a dedicated group of advocates came together with a common goal: to rebuild and reimagine a summer musical experience for the next generation.

"I am honored to be a part of this group and grateful for the partnerships that have already been forged with the Ashwaubenon PAC, Evergreen Theatre, and numerous local artists," said Brayko. "This collaboration will provide high school students from all over Northeast Wisconsin the opportunity to engage in a high-quality theatrical experience that sharpens not only their skills on and behind the stage but also their pure love of theatre."

NEW Heights aims to build a sustainable model by rotating creative teams from year to year, giving students the benefit of diverse artistic perspectives shaped by a wide range of experiences. At the core of NEW Heights' mission is the belief that education is a lifelong endeavor. Striving for new heights is not about achieving success but rather adopting a growth mindset that will serve young people throughout their lives.

*Legally Blonde The Musical* is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI).

### **NEW Heights Community Advisory Council**

**Brent Brayko**, Education Instructor, Administrator, and Director

**Kate Williams** - Executive Director, Ashwaubenon Performing Arts Center

**Mike Ajango** - Board President, Evergreen Theater

**Sherrill Revolinski** - Community Volunteer and Outreach, Evergreen Theater

**Brandon Rockstroh** - Music Educator, Green Bay Southwest High School

## CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

### **Kirt Graves, Director**

Kirt Graves is an actor and director originally from Sheboygan, WI. He helmed recent productions of *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (2021), *Xanadu* (2022), and *The Rocky Horror Show* (2024). As an audiobook narrator, he has voiced over 300 audiobooks, including the NYT Bestselling *Under the Whispering Door* by TJ Klune and the Lambda Literary Award-Winning *Icarus* by K. Ancrum. He coached high school speech & debate at Sheboygan North High School for 15 years, and he was awarded the William Hintz Memorial Award for Coaching Excellence in 2016. He now lives in De Pere with his husband and two dogs. You can learn more about Kirt at [www.kirtreads.com](http://www.kirtreads.com).

### **Debbie Drumm, Music Director**

Debbie Drumm received her BA in K-12 Choral/General Music from UW Green Bay and began her teaching career in the Howard Suamico School District. After leaving that job to expand her private voice and piano studio to full-time, she pursued numerous part-time jobs such as teaching ad hoc at UWGB, adjudicating for WSMA festivals, directing the Silver Lake Children's Choir, accompanying and being a clinician at area schools, and being on the worship team at St. Mark Lutheran Church. Debbie has been the vocal director for the Ashwaubenon High School musicals for the past seven years and enjoys her time with her husband, Roger, daughter, Cami, and spoiled dog, Bella.

### **Kari Devine, Pit Orchestra Director**

Kari Devine received her Music Ed degree from St. Norbert College and has been involved in numerous productions around Northeast Wisconsin. Some favorites she directed include *Aida*, *Footloose*, *Legally Blonde*, *Kiss Me Kate*, and *School of Rock*. She's a native of the Appleton area and is currently the Production Director of *Dancing With Our Stars - Green Bay* and *Just Dance* in Appleton. She currently lives in Green Bay with her pup, Gus, and when she's not doing her day job or theatre, she works as a professional pyrotechnic, shooting airshows across the country.

### **Anna Allen, Choreographer**

Anna has extensive training in tap, jazz, and ballet and is an active performer in the community. Anna has been choreographing musicals for both high schools and the community for over 20 years. Anna is an educator in the Howard-Suamico School District and active in Theater Arts at her school. She directs the school musical and the end-of-year teacher dance. Anna is married and has two wonderful children.

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