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Inside Broadway brings performing arts to Glendale elementary school

By Anthony Giudice | agiudice@ridgewoodtimes.com | [Follow @A_GiudiceReport](#)



Photos by Anthony Giudice

The students of P.S./I.S. 119 with teaching artist Nick Saldivar after their performance.

As part of Inside Broadway's after-school arts program, the students at P.S./I.S. 119 in Glendale performed their play "The After School Club" on Thursday in the school's auditorium for parents, teachers and fellow classmates.

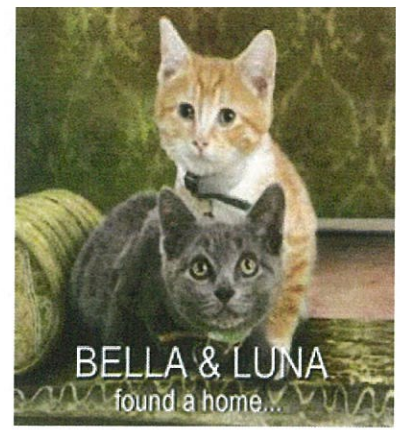
Inside Broadway, an arts education nonprofit, is funded by the City Council's Cultural After-School Adventures (C.A.S.A.) Initiative. Through the C.A.S.A. Initiative, Inside Broadway has brought, and will continue to bring, a taste of Broadway to over 500 students in over 20 public schools throughout the boroughs this winter and spring.

The nonprofit is in its 33rd year of operation, providing city public schools with arts education programs, professional staff members and artists who teach the students dancing, singing, acting, theater history and how to design and build the scenery and backdrops for their show.

City Councilwoman Elizabeth Crowley helped bring the C.A.S.A. program to P.S./I.S. 119 through a grant.

"We really appreciate that Councilwoman Crowley gave us the opportunity to bring drama back," said Jeanne Fagan, principal at P.S./I.S. 119. "We don't have a drama program at the school. We have arts and music, but no drama."

The play, which the students created themselves, was inspired by the '80s cult classic film "The Breakfast Club." In the story, two rival factions in the school, the "nerds" and "cool kids," are sent to detention. While there, they sing and dance their way past their differences and all become friends in the end.



The music for the play included songs from the 1980s such as Pat Benatar's "Hit Me With Your Best Shot," Twisted Sister's "We're Not Gonna Take It," Journey's "Don't Stop Believing" and more.

"We are excited to expand the arts program at P.S./I.S. 119 to include musical theater to go along with their other arts programs," Katie McAllister, program director of Inside Broadway, said.

The students who took part in the play were Quinn Corcino, Sheikh Hasin, Julia Sirkoski, Adam Sirkoski, Aafant Shrestha, Alexa Garci, Samantha Liu, Sylvester Leyton, Darren Valdera and Jayda Nicole Catrina Fogarty.



Since January, the children have been working with teaching artist Nick Saldivar for two days a week, two hours each day to create the play.

"All the kids wrote parts of the play and we cut and pasted it all together," Saldivar said. "I try to get the kids to create and generate their own content."

Saldivar said he usually works with 30 kids per group in other schools, so working with such a small group of 10 students at P.S./I.S. 119 was "a great experience."

"They are a really dedicated, lovely bunch," Saldivar said. "I've been teaching them technique, having them think critically and be engaged."

Besides writing and performing in the play, the students also helped decorate by painting the banner that hung behind them while they were on stage.

As a treat for the students, McAllister announced that they, along with other students from schools in the C.A.S.A. Initiative, will get to go behind the scenes of the Broadway hit "Wicked."

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