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Glendale students learn the secrets of Broadway

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Photo by Anthony Giudice

Pictured from left to right: Darren Valdera, Quinn Corcino, Adam Sikorski and Julia Sikorski from P.S./I.S. 119 in Glendale who went behind the scenes of "Wicked."

Students from P.S./I.S. 119 got a chance to look behind the scenes and learn how a hit Broadway show is put together.

The students who took part in the Glendale public school's partnership with Inside Broadway, a program designed to bring the performing arts to more than 20,000 children in more than 75 schools across the city, were invited to the Gershwin Theater in Manhattan to go behind the scenes of the Broadway show "Wicked" earlier this month.

More than 3,000 students from all five boroughs attended the free Creating the Magic seminar hosted by Inside Broadway, where they learned the dynamics of putting on a professional show, as well as learning about career opportunities in the performing arts from the actors, musicians, sound technicians and other members of the cast and crew of "Wicked."

The professionals showed the kids how the props worked, how the sound effects came from hidden speakers throughout the theater and how the 23-musician orchestra is located beneath the stage. Some of the cast members even performed musical numbers from the show.

"I thought it was really cool," said Quinn Corcino, an eighth-grader at P.S./I.S. 119. "The stage design was really cool, the vines were interesting and the dragon was great."

Sixth-grader Adam Sikorski enjoyed the demonstration of how the props worked, especially the head of the Wizard of Oz.

"The Oz head was my favorite," he said. "I really liked when they showed the back of it and you saw all the different instruments and switches."

Ashley Wool, a teaching artist with Inside Broadway who was at the seminar helping usher students around the Gershwin Theater, said that the kids really enjoyed this learning experience.

"This was the third one of these that I've been to," she said. "This was a really special one. The kids were very responsive."

"I always like watching these because they show the other aspects that bring the show together," Wool continued. "[The students] see it is not as easy as going to a theater and doing the show. That's the kind of thing that will bring kids into the performing arts world. It shows respect for all of the people working on it."

The students from P.S./I.S. 119 took away more than just a fun experience from the Creating the Magic seminar.

"I learned that it's not just about the cast, but it's about the crew too," said Julia Sikorski, a P.S./I.S. 119 eighth-grader.

Darren Valdera, also an eighth-grader, learned "how important the crew is."

"It is also important to have loud volume when you're on stage for the crew to hear their cues," he added.

The students will take all that they learned during the Creating the Magic seminar and put it to use as they get ready to perform "Once on this Island Jr."

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