

Library reveals shades of experimental theater

By LYNN ORR

The library might be the last place one would expect to find pre-teens being taught the finer art of making up.

But 10 fifth and sixth grade girls were busily engaged in selecting shades of pancake makeup, coloring their eyelids with iridescent aqua, and outlining their mouths with bright red lipstick last Thursday in Farmington Hills Library.

The purpose? The girls were getting their first lesson in experimental theater, one of the many six-week after-school programs conducted by the libraries.

"I never put lipstick on before," said Laura Sweet, but like the others she was soon wielding a tube with expertise as the girls learned how to makeup their faces for the stage.

"We want them to enjoy themselves and learn a little bit about what acting involves," said course instructor and librarian Denise Moll.

"AT THEIR AGE, they haven't become that inhibited about doing things in front of people, and we're trying to stretch that out a little longer," she added.

The goal of the class is two-fold—learning about acting and learning to use library materials.

After experimenting with makeup, the girls each performed a short pantomime they prepared in advance of the class. Kathy Cahill mimicked the nightly ritual of brushing teeth and gargling, and Pam Rowen stirred an imaginary bit of piecework.

"You're a hot fudge sundae that was left on the counter, and you're melting into a big puddle," Ms. Moll told Laura Sweet. Laura, who had the disadvantage of performing first, decided that trying to be a melting glob was too difficult and opted for preparing her morning breakfast.

The girls had their first taste of the smell of greasepaint, and although the audience was scant in numbers, performing before others always seems to generate some trepidation.

Next week the girls will pantomime a number from a musical, using library records if they wish. Their third session will involve interpretive readings, and the remaining classes will focus on combining voice and movement with a monologue to be performed in the final session.

The class was limited to 10 students, so the library plans another six-week session in March for those who didn't get into the first session. Although the girls managed to beat

cut the boys who had tried to register for the class, the next session should be co-ed, said Ms. Moll.

"I think the class would appeal more to girls, but four boys are on the waiting list," she explained.

The class involves a little more work than most library offerings, she added. "I'm not yet sure how they're going to react to that."

THE GIRLS SEEMED to love the first session. Dana Curtin, who volunteered as the guinea pig, giggled while Ms. Moll applied rouge and eye-liner to emphasize Dana's features

under the stage lights.

"Suck in your cheeks and apply the rouge on the line formed," Ms. Moll instructed her students. "You need a steady hand for eyeliner."

"Who's got that white stuff?" and "I need a mirror" could be heard, as the girls scrambled to color their faces.

A chorus of groans echoed in the auditorium when Ms. Moll informed the class that they'd be on stage right from the beginning.

"You might as well get used to it," said the librarian, and the girls adjusted.



"How do you do this?" asks Kathy Cahill as she for the light, juvenile female complexion. (Staff attempts to cover her freckles with pancake makeup photos by Harry Mauthe)



Under the lights of the Farmington Hills Library auditorium, Denise Moll's class discovers there's more to acting than meets the eye.



Pam Rowen couldn't figure out a way to get her makeup right without some facial gyrations.



"Is this right?" asked Laura Sweet as she covers the shine on her nose.



Sharing a mirror and similar expressions, Lynn Becker, Pam Rowen and Laura Sweet find sponges, baby oil and cotton swabs important accessories in applying and removing make-up.



Lynn Becker learns how to apply pancake make-up, a stage necessity.

Harry Spring



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