

VACT

VERONA AREA
COMMUNITY THEATER
presents

**The
Children's
Hour**



February 9, 10, 16, 17, 2023 - 7:30 pm

February 11, 18, 2023 - 2:00 pm

VACT Theater
(103 Lincoln Street, Verona)

32nd Season, 168th Show



Enjoy the night of
entertainment with
Verona Area
Community Theater



The Verona Area Community Theater
Production of



**The
Children's
Hour**

Written by

LILLIAN HELLMAN

THE CHILDRENS HOUR

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Remember to turn off audible pagers and cell phones during the performance.

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The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

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Smoking is not permitted.

# AACTFest Competition 2023

You may notice that the set for *The Children's Hour* looks different from a typical play set at VACT in that it is far less substantial than the usual full house-type set you often see in such a production. This is because *The Children's Hour* was VACT's entry into the American Association of Community Theater's (AACT) AACTFest Competition, which limits the size set that can be used by a production.

The AACTFest process begins with a statewide festival and winners of each state festival then move on to one of the ten regional festivals. Winners of the regional festivals move on to the national theater festival that is held by AACT every odd-numbered year. This year's state festival, sponsored by the Wisconsin Association of Community Theater, and hosted by the Beaver Dam Area Community Theater, was held on January 21, 2023.

Participating companies are limited to presenting a one-act play or a cutting of play that cannot exceed one hour in length, so the production you are watching is different from the one-hour cutting we presented at the festival. All sets and props must fit into a 10'x10' box. When the word "go" is called the company has 10 minutes to set all set pieces and props, then return to the box. The production then begins and must finish before the one-hour period expires. If the production exceeds one hour it is disqualified. When the performance has ended the company returns to "the box." Once again, "go" is called and the company has 10 minutes to strike the set and return it and all props back to the box. Once the set has been struck the company has the wonderful opportunity to be given feedback by the three AACT adjudicators assigned to the festival. While *The Children's Hour* was not selected to move on to the regional level, we were so happy to have participated in this great festival and it was fantastic to watch the other productions and see how much talent and creativity there is amongst community theaters in Wisconsin. Additionally, our costumer, Gail Gomach won an Outstanding Costumer Award at the festival and we are so proud of her!

VACT is a longtime AACT member and participant in this great festival process. We are so happy for the theaters that moved on to the regional competition and can't wait to see if a Wisconsin theater moves on to the national competition!



Praise to Timothy Farley! It is simply amazing how he manages to restore old pianos and to bring them to new life again.

—Paul Badura Skoda

I am profoundly grateful to Timothy Farley, piano rebuilder, scholar, technician and tuner par excellence, for demonstrating the precious benefits there are in applying older, traditional tunings to keyboard instruments.

—Peter Serkin

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Thank you to everyone for your generous support. If we have made an error in your listing, please contact Dee Baldock at 608-332-7991

# the production staff

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|                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Director . . . . .         | Sara Ward-Cassady |
| Producer . . . . .         | Sarah Lederer     |
| Set Designer . . . . .     | Alex Rosenbaum    |
| Costume Designer . . . . . | Gail Gomach       |
| Stage Manager . . . . .    | Rachel Erickson   |
| Scenic Painter . . . . .   | Gina Hamon        |
| Props Manager . . . . .    | Marie Kyle        |
| Lighting Design . . . . .  | Steve Nickels     |
| Sound . . . . .            | Dale Nickels      |
| Programs . . . . .         | Sara Pfantz       |
| Tickets . . . . .          | Lynn Vilker       |
| Website . . . . .          | Sara Ward-Cassady |

Thank you to everyone that helped with costumes, props, sets, backstage, ushering and everything else that makes this production possible!

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# notes from the director

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I first read *The Children's Hour* in a college theater class and it has stuck with me for 30 years. The fact that it was written in 1934 but that its themes are still so relevant today is both fascinating and somewhat depressing. Not only that the "rumor mill" still has great power to wreak havoc on people's lives, but that the underlying themes of self-righteousness in the name of "good," discrimination, and hatred and fear of things that are different are sadly still prominent today. This cast had to grapple with these heavy themes and it was incredible to watch them dive into this script and bring the emotion and humanity of these characters to life.

Thank you to producer Sarah Lederer for supporting this production and ensuring that all the administrative pieces came together so that we could focus on this complex script. Thank you also to set designer Alex Rosenbaum, who always listens to my fractured set ideas and brings them together with fantastic results. Many thanks to Gail Gomach, whose creativity was integral to the beautiful picture painted onstage. This was my first opportunity to work with Stage Manager Rachel Erickson, who was absolutely stupendous in providing guidance in working through many little set and staging quirks – I cannot wait to work with them again! Gina Hamon's artistic vision was instrumental in bringing cohesion and beauty to our set pieces, and Marie Kyle was, as always, amazing in providing the perfect props, always willing to chase down the things that took the set to the next level. Thanks also to Steve Nickels who always sees the perfect way to enhance the stage through his beautiful lighting, and thanks to Dale Nickels for providing us with the sound to further bring the script to life, as well as his great acting feedback during the production process. Finally, greatest thanks to VACT founder Dee Baldock, who is the whole reason I am at VACT to begin with. Dee, you always encourage me to embark on new projects and are always there to answer my many questions, whether about theater contests, licensing, staging, or VACT history. Your counsel is forever appreciated.

Additionally, thank you to this incredible cast. You were tasked with bringing a powerful story full of heavy themes to fruition and you responded to every character challenge, every blocking challenge, every emotional challenge with enthusiasm and creativity. Your willingness to adapt and be flexible and try whatever was thrown at you was amazing and I am so glad we were able to work together on this show.

Finally, thank you to my amazing daughter, Erin, who I am so grateful to get to spend so much time with through our shared theater experiences, and my incredible husband, Colin, whose support of me is never-ending and who never lets on how much he would rather be doing something else when Erin and I make him run lines with us. Enjoy the show!

Sara Ward-Cassady





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# the scenes

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## ACT ONE

Living room of the Wright-Dobie School.  
Late afternoon in April.

## ACT TWO

Scene 1: Living room at Mrs. Tilford's. A few hours later.  
Scene 2: The same. Later that evening.

*There will be one 15 minute intermission*

## ACT THREE

The same as Act I. November.

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# the cast

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|                                    |                                                                  |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Martha Dobie . . . . .             | Natalie Coombs                                                   |
| Karen Wright . . . . .             | Erica de Lacerda                                                 |
| Doctor Joseph Cardin . . . . .     | Mike Brady                                                       |
| Mrs. Amelia Tilford . . . . .      | Emily Williams                                                   |
| Mrs. Lily Mortar . . . . .         | Anna Plaunt                                                      |
| Agatha . . . . .                   | Liz McCartney (AACT Festival)<br>Gail Gomach (VACT Performances) |
| Mary Tilford . . . . .             | Erin Cassady                                                     |
| Rosalie Wells . . . . .            | Callie Lederer                                                   |
| Peggy Rogers/Grocery Boy . . . . . | Maddie Dahlen                                                    |
| Evelyn Munn . . . . .              | Belle McCartney                                                  |
| Catherine . . . . .                | Georgia Volkman                                                  |
| Lois . . . . .                     | Bri Sexton                                                       |



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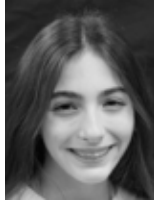
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# the cast

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**MIKE  
BRADY**



**ERIN  
CASSADY**



**NATALIE  
COOMBS**



**MADDIE  
DAHLEN**



**ERICA  
DE LACERDA**



**GAIL  
GOMACH**  
VACT PERFORMANCES



**CALLIE  
LEDERER**



**BELLE  
MCCARTNEY**



**LIZ  
MCCARTNEY**  
AACT FESTIVAL



**ANNA  
PLAUNT**



**BRI  
SEXTON**



**GEORGIA  
VOLKMAN**



**EMILY  
WILLIAMS**

# who's who in the cast

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**MIKE BRADY** (Joseph Cardin) is excited to be back for his ninth production with VACT! Favorite prior roles include *The Monster (Young Frankenstein)*, *Mushnik (Little Shop of Horrors)*, and *George (Don't Dress For Dinner)*. When not tending to fictional patients, Mike maintains varied interests as a twelve-time state champion in taekwondo, a software development trainer at Epic, and a board member of the Madison Savoyards. He thanks his exceptional friends and family for their support!

**ERIN CASSADY** (Mary Tilford) is so excited to be a part of this great show! Erin's first show with VACT was *Aladdin Kids* in 2015 when she was 5-years-old and she has participated in many VACT plays and musicals since. Favorite roles include *Grace in Annie Kids*, *Rafiki (Lion King Kids)*, *Sharpette (High School Musical 2 Jr.)* and *Lily (The Giver)*. When Erin isn't in a show you can find her rock climbing with the Boulders Advanced Climbing Team. Erin thanks her parents for always supporting her and is sure she and her mom will be able to talk her Dad, Colin, into being in a show eventually.

**NATALIE COOMBS** (Martha Dobie) is excited to be performing in her first play and 11th show at VACT. Previous favorite roles at VACT include *Fiona (Shrek The Musical)*, *Deb (Elf The Musical)*, and *Chiffon (The Little Shop of Horrors)*. Thanks to Garrett for running lines with me and for your emotional support throughout.

**MADDIE DAHLEN** (Peggy Rogers/Grocery Boy) has really enjoyed working with this talented cast. She started performing as a 1st grader and some of her favorite roles include *Nigel (Matilda)*, *Annie (Annie Kids)*, *Marta (The Sound of Music)* and *Donkey (Shrek Jr.)*. She would like to thank her family for always supporting her love of theater.

**ERICA DE LACERDA** (Karen Wright) is thrilled to be a part of this show alongside such a talented cast! This is Erica's second show with VACT and she's very grateful to have found this wonderful community after moving to Wisconsin from New Jersey just a few months ago. Thank you to her family, friends, and boyfriend for their constant support.

**GAIL GOMACH** (Agatha - VACT Performances/ Costume Designer) has been dancing and singing with VACT since 2015 and has performed on stage in 14 of their productions. Favorite past roles include: *Mamma Ogre (Shrek The Musical)*, *Sister Mary Martin-of-Tours (Sister Act)*, and *Mrs. Gloop (Willy Wonka)*. Gail feels blessed to be a part of this talented cast, playing the role of Agatha, as well as Costume Designer. When not on stage, Gail and her husband enjoy beekeeping and spoiling their three dogs.

**CALLIE LEDERER** (Rosalie Wells) is thrilled to be performing in *The Children's Hour*! This is Callie's nineteenth production with VACT! Callie's favorite roles have been *Young Nala (Lion King KIDS)*, *Jemima Potts (Chitty Chitty Bang Bang)*, *Regina (Rock of Ages MSE)* and is looking forward to the upcoming production of *The Little Mermaid Jr. (Ariel)*. Callie is a 7th grader at Core Knowledge Charter School in Verona. She would like to thank VACT and her family and friends for their endless support.

**BELLE MCCARTNEY** (Evelyn Munn) is thrilled to be acting in her first non-musical play. This is her first show with VACT and she's looking forward to many more! Belle is thankful for her friends and family.

**LIZ MCCARTNEY** (Agatha - AACT Festival) is honored to be performing in *The Children's Hour* with such a great group. This is Liz's second VACT production of the season after taking a 10 year hiatus from theater. She is so grateful for her amazing spouse who supports his three theater girls.

## who's who in the cast

**ANNA PLAUNT** (Lily Mortar) is overjoyed to be making her debut with VACT. A Minnesota native, Anna moved to Madison in 2019 and is thrilled to be on stage again. She recently performed in *Sweeney Todd* with Oregon Straw Hat Players and looks forward to future production opportunities. Anna wishes to express immense gratitude to Dee Baldock (initially set to play Aunt Lily) for trusting her with the role and all of Dee's countless contributions to VACT.

**BRI SEXTON** (Lois) is excited to be in this amazing show. This is Bri's first full production with VACT. Thanks to her amazing family for supporting her in this show.

**GEORGIA VOLKMAN** (Catherine) Is an 8th grader at Cherokee Heights Middle School. She is very excited to be in VACT's production of *The Children's Hour*. Georgia (14) has been obsessed with theater since she was in third grade when she started taking classes after she had seen her cousin Molly perform as a wolf and fork in *Beauty and the Beast*. Some of Georgia's favorite roles include

Fan #2 (*Singin' in the Rain Jr.*), Aunt Em (*The Wizard of Oz Youth Edition*), Protester #3 (*Rock of Ages MSE*), and is super thrilled to play Aquata and understudy for Carlotta in VACT's upcoming show *The Little Mermaid Jr.* She loves dance and when she's not in dance classes loves to break out in random dance parties. She thanks VACT for giving her a second home and her amazing friends, family, and two fluffy friends at home for their support of this show.

**EMILY WILLIAMS** (Amelia Tilford) is thrilled to be a part of this amazing show! Some of Emily's recent theater productions include *Beauty and the Beast* (costume assistant), *Mamma Mia!* (ensemble), and *Young Frankenstein* (assistant stage manager) with VACT; and Marcellus (*Sudden Shakespeare: Hamlet*) with the Madison Shakespeare Company. As a member of the queer community, this story is deeply personal to her, and she is honored to help tell it. Many thanks to the cast and crew for making this such a rewarding experience!

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# who's who in the crew

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**SARA WARD-CASSADY** (Director) is honored to be working with the incredible cast and staff of *The Children's Hour*. Sara enjoys being a part of productions both onstage and off, with favorite onstage roles at VACT including Emily Hobbs (*Elf the Musical*), Sandy, (*Four Weddings and an Elvis*), and Kate (*Brighton Beach Memoirs*), and favorite offstage roles including directing VACT's *Matilda the Musical*, *The Radio Play Disaster*, and *Rock of Ages, Middle School Edition*, as well as producing and stage managing many other VACT productions. Sara is thrilled to be sharing this production with her daughter, Erin, and is always thankful to her husband Colin for always supporting her and Erin in their creative endeavors!

**SARAH LEDERER** (Producer) is excited to be producing *The Children's Hour*! Sarah has been producing shows at VACT for the last several years with most of her time spent working with our youth productions. Some of the shows she has produced are *Pirates Past Noon KIDS*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Willy Wonka KIDS* and is looking forward to the upcoming productions of *Lion King KIDS* and *Singin' In The Rain Sr*. Thanks to the fantastic production team of *The Children's Hour* and a special thanks to her family for their love and support! Enjoy the show!

**GAIL GOMACH** (Agatha - VACT Performances/Costume Designer) has been dancing and singing with VACT since 2015 and has performed on stage in 14 of their productions. Favorite past roles include: Mamma Ogre (*Shrek The Musical*), Sister Mary Martin-of-Tours (*Sister Act*), and Mrs. Gloop (*Willy Wonka*). Gail feels blessed to be a part of this talented cast, playing the role of Agatha, as well as Costume Designer. When not on stage, Gail and her husband enjoy beekeeping and spoiling their three dogs.

**RACHEL ERICKSON** (Stage Manager) has been working with theatre for as long as they can remember. They are very appreciative of the opportunity presented by VACT to work with many different people. They would like to thank their parents who have supported them throughout their theatrical adventures, and all the opportunities they have been granted.

**GINA HAMON** (Scenic Painter) Gina is thrilled to be a part of her ninth VACT production as a scenic artist. Her past scenic artist credits include VACT's productions of *Something Rotten*, *Matilda*, *Mamma Mia* and *Young Frankenstein*. Thanks to Sara for the opportunity to work on another great show!

**MARIE KYLE** (Prop Master) has been the elementary music teacher at Sugar Creek Elementary School in Verona for over 25 years. She has worked as the music director, and appeared on stage for many VACT shows, as well as directing the teen productions of *Grease*, *Legally Blonde*, *Bye, Bye Birdie* and *The Drowsy Chaperone*. Favorite roles include Narrator (*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*), Glinda (*The Wizard of Oz*), Betty Haynes (*White Christmas*) and Mother Superior (*Sister Act*). Marie loves being in shows with her husband Jim and playing the role of mom to sons Joe and Tom.

**STEVE NICKELS** (Lighting Design) has been designing lights for VACT shows for over 15 years, and can usually be found in the lighting booth. He has also worked backstage as a stage manager, ropes operator, spotlight operator, and producer, and occasionally can even be found on stage, but always manages to be involved with the lights. "May the Light shine on you!"

**DALE NICKELS** (Sound) has produced or directed many VACT shows and designed the sound for nearly every show since *The Wizard of Oz* in 1996. From time to time he shows up on stage. Most of the time he lives behind the sound board, dealing with an increasing number of wireless microphones. His most recent directorial outing was *Elf the Musical*. "Thanks to my lovely wife, Deb, for letting me play."

*Enjoy the show!*



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# recent VACT Productions

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- 2012 Noises Off; Welcome to the Jungle; Seussical Jr.; Grease; Encore! 2012: Celebrating 20 Years; High Society; The Best Christmas Pageant Ever
- 2013 The Producers; Disney's Winnie The Pooh KIDS; Disney's The Little Mermaid Jr.; Legally Blonde, The Musical; Peter Pan; Seven Brides for Seven Brothers; The Best Christmas Pageant Ever
- 2014 Heaven Can Wait; Disney's 101 Dalmatians, KIDS; Encore Jr.; Bye Bye Birdie; The Music Man; How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying; Getting to Know The Sound of Music; White Christmas
- 2015 Singin' In The Rain; Aladdin, KIDS; Hairspray Jr.; The Drowsy Chaperone; Shrek The Musical; Forever Plaid; Elf The Musical Jr.; A Very Merry Hometown Christmas
- 2016 Brighton Beach Memoirs; Dinosaurs Before Dark, KIDS; High School Musical Jr.; Bring It On the Musical; Mary Poppins; Billy Elliot the Musical; A Seussified Christmas Carol; It's A Wonderful Life the Musical
- 2017 South Pacific; The Lion King, KIDS; Guys and Dolls Jr.; West Side Story; The Little Mermaid; Sister Act the Musical; Stone Soup; Godspell Jr.
- 2018 The Hunchback of Notre Dame; Bus Stop; A Race To The Finish; The Jungle Book KIDS; Bye Bye Birdie YPE; Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka; Little Shop of Horrors; Annie KIDS; Legally Blonde Jr.; A Christmas Story
- 2019 The Odd Couple; Three Nanny Goats Gruff; The Aristocats KIDS; 42nd Street YPE; Disney's Newsies; Chitty Chitty Bang Bang; Young Frankenstein; We Are Monsters; Disney's Frozen Jr.
- 2020 Mamma Mia!; 4 Weddings and An Elvis; Chicago High School Edition\*; Getting To Know Footloose The Musical\*; Seussical KIDS\*; Pajama Party\*; VACT Virtual Youth Theater Fall 2020; A Very Virtual Merry Hometown Holiday (\*cancelled due to COVID)
- 2021 The Importance of Being Earnest In a Pandemic; VACT Virtual Youth Theater Spring 2021; The Radio Play Disaster; Seussical KIDS; Singin' In The Rain Jr.; Matilda The Musical
- 2022 Don't Dress for Dinner; Something Rotten!; Pirates Past Noon KIDS; High School Musical 2 Jr.; The Music Man Sr.; Disney Beauty and the Beast; Encore! 2022; Elf The Musical

For a complete list of VACT's past productions since 1992, please visit  
[www.vact.org/page-pp](http://www.vact.org/page-pp)

## Verona Area Community Theater, Inc

VACT, Inc. originated in the summer of 1992 and is now producing ten shows a year. From the beginning, our goal has been to offer the people in the Verona Area community opportunities to utilize their talents in all facets of the arts. Our primary goal is to have fun! If you are interested in participating in any way, please contact one of the board members listed below:

### VACT INC., BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### Officers

President: Dale Nickels  
Vice President: Sara Ward-Cassady  
Secretary: Elizabeth Kraemer  
Treasurer: Brian Johnson

#### Additional Members

Tom Arnol, Dee Baldock, Kim Eckmayer, K.B. Kendricks,  
Marie Kyle, Sarah Lederer, Alex Rosenbaum, Lynn Vilker



Thank you so much for attending *The Children's Hour*. Like many arts organizations, COVID-19 caused a great deal of change for VACT. We are so grateful for all of the support we received. Every kind message, donation, and show of support meant the world to us as we navigated time without live theater and figured out how to adapt. While there is a light at the end of the tunnel, your support will help us return to live theater and come back stronger than ever. If you're a theater lover who is in a position to help, please consider making a donation to VACT. Donations can be made through our website by going to [www.vact.org](http://www.vact.org) and clicking on the "donate now" link at the top of the page.

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# The Children's Hour



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# Our 2022 - 2023 Season



November 17th - 19th  
2022



November 17th - 19th  
2022



December 1st - 4th  
2022



February 9th - 18th  
2023



April 20th - 22nd  
2023



April 20th - 22nd  
2023



April 27th - 29th  
2023



May 11th - 21st  
2023



June 16th - 24th  
2023

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