

COMMENTARY : Theater experience adds drama to life.

Byline: Cory Smith, Valley Voices

Mar. 12--Throughout high school, teens search for something to occupy their time. I found that volunteering and performing at a local theater left me with a sense of pride and accomplishment. At first, I really didn't think that I could make it, but persistent encouragement from friends and family I tried out for "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" at Tennessee Valley Theatre in Spring City. To my amazement, not only did I make the play, but I was awarded the lead role. It was certainly an unexpected but pleasant surprise. However, I didn't realize the commitment I was making when I agreed to play the part of Charlie Brown. I now had to give up my Saturdays and numerous nights for practices just to get ready to play the part. We had to learn our lines, memorize the lyrics (it was a musical), learn our choreography and memorize our blocking, our movements onstage. It was no easy task. It took a lot of time and determination, and without my friends there, it would have been tough. It was easy because all of the cast members were high school students and most were my friends -- even our light rack was designed by a high school student. This isn't to say that the adults who worked with us didn't help, because they made it so much easier. Our directors showed that we were capable, instilling a sense of pride in all of us. When we were down, they helped us up, and without them I don't believe that the play would have been the same. The experience was life-changing. The play brought all of us closer together and showed us the value of teamwork. It showed me what I was capable of and the value of determination. It also showed my family that I was responsible enough to start something and finish it. This was more than just a time killer, though, in that it showed me that there was life outside of school. I feel as if I am a better person because of it. I know more about who I am. Performing in this musical was so beneficial to me I wouldn't hesitate to recommend it to any other person. Don't let someone tell you you're not capable of acting onstage. And if onstage isn't for you, every theater needs set builders. Really, it doesn't have to be theater. Any out-of-school activity can help you know more about yourself. Don't hesitate: Get out there and try something new.

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