

uEd up for Education

People and programs impacting our QCSD community

October 25, 2018



Students Emma Geiser, left, and Jenny Starzecky pair up in the workshop *Stage Combat: The Illusion of Violence*.

A different Shakespeare experience



Actor Dane McMichael, right, who grew up in Silverdale and is a Pennridge graduate, speaks with QCHS student John Russell.

High school AP and Honors Literature students received tips from professional actors and watched them perform.

By Gary Weckselblatt

A touch of Broadway came to Quakertown Community High School Thursday as professional actors led workshops for more than 100 students and then performed Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

"Many students never get to see something like this, so it was really cool to be exposed to it," QCHS senior Emma Geiser said after participating in the workshops. "It brings Shakespeare to another level."

Classmate Jenny Starzecky added, "Everyone in our class was really going for it. It was fun to see all of us doing this." Jenny said working with the actors "helped us make a connection with Shakespeare, rather than just reading his work."

For the fifth consecutive year, English teacher

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Nick Burch wrote the grant that brought the Linny Fowler WillPower Tour, the centerpiece of DeSales University-based Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, to the high school.

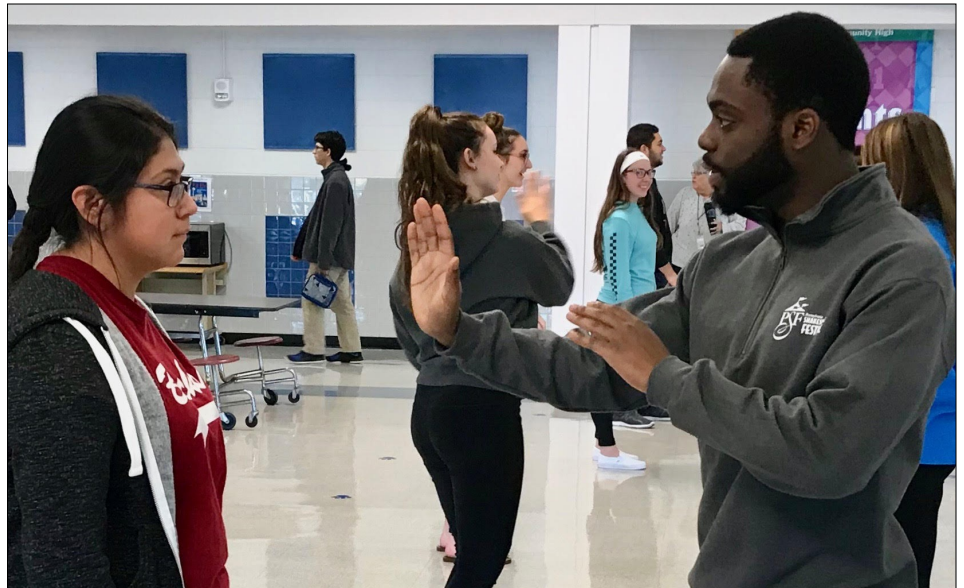
Named for Marlene “Linny” Fowler, a supporter of theater and education, the program honors her endowment. Several of her grandchildren have graduated from Quakertown Community High School.

“Our kids really love this experience,” Mr. Burch said. “This is a memory that after they’re away from here for a year or two, they’ll get together and remember this. We have great kids and they need an experience like this.”

Mr. Burch, part of an outstanding English department that includes, Brett Farley, Rachel Girman, Mike Mackey and Ryan Stetler, said education needs to be “more than the bell rings and the students start reading. This is one of those extensions that will make their high school career memorable.”

The four workshops for the Advanced Placement and honors students were:

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- Rude Mechanicals: Clowning and Comedy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
- Carriage, Character, and Class: Non-Verbal Storytelling.
- Action to the Word: Objectives, Tactics and Language.
- Stage Combat: The Illusion of Violence.

School Board member Mitch Anderson stopped by the school to view the workshops firsthand. "The actors are very effective instructors," he said. "The students were engaged. They really got into it."

One of the actors, Dane McMichael, grew up in Silverdale and graduated from Pennridge High School before attending DeSales. "Shakespeare didn't really click until my first year of college," he said. "Now, most of my professional gigs are because I can do Shakespeare."

Mr. McMichael said "It's very rewarding to work with the kids and get them away from the daily grind. It's really gratifying to watch them and hear that first laugh when they get it. You look into their eyes and see that something clicked. It means a lot to me."

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