



ST. AMBROSE
ACADEMY



It's been a whirlwind ride for SAA rising senior Catherine Gernetzke since coming home from her Broadway debut.

She began this journey after being nominated for an Outstanding Female Performer award by the Overture Center's "Jerry Awards". After competing in May, the committee of judges selected Catherine to move on to nationals.

She earned the rare opportunity to be one of 92 students from across the country selected to attend a summer intensive and stage a performance as a part of the National High School Musical Theatre awards (the "Jimmy Awards") in New York City.

This truly once-in-a-lifetime experience was filled with unexpected surprises and a ton of learning opportunities for this talented Guardian.

Catherine and fellow performers got the full Broadway experience from rehearsals to finally performing at the Minskoff Theater. In addition to the remarkable experience of living the life of a Broadway professional for a week, and understanding the demands and joys of that,

students were vying for the top spots in the competition. Sixteen finalists and two ultimate award recipients gained increased recognition and scholarships for college.

Below is a brief interview with Catherine, fit in between rehearsals for two other productions she is a part of this summer because she never stops! Catherine is a beautiful witness to the grit, dedication, and cultivation of talent that we strive to instill in students. Thank you for sharing your gifts, Catherine!

What were your days like in NYC?

It was a whirlwind of craziness! We were working hard from 6:30am-8pm. Everyone there - the directors, choreographers, producers, coaches - pushed us really hard. It was a very intense rehearsal process - we only had a week to work on it and it had to be sharp the first time.

They were never mean, but there was a level of excellence they expected, and I knew that any correction they gave me wasn't something to take personally.

How does this experience shape goals for your future?

It's definitely given me more hope that I could see myself doing this. But it's also a little scary to go into because it's such a hard profession to go into - you don't know if you'll ever book a job or how many years it would take. But that's kind of the exciting part.

I don't know what is going to be on my path. But seeing myself in that kind of lifestyle was eye-opening for my future. We met Jimmy Award alumni who are working on Broadway and it was unique to get that insight into how the Jimmy Awards propelled them on their own special paths within the industry.

What is a lesson you took away from your week on Broadway?

At the beginning of the week, I was so nervous about the competition, but during the week I stopped thinking about the competition and more about how fun this whole experience was. I thought, "I need to remember where I am and take it all in because I might never be able to do something like this again."

Mostly I learned to be comfortable being uncomfortable. It was the hardest but the best and most rewarding week of my life. I felt challenged and I was with people that love theater as much as I do so when we all worked together on something it was so fun, the energy was so great!



While we all appreciate an easy-going summer, there's still a lot of time to keep students' minds sharp! To 'keep boredom at bay', St. Ambrose's multi-talented Mr. Michael Kwas leads our Summer Skills Workshops with aplomb.

This year marks the first since 2019 when two week-long Summer Workshops can be held, the first taking place this past June and focused on "Soil, Farms & Food". As the wine director for the notable Madison restaurant L'Etoile, which prioritizes local ingredients and relationships with producers, Mr. Kwas sure knows a lot about this topic!

Students began the week in the classroom with Mr. Kwas and Ms. Quinn Myers. They conducted experiments with soil, plants and how they get and store food, and performed a cool demonstration of calorimetry to discover how much energy foods contain.

The week also included an ingenious lesson called "Soil Your Undies," led by Farming for the Future Curriculum specialist, Sarah Krauskopf. The central question was, what do farmers hope to learn when they bury underwear on their farms?

Tours of Blue Moon Community Farms and UW's Dairy Cattle Center brought the topics into the field and students ended the week with the Sisters of Mary Morning Star to

pray together in front of the Blessed Sacrament and hear a talk from Sister Mary Thomas which brought together the themes of soil, plants, working the land, and eating together as all our work is mirrored in the Eucharist.

Needless to say, it was a full week and we can't wait for our Week Two Summer Workshop: "Lights, Camera... Action!" in August when students will learn the process of movie-making from start to finish!





The 2022 graduating class of St. Ambrose Academy is off and heading down the exciting paths of post-grad life!

Graduates and their families began, with Christ at the center, with the Holy Mass at St. Paul Catholic Center and then finished their careers as SAA Guardians during a graduation ceremony that followed.

The day featured commencement speaker Scott Hackl and addresses including those from salutatorian Maria Pfeil, and valedictorian Caitlin Sturm before students walked the stage and received their well-earned diplomas.

We are so proud of each of our graduates. Please join us in praying for them as they continue to establish their place in the world!



From left to right: Anastasia Tejada, Christian Service Award recipient, who will attend Notre Dame University and major in Civil Engineering; Maria Pfeil, Salutatorian, who will attend UW-Eau Claire and major in Communications; and Caitlin Sturm, Valedictorian, who will attend Winona State University and major in Marketing.

