



Applause for Sydney McCray (Fiona), Haniah Edwards (Gingy), Aiden Kingry (Shrek) and the rest of the "Shrek" cast at Fairview. PHOTOS BY AMANDA THOMPSON

# Comfortable in their skin

*Fairview students bond over 'Shrek' production*

**Amanda Karioth Thompson**  
Council on Culture & Arts

**D**espite his surly disposition, appalling manners and repellent personal hygiene, Shrek has become one of the world's most beloved movie stars. The original "Shrek" film was released in 2001 and was an immediate success, winning an Academy Award for best animated feature. This anti-fairy tale inspired numerous sequels and spin-offs amounting to one of the highest-grossing film franchises in history.



Piper Greisl played Pinocchio, a character she identified with in Fairview Middle School's production of "Shrek."

Catapulted beyond the silver screen, "Shrek The Musical" premiered on Broadway in 2008 and was nominated for eight Tony Awards. It was only a matter of time before the show was adapted for young performers and "Shrek The Musical Jr." has delighted audiences ever since. This condensed version provides plenty of hilarity and hijinks as students from Fairview Middle School recently learned.

"I love Shrek," said Tim Peck, Fairview's chorus and guitar teacher. "It's a really funny show and there are so many different characters the kids can play and relate to really well." As the production's director, Peck said he selected it because "middle school is a really difficult time and this show helps us realize that we can be ourselves and we can accept ourselves."

Song lyrics like "let your freak flag fly" and "what makes us special, makes us strong" highlight the show's essential message encouraging self-confidence and inclusivity. In theater, "we get to step into somebody else's shoes and, by extension, we recognize that differences are not a bad thing," said Peck.

"The lessons students learn here they will absolutely take with them. They're going to make different choices when they're around people who are different than them and

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Many familiar fairy tale characters make an appearance in the show. AMANDA THOMPSON

## Shrek

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make choices that are healthy for themselves too. We can protect the value that the students feel within themselves and the value they see in others."

Eighth-grader Piper Greisl internalized that concept and said her take-away from the show is "even though we're all very different, we should accept that, no matter what." She identified with her character Pinocchio despite their clear differences. "He's kind of awkward and I'm kind of awkward myself. He's also a little sarcastic and I'm sometimes sarcastic so I connected with him in that way."

Sydney McCray also felt a kinship with her character, Fiona. "Through the whole show, Fiona is persistently showing this hopeful feeling; conveying to the audience that she really believes deep down inside, her dream will come true," said the eighth-grader.

Fiona was hiding a shameful secret though she ultimately learns to embrace her true self. "This is how I want everybody to feel; comfortable in their own skin and confident in themselves and who they are," Sydney said.

With dreams of her own and confidence to spare, Sydney explained, "both my parents are singers and artists so being around that environment exposed me to different elements of music." She added "the arts shape kids into real people. They enhance your hobbies into more than that; essentially creating an eventual career. Performing is just what I was meant to do."

Peck is proud of his students for their dedication to their craft, characters and each other. Both on stage and backstage, these middle schoolers demonstrated teamwork, tenacity, and mutual respect, all essential requirements for a suc-

cessful production as well as a successful life.

"These youngsters are confident enough, through this experience, to stand up and say we are going to fight for our differences, we are not going to be put aside. We can listen to each other and we all deserve equal representation."

*Amanda Karioth Thompson is the Assistant Director for the Council on Culture & Arts. COCA is the capital area's umbrella agency for arts and culture (www.tallahasseearts.org).*

## Obituaries

### William Floyd Marlow, Jr

**GREENSBORO** - William Floyd Marlow, Junior was born September 24, 1974. Husband of Kim Marlow, and son to Paula Marlow-Toole and the late Floyd Marlow, Sr. He left this earth on February 26, 2018. He was an avid fisherman and enjoyed spending time with his family and friends. He is survived by his wife, Kim, mother Paula, sister Stephanie Edwards-Griffin (Shane), Mother-in-law Joan Swafford, son Josh Hovers (Gena), daughter Ashley Wallace (Charlie), nephews Derringer Edwards (Whitney) and Alex Gonzalez, grandchildren Steven, Wyatt, Clayton, Harlow, Bristol (Ms. B) and Fisher, great niece Kaybrie Edwards, and many cousins and extended family. Visitation will be on Thursday, March 1, 2018 at Charles McClellan Funeral Home, 15 S. Jackson St., Quincy, FL. (850) 627-7677, from 5:00-8:00pm. Services will be at Floyd's home, 210 Hall Ln, on Friday, March 2, 2018 at 11:00