

Dinner theater helps kids act up



and Community Theatre's (MYACT) third dinner theater experience, set for Friday night in Sonora.

Comprised mostly of younger theatrical talents, MYACT and its Hideout Program provide a positive environment for all ages to grow in, learn about and

Dinner theaters might be a thing of the past – sort of like drive-in movie theaters. So it's refreshing for the nostalgic, entertainment lover like myself when one or the other shows up and suddenly seems new. Desserts and Disneyland were made to be once-in-awhile, heavenly treats. Dinner theaters and drive-ins were made to cater to an overall experience with a relaxing ambiance. Of course, they also come in handy for fundraisers like the upcoming Mountain Youth

experience the world of live performance. Several of its members – coming from after-school classes in costuming, acting and dancing – will perform a series of acts from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday at the MYACT Theatre, 14372 Cuesta Court, Sonora. The doors open at 5:30 p.m. and dinner – meat and vegetarian chili with cornbread made by family volunteers – is served at 6 p.m.

The acts include songs from popular groups and singers including Journey,

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Sierra Lodestar

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the Jonas brothers, Johnny Cash and more. Mark Kreuzer's Dancing Grannies – made up of teenagers from his Mountain Oaks Charter School band class – are set to appear, too. Kandas Wright, the coordinator of the event, said Kreuzer will sing lead vocals and play the drums on music ranging from pop to punk rock.

Performers for the evening have been rehearsing once a week for an hour and a half for about two months and were given the freedom to choose their own songs to sing, which music teacher Kerry Ann then guided with help in vocal instruction and choreography.

“All of the money we raise from fundraisers, tuition and donations is used to put on a play and goes back to the projects we do with the kids,” Wright said. “This fundraiser will fund the events in spring to kick off the new year of our group. The funds will pay for events such as the two weekend workshops we have in March, rent for our new location and classes in our after-school program. We have many events set up in spring, such as after-school classes and a theater workshop to start us early for the summer. Without the funds, the program would not be able to function.”

Wright joined MYACT in 2005, when she volunteered to help wrangle kids to pass the summertime. Her sewing talents soon found a place within the group, and she has stayed active with the organization since.

“I really enjoy working with the kids and having an outlook for my creative side,” Wright said. “The group gives kids the theater experience from auditions, rehearsals, building the sets, building costumes, dancing, singing and the tear-down after the show. The

Mountain Youth and Community Theatre dinner

WHEN: 6 p.m. Friday

WHERE: 14372 Cuesta
Court, Sonora

TICKETS: \$10 for adults and
\$8 for students and seniors
at mountainyouthact.com

kids are a part of every step to create the theater experience. I think the thing I like most about being a part of this group is that it has become like a family and everyone is extremely supportive of each other.

“Our organization has seen many kids over the years offering an outlet for their creativity and the ability to gain lifelong friends. There have been many kids that come to the first few rehearsals being shy and quiet. By the end of the summer they are expressive and they have the self-esteem to show who they really are. The children gain so much esteem with showing their talents, having fun and gaining the support of their family and peers.”

*Send your Tuolumne County events to
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