



**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**NSSRA's Bright Star Theatre Company Presents Original Musical,
THE HIVE, in Partnership with Northbrook Park District**

Northbrook – January 8, 2019 – Actors in the Northbrook-based Bright Star Theatre Company (BSTC) are buzzing with activity preparing for their upcoming March performances of this year's original musical, THE HIVE. Starring nine actors with disabilities and their volunteer Creative Companions, rehearsals began in September.

After several years of licensing popular shows, director Julie Gibson Lay decided it was time to pen a show of her own with BSTC cast members in mind. "What do two local moms full of spunk and imagination do over the summer? They write a musical together, of course," said Gibson Lay, who wrote the show with friend Joan Matthews, both of Northbrook. A family affair, music for the show was composed by Gibson Lay's husband, Chris, and son, Cecil, a senior at Glenbrook North High School, and the artwork was created by Matthews' daughter, Julia, a junior in high school.

The setting of the show is a beehive rocked by change, the story of two struggling young bees on their path to self-discovery. The story is a lighthearted one, jammed with kooky puns, tongue-in-cheek dialogue and catchy music. It is sure to inspire and bring a smile to your face!

"We started out with a universal theme---that of young people in search of their own individuality---and we fashioned the story around the actual actors in the troupe," said Matthews. "The most exciting thing for me was getting to meet the actors during rehearsals and watching them bring our story to life."

"I'm really happy about playing Johnny Bee Goode because he is so excited and has a big smile on his face and makes people laugh," said Jay Slotnick, a long-time NSSRA participant in his second year acting with BSTC. Along with Johnny Bee Goode, characters include Queen Elizabee, May Bee and Lord Buzzkill, just to name a few.

"The original show this year has been really different," said Marlee Fradin, a junior at Deerfield High School. Fradin has been a companion in the program for six years. "It's really fun because it's the first time we're performing the show, so we can make it our own," Fradin continued. "It also comes with a lot more work because the story line is new to all of us, but it really shows off everyone's uniqueness well and how well they can act."

"This year the cast has an opportunity to improvise during one of the songs," said Gibson Lay. "We started with a gem of an idea and I let them run with it. I have been so blown away by their creative ownership."

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The performances will take place at Northbrook Theatre on Saturday, March 16 at 5:00 pm and Sunday, March 17 at 1:00 pm. Tickets will go on sale Friday, February 1 online at www.nbparks.org and the Northbrook Leisure Center Box Office.

In its eighth year, Bright Star Theatre Company is a program produced by Northern Suburban Special Recreation Association (NSSRA) in partnership with Northbrook Park District. Meeting weekly from September to March, the experience combines theater games, movement exercises and musical training for participants ages 16 and up who work with Northbrook Park District Theatre staff to put on a professional production.

SHOW SYNOPSIS

Imagine a world where everyone is expected to be the same. Then imagine you are different... Enter THE HIVE, where all bees are alike and work toward one common goal, but two young bees are different and excluded because of it. Watch these two make an amazing discovery and realize how wonderful it is to be unique. THE HIVE will make you laugh, make you cry, and make you happy to be alive.

TICKETS

Available Friday, February 1 online at www.nbparks.org and the Northbrook Leisure Center Box Office.

REHEARSALS

Tuesdays, 4:30 – 5:30 pm • Northbrook Theatre

DRESS REHEARSALS

Tuesday, March 12, 4:30 – 6:30 pm • Northbrook Theatre

Thursday, March 14, 4:30 – 6:30 pm • Northbrook Theatre

Friday, March 15, 4:30 – 6:30 pm • Northbrook Theatre

PERFORMANCES

Saturday, March 16, 5:00 pm • Northbrook Theatre

Sunday, March 17, 1:00 pm • Northbrook Theatre

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NSSRA provides and facilitates year-round recreation programs and services for children, teens and adults with disabilities who live in the partner communities. NSSRA is an extension of ten park districts, two cities and one village in the northern suburbs of Chicago. This partnership includes the Park Districts of Deerfield, Glencoe, Glenview, Highland Park, Kenilworth, Lake Bluff, Northbrook, Northfield, Wilmette and Winnetka; the Cities of Highwood and Lake Forest; and the Village of Riverwoods. NSSRA has been creating an environment of belonging through play since 1970, and has the distinction as the first Special Recreation Association in the country. For more information about NSSRA and the programs and services they provide visit www.nssra.org.