



# Shakespeare Workshops!

**To: All 7<sup>th</sup> grade students and parents/guardians**

**From: Mr. Zach Brandt, Mrs. Stephanie Mc Whirter, Mrs. Linda Morelli,  
Mrs. Tara Strain, & Mr. Adrian Unger, the Grade 7 English Team**

**Re: Shakespeare Workshops**

**Date: April 5, 2011**

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Dear Students and Parents/Guardians:

As we begin our fourth and last unit in 7<sup>th</sup> grade English called “Imagination”, we are excited to announce that a group of professional actors from the Maryland Shakespeare Festival will be working with our classes. Actors will perform *Will Power* for seventh graders on Thursday, April 14 in order to introduce students to the plays of William Shakespeare.

## **Workshops (required)**

During English class, students will have the opportunity to build their understanding of Shakespeare’s play *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Students will participate in performance-based workshops with the actor-educators during five class sessions during the week of April 26 – May 2. By participating in the workshops, students will learn about Shakespeare’s language, the characters in the play, and the basic plot of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

Upon completion of the workshops, students will read *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* as the central text in this unit of study. Participating in the workshops gives students the confidence and background knowledge to tackle this challenging text. Also, Shakespeare created *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* primarily as a dramatic rather than a purely literary experience. Students have a chance to experience the play both on the stage and on the page.

## **Workshop Expectations**

This unique opportunity is very different from our regular classroom routine. Here are some expectations that we have for students during this workshop:

All students are expected to participate in every activity to the best of their ability.

All students are expected to respect our guest teachers and other classmates. Teamwork is required.

Since this is a new experience for many students, please listen and follow all directions carefully.

If a student demonstrates that he or she cannot meet these behavioral expectations, he/she will not be allowed to participate in the workshop and an alternative written learning activity will be provided.

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### **Student Production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (optional)**

In addition to the in-class workshops, interested students may take advantage of a fun, enriching, and unique opportunity to perform in a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. **Rehearsals are intensive and require a big commitment. They will be held after school April 26 - May 11 from 2:45 - 4:45 p.m. Each student will need to arrange his or her own ride home; activity busses will NOT be available.** Permission and the calendar can be accessed through Edline. “**Auditions**” will be on Tuesday, April 26 from 2:45 – 4:45 p.m. Every student, who tries out, will have a role in the play. All casting decisions will be made by actor-educators from the Maryland Shakespeare Festival.

A Friends and Family performance of the student production will be held on the evening of **Thursday, May 12**. A performance for the entire seventh grade will take place on **Friday, May 13**, during the school day. Student actors **MUST** attend both productions.

### **Special Thanks**

Very few schools offer this opportunity where students experience *A Midsummer Night's Dream* through hands-on performance with professional Shakespearean actors. We thank the Maryland State Arts Council, the CJMS administrators and staff, and, especially, the CJMS PTSA for their generous support of this exciting program.

Thank you and we look forward to a great experience!

Mr. Zach Brandt, Mrs. Stephanie McWhirter, Mrs. Linda Morelli, Mrs. Tara Strain, Mr. Adrian Unger  
Seventh Grade English team