

Westlake High School student production takes J.M. Barrie's 'Peter Pan' to new heights

continued from Page 1

fun to do and provides them with a break from what they have to think about every day is pretty great."

More than 20 area foster children were able to attend the Thursday morning performance. The names of the children who attended, as well as the name of the

foster organization involved were not available for publication for security and privacy reasons. Echols' mother, Travis County 126th civil district court judge Darlene Byrne, helped facilitate the activity.

"My mother handles a lot of Child Protective Services cases and we were able to pull it off because of her contacts," Echols said.

Echols said she came up with the idea of including the foster chil-

dren by watching the movie "Neverland" and realizing that J. M. Barrie, the author of "Peter Pan: the Story of Peter and Wendy," invited orphans to his first showing.

"It is so fun to be able to do the play for kids, especially a play like this that is fueled by fantasy," said Andrew Butler, who plays Mr. Darling in the WHS production.

Fellow actress Miranda Atwell, who played an Indian in

the children's presentation, agreed.

"Kids pretty much provide you with instant feedback," she said. "You know in a second when they are interested and when they are bored."

Echols hopes to start a tradition of including foster children in WHS play productions. "I would like to keep the idea going and pass it along to my successors," she

said. The WHS production held performances in the Ninth Grade Center Black Box Theater Nov. 16-19. It starred Johnson Brock as Peter, Lauren Gabel as Wendy, Gary Jaffe as Captain Hook and was directed by Michael Harlan.

Questions? Comments? Contact Dane Anderson at danderson@westlake-picayune.com

400 Voices prompts West Lake Hills to reach out abroad

continued from Page 2

carefully consider approving the resolution.

He later said it is a great way to lend support to a worthwhile endeavor.

"It was just a show of support for a citizen who is doing good work in another country," he explained. "It is a goodwill gesture and an opportunity for the city to reach out beyond our four square miles to the rest of the world.

"It is not a situation where they have not asked us for any money or support; they simply asked us to take an interest."

Dauti-Heilman, who just returned from a Nov. 1-18 trip to take more supplies to the Stanterg School, said the quest to help began after being convinced that she had to do something to help in the wake of devastation from the war in Kosovo that ended in 1999.

Her efforts included meeting with many high ranking officials in Kosovo and the Minister of Education, Rexhep Osmani, who promised her to look in to releasing any possible funds for the new construction on her former school. Construction on the first phase of the new school building got under way in spring.

"It was my best birthday present ever," she said.

"This year, I did have with me letters, pictures and artwork from Austin students with 400 pounds of supplies," she said, noting that much of the supplies that she sent over the summer to deliver them myself once I got there. "Each day I went to the school I had treats for everyone so it was quite fun to see them smile, laugh and enjoy being

kids. I did have with me a letter for the Sister School with the EISD and the Trepca School signed by (Superintendent) Dr. Nola Wellman. When I delivered it to them they all cheered for five minutes."

For her next trip, she hopes to have a backpack for each student along with more much-needed supplies.

"I hope that we will have enough to buy winter shoes/boots for each student since the weather can be quite harsh in that mountainous area," she said. "Since the new school will be finished by the next school year, I would like to furnish each classroom with the computer."


Her dream also includes providing a TV/DVD set with projector in the main area of the school, sports supplies; English language lab, books for each child and more to fur-

nish a school library and the local town library destroyed completely during the war.

"Being a Westlaker myself, I enjoy the best life in the best environment possible to live and raise my family," she said. "Giving back to my community has been my top priority since I am a full-time community volunteer. For my husband and I, it is very important to show by example to our two boys how to become good and productive citizens."

For more information, visit www.main.org/400voices or call 328-7028.

Questions? Comments? Contact Ed Allen at eallen@westlake-picayune.com



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