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Starlight Announces Virtual Celebration of Annual Blue Star Awards Ceremony



Each year, the Blue Star Awards ceremony publicly recognizes outstanding achievement and excellence in musical theatre among Kansas City high school students.

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Starlight has announced that, for the first time in the program’s 18-year history, the Blue Star Awards ceremony will become a virtual event and premiere live on Starlight’s Facebook page. Although Starlight had previously postponed the ceremony in hopes of holding an in-person event in July, leadership and staff have since determined that it is in everyone’s best safety interests to hold this year’s event exclusively online, with no in-venue attendees, on **Friday, July 31, 2020.**

While the Blue Star Awards ceremony will differ from years past, Starlight’s community engagement department is confident that this virtual event will still bring well-deserved recognition to outstanding Kansas City area students.

“The pandemic has forced us to adapt, but there are positives to streaming the Blue Star Awards ceremony online,” said Barb Schulte, Starlight’s vice president of community engagement. “We can now invite all Starlight patrons and the general public to join in the excitement of the awards ceremony—virtually—in July. These talented students deserve a standing ovation for their hard work throughout the 2019-20 school year, especially in light of the changes brought by COVID-19.”

Established in 2003, the Blue Star Awards is one of the largest and most admired high school musical theatre awards programs in the nation. All high schools in metropolitan Kansas City and selected outlying communities are invited to participate. Each year the program serves 5,000 area

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students who contribute either on the stage or behind the scenes to their schools' musical theatre productions. The program traditionally culminates with a red-carpet Blue Star Awards ceremony on the Starlight stage.

In years past, the public event featured performances by casts nominated for Outstanding Overall Production, as well a number of medleys spotlighting Outstanding Actor in a Lead Role and Outstanding Actress in a Lead Role nominees. While hosting an online event presents its challenges with live performances, Starlight's community engagement department is exploring and developing other ways to allow nominated schools and students to be a part of the event.

"This new approach will share the talents and dedication of these students with a broader audience," Schulte said. "We have a few virtual twists in the works that will highlight students from a number of schools."

Students received the 2019-20 Blue Star Awards nominations in late May, via a livestream on Starlight's Facebook page. Hundreds of students tuned in to this first-ever virtual nomination announcement and interacted via the comments section, congratulating one another on their achievements.

Tune in to Starlight's Facebook page @kcstarlight Friday, July 31, to see the 2019-20 Blue Star Awards ceremony. For more information on the Blue Star Awards, please visit [kcstarlight.com/bluestarawards](https://www.kcstarlight.com/bluestarawards).

About Starlight

Opened as a theatre in 1950 and a nonprofit organization in 1951, Starlight is the largest and oldest performing arts institution in Kansas City and provides inspiring, one-of-a-kind experiences to its patrons. Starlight presents and produces Broadway musicals, concerts and Indoors shows in addition to offering extensive community outreach and educational programming, including classes, scholarships and Starlight's Blue Star Awards, one of the largest high school musical theatre award programs in the nation.

Located on 16 acres in Swope Park, Starlight's historic, city-owned venue is the second-largest outdoor producing theatre in the country and includes rehearsal halls, a museum, club area for dining, concessions, gardens, fountains and a 10-story, climate-controlled stage. For more information, visit [kcstarlight.com](https://www.kcstarlight.com).

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