

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Starlight Reveals the Much-Anticipated 2019-20 Blue Star Awards Nominations**



*Starlight's Blue Star Awards is one of the largest high school musical theatre awards programs in the country and serves 5,000 Kansas City-area students annually.*

**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** – In its first-ever virtual announcement, Starlight revealed the nominations for the 18th annual Blue Star Awards in a live premiere on Facebook Thursday, May 21. Fifty-three of 54 schools were able to stage their 2019-20 Blue Star Awards musicals throughout the past school year, leading to 179 nominations in 23 categories. On Thursday, hundreds of Blue Star Awards students celebrated the much-anticipated nominations at a safe social distance.

Traditionally delivered in schools approximately one month prior to the Blue Star Awards ceremony, Starlight leadership and staff made the decision to announce this year's nominations via its Facebook page in an effort to keep students and staff safe in light of the coronavirus pandemic.

"We realize the end of this school year is very different than anyone had planned," Andy Pierce, Starlight's community engagement manager, said. "However, the hard work of the students and schools over the past year still remains and we are very excited to take time to celebrate those accomplishments. The Blue Star Awards program always strives to spotlight the amazing talent found in our area high schools and this year will be no exception!"

Modeled after Broadway's Tony Awards, Starlight's Blue Star Awards annually recognizes achievement and excellence in high school music theatre and is one of the largest programs like it in the country. All high schools within 60 miles of Starlight are invited to participate. Each year the program serves 5,000 area students who contribute either on the stage or behind the scenes to

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their schools' musical theatre productions.

A panel of adjudicators, who are theatre professionals, performing artists, designers and theatre arts educators, attend each participating school's musical and provide evaluations and commentary to Starlight's community engagement department. Their comments are also compiled and shared with each school's theatre teacher and students.

The annual Blue Star Awards ceremony has been postponed to Friday, July 31 at Starlight Theatre, pending city guidelines at that time.

## **2019-2020 Blue Star Awards Nominees**

### **Outstanding Overall Production**

|                   |                                      |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Lansing           | <i>Chicago (High School Edition)</i> |
| Lee's Summit West | <i>Elf The Musical</i>               |
| Liberty           | <i>Into the Woods</i>                |
| Liberty North     | <i>Cinderella (Broadway Version)</i> |
| Olathe East       | <i>All Shook Up</i>                  |
| Olathe North      | <i>Bright Star</i>                   |
| Olathe West       | <i>Xanadu</i>                        |
| Raymore-Peculiar  | <i>Guys and Dolls</i>                |

### **Outstanding Artistic Contribution by a Student**

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Blue Valley North | Mckenna Lewis for Choreography – <i>Honk!</i>                           |
| Leavenworth       | Sam Wise for Choreography – <i>Disney's Descendants</i>                 |
| Liberty           | Kendall McMullen and Paige Saluri for Direction – <i>Into the Woods</i> |
| Liberty North     | Hannah Samson for Direction – <i>Cinderella (Broadway Version)</i>      |
| Olathe East       | Olivia Hollan for Music Direction – <i>All Shook Up</i>                 |
| Olathe North      | Jenna Barnes for Music Direction – <i>Bright Star</i>                   |
| Piper             | Jennifer Obiesie for Choreography – <i>Hairspray</i>                    |
| Raymore-Peculiar  | Abby Ball for Choreography – <i>Guys and Dolls</i>                      |

### **Outstanding Actress in a Lead Role**

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Blue Springs South   | Madelyn Padget as Elle Woods – <i>Legally Blonde The Musical</i>    |
| Lee's Summit North   | Elaine Watson as Deloris Van Cartier – <i>Sister Act</i>            |
| Liberty              | Grace Fisher as Baker's Wife – <i>Into the Woods</i>                |
| Olathe North         | Hannah Guzman as Alice Murphy – <i>Bright Star</i>                  |
| Olathe West          | Kalista Brown as Kira – <i>Xanadu</i>                               |
| Raymore-Peculiar     | Ella Schnake as Miss Adelaide – <i>Guys and Dolls</i>               |
| Ruskin               | Nikéla Reed as Celie – <i>The Color Purple</i>                      |
| St. Teresa's Academy | Liv Collet as Winnifred the Woebegone – <i>Once Upon a Mattress</i> |

### **Outstanding Actor in a Lead Role (continued on next page)**

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Blue Springs      | Aidan Henry as Gomez – <i>The Addams Family</i>         |
| Blue Valley       | Jacob Jackson as Nathan Detroit – <i>Guys and Dolls</i> |
| Blue Valley North | Will Hancock as Ugly – <i>Honk!</i>                     |
| Lee's Summit West | Cooper Carr as Buddy – <i>Elf The Musical</i>           |
| Olathe North      | Tim Hampton as Jimmy Ray Dobbs – <i>Bright Star</i>     |

**MORE**

**Outstanding Actor in a Lead Role (continued from previous page)**

Park Hill Maddox Bane as Bert – *Disney’s Mary Poppins*  
 Raymore-Peculiar Seth Kelley as Sky Masterson – *Guys and Dolls*  
 Shawnee Mission East Fritz Sullivan as Bobby Child – *Crazy For You*

**Outstanding Actress in a Supporting Role**

Blue Springs Zoe Edgar as Wednesday – *The Addams Family*  
 Free State Emily Bial as Val – *A Chorus Line (High School Edition)*  
 Free State Gabriela Carttar as Diana – *A Chorus Line (High School Edition)*  
 Lansing Alyssa Wiegers as Matron “Mama” Morton – *Chicago (High School Edition)*  
 Lee’s Summit West Kyler Gher as Michael Hobbs – *Elf The Musical*  
 Olathe East Brillian Kina as Sylvia – *All Shook Up*  
 Olathe East Willa Walberg as Sandra – *All Shook Up*  
 Olathe Northwest Emma Whitney as Eulalie Mackecknie Shinn – *The Music Man*

**Outstanding Actor in a Supporting Role**

Belton Eric Nunn as Pharaoh – *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*  
 Blue Springs Francis Gatdula as Fester – *The Addams Family*  
 Olathe East Justin Cooley as Dennis – *All Shook Up*  
 Raymore-Peculiar Denton Meehan as Nicely-Nicely Johnson – *Guys and Dolls*  
 Shawnee Mission East Aidan C. Connelly as Lank Hawkins – *Crazy For You*  
 Shawnee Mission West Gavin Tanner as Jack – *Into the Woods*  
 Shawnee Mission West Will Edeal as Cinderella’s Prince – *Into the Woods*  
 St. Teresa’s Academy Toby Rodriguez as Sir Harry – *Once Upon a Mattress*

**Outstanding Actress in a Featured Role**

Blue Springs Tyler Clayton as Grandma Addams – *The Addams Family*  
 Lee’s Summit North Sarah Keary as Sister Mary Patrick – *Sister Act*  
 Liberty North Ava Wolesky as Charlotte – *Cinderella (Broadway Version)*  
 Park Hill Ella Sedlock as Mrs. Corry – *Disney’s Mary Poppins*  
 Piper Jennifer Obiesie as Little Inez – *Hairspray*  
 Ruskin Arkiah Collins as Jarene – *The Color Purple*  
 Saint Thomas Aquinas Sarah Phillips as Ursula Merkle – *Bye Bye Birdie*  
 Shawnee Mission East Lily Utt as Patsy – *Crazy For You*

**Outstanding Actor in a Featured Role**

Belton Nathan Garner as Simeon – *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*  
 Blue Valley John Oldroyd as Benny Southstreet – *Guys and Dolls*  
 Lee’s Summit North CJ Gilbert as TJ – *Sister Act*  
 Olathe East Jeremiah Valenzuela as Jim Haller – *All Shook Up*  
 Olathe East Zach Billings as Dean Hyde – *All Shook Up*  
 Olathe West John Paul Gee as Terpsicore – *Xanadu*  
 Raymore-Peculiar Dylan de Leon as Harry the Horse – *Guys and Dolls*  
 Raymore-Peculiar Robbie Keays as Benny Southstreet – *Guys and Dolls*

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**Outstanding Actress in an Ensemble Role**

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Blue Valley              | Olivia Wells as Havana Dancer/Hot Box Dancer – <i>Guys and Dolls</i>   |
| Olathe East              | Jade Belden as Sarah/Barfly Trio – <i>All Shook Up</i>                 |
| Olathe East              | Jessie Fish as Townsperson/Bus Passenger – <i>All Shook Up</i>         |
| Raymore-Peculiar         | Kaijah Simmons as Member of the Salvation Army – <i>Guys and Dolls</i> |
| Raymore-Peculiar         | Makiya Leslie-Hardison as Hot Box Girl – <i>Guys and Dolls</i>         |
| Saint Thomas Aquinas     | Katie Dors as Deborah Sue – <i>Bye Bye Birdie</i>                      |
| St. Teresa’s Academy     | Ally Fox as Lady Merrill – <i>Once Upon a Mattress</i>                 |
| Summit Christian Academy | M’racle Bryant-Morgan as Ensemble – <i>Disney’s Mary Poppins</i>       |

**Outstanding Actor in an Ensemble Role**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Blue Valley           | Jonah Kahn as Gambler – <i>Guys and Dolls</i>  |
| Blue Valley Northwest | Sam Stubenhofer as Citizen of Cloisterham – <i>The Mystery of Edwin Drood</i>              |
| Grandview             | Rowell Yniguez as Fender – <i>Hairspray</i>  |
| Lee’s Summit West     | Sean Sinow as Macy’s Elf/Fake Santa – <i>Elf The Musical</i>                               |
| Liberty North         | Garrett Lampert as Dancer – <i>Cinderella (Broadway Version)</i>                           |
| Raymore-Peculiar      | Xander Blackmon as Crapshooter – <i>Guys and Dolls</i>                                     |
| Raytown               | Jesse Best as Caveman – <i>The Addams Family</i>   |
| Ruskin                | DaVante Hudson as African Chief/Prison Guard/Older Adam/Ensemble – <i>The Color Purple</i> |

**Outstanding Ensemble**

|                      |                                      |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Blue Valley          | <i>Guys and Dolls</i>                |
| Lansing              | <i>Chicago (High School Edition)</i> |
| Lee’s Summit West    | <i>Elf The Musical</i>               |
| Liberty North        | <i>Cinderella (Broadway Version)</i> |
| Olathe East          | <i>All Shook Up</i>                  |
| Olathe West          | <i>Xanadu</i>                        |
| Raymore-Peculiar     | <i>Guys and Dolls</i>                |
| Shawnee Mission East | <i>Crazy For You</i>                 |

**Technical Achievement Award**

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Liberty       | Leah Rainwater for Technical Direction – <i>Into the Woods</i>   |
| Liberty North | Ayriana Haney, Margaret Reams and Elizabeth Reams for Costume Design and Construction – <i>Cinderella (Broadway Version)</i> |
| Leavenworth   | Dillon White and Christian Lake for Lighting Design – <i>Disney’s Descendants</i>  |
| Leavenworth   | Hope Lopez, Nola Goodman and Briana Morgan for Scenic Design and Construction – <i>Disney’s Descendants</i>                  |
| Leavenworth   | Michelle Denney and Dillon White for Scenic Design and Construction – <i>Disney’s Descendants</i>                            |
| Oak Park      | Elaina Shalabi for Stage Management – <i>Mamma Mia!</i>  |
| Olathe East   | Grant Martin for Costume Design, Construction and Crew – <i>All Shook Up</i>   |
| Olathe West   | Summer Sperke for Stage Management – <i>Xanadu</i>   |

MORE

**Outstanding Orchestra**

|                      |                                      |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Blue Valley North    | <i>Honk!</i>                         |
| Lee's Summit West    | <i>Elf The Musical</i>               |
| Liberty North        | <i>Cinderella (Broadway Version)</i> |
| Olathe Northwest     | <i>The Music Man</i>                 |
| Park Hill South      | <i>Annie</i>                         |
| Platte County        | <i>Footloose</i>                     |
| Ruskin               | <i>The Color Purple</i>              |
| Shawnee Mission West | <i>Into the Woods</i>                |

**Outstanding Scenic Design and Construction, Tier I (\$0 - \$1,999)**

|                          |                                      |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Excelsior Springs        | <i>The Wizard of Oz</i>              |
| Lansing                  | <i>Chicago (High School Edition)</i> |
| Leavenworth              | <i>Disney's Descendants</i>          |
| Oak Grove                | <i>Mamma Mia!</i>                    |
| Odessa                   | <i>Mamma Mia!</i>                    |
| Olathe North             | <i>Bright Star</i>                   |
| Saint Thomas Aquinas     | <i>Bye Bye Birdie</i>                |
| Summit Christian Academy | <i>Disney's Mary Poppins</i>         |

**Outstanding Scenic Design and Construction, Tier II (\$2,000+)**

|                    |                                      |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Blue Springs       | <i>The Addams Family</i>             |
| Blue Springs South | <i>Legally Blonde The Musical</i>    |
| Central            | <i>Bye Bye Birdie</i>                |
| Liberty            | <i>Into the Woods</i>                |
| Liberty North      | <i>Cinderella (Broadway Version)</i> |
| Oak Park           | <i>Mamma Mia!</i>                    |
| Olathe East        | <i>All Shook Up</i>                  |
| Park Hill          | <i>Disney's Mary Poppins</i>         |

**Outstanding Lighting Design**

|                      |                                      |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Excelsior Springs    | <i>The Wizard of Oz</i>              |
| Lansing              | <i>Chicago (High School Edition)</i> |
| Leavenworth          | <i>Disney's Descendants</i>          |
| Liberty North        | <i>Cinderella (Broadway Version)</i> |
| Olathe East          | <i>All Shook Up</i>                  |
| Olathe West          | <i>Xanadu</i>                        |
| Shawnee Mission East | <i>Crazy For You</i>                 |
| Shawnee Mission West | <i>Into the Woods</i>                |

**Outstanding Technical Crew (continued on next page)**

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Belton        | Costume Crew – <i>Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat</i> |
| Blue Valley   | Deck/Set Crew – <i>Guys and Dolls</i>                              |
| Lee's Summit  | Costume Crew – <i>Chitty Chitty Bang Bang</i>                      |
| Liberty North | Deck/Set Crew – <i>Cinderella (Broadway Version)</i>               |
| Liberty North | Hair and Makeup Crew – <i>Cinderella (Broadway Version)</i>        |
| Liberty North | Lighting Crew – <i>Cinderella (Broadway Version)</i>               |

MORE

**Outstanding Technical Crew (continued from previous page)**

Liberty North                      Sound Crew – *Cinderella (Broadway Version)*  
Olathe West                         Lighting Crew – *Xanadu*

**Outstanding Costume Design and Construction, Tier I (\$0 - \$1,199)**

Blue Springs                         *The Addams Family*  
Excelsior Springs                  *The Wizard of Oz*  
Lansing                               *Chicago (High School Edition)*  
Olathe West                         *Xanadu*  
Raytown                              *The Addams Family*  
Ruskin                                *The Color Purple*  
St. Teresa's Academy              *Once Upon a Mattress*  
Summit Christian Academy       *Disney's Mary Poppins*

**Outstanding Costume Design and Construction, Tier II (\$1,200+)**

Belton                                 *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*  
Leavenworth                         *Disney's Descendants*  
Liberty                                 *Into the Woods*  
Liberty North                         *Cinderella (Broadway Version)*  
Olathe East                         *All Shook Up*  
Park Hill                               *Disney's Mary Poppins*  
Spring Hill                             *Crazy For You*  
Winnetonka                         *Shrek The Musical*

**Outstanding Hair and Makeup Design**

Blue Springs                         *The Addams Family*  
Excelsior Springs                  *The Wizard of Oz*  
Leavenworth                         *Disney's Descendants*  
Liberty North                         *Cinderella (Broadway Version)*  
Oak Grove                             *Mamma Mia!*  
Olathe East                         *All Shook Up*  
Raytown                               *The Addams Family*  
Spring Hill                             *Crazy For You*

**Rising Star Scholarship Female Nominees**

Basehor-Linwood                  Clarissa Kiefer  
Leavenworth                         Haley Bell  
Liberty North                         Hannah Samson  
Lincoln College  
    Preparatory Academy         Auryona Webb  
Oak Park                                Elaina Shalabi  
Olathe South                         Anna Hastings  
Ruskin                                 Nikéla Reed  
Shawnee Mission East              Janie Carr

**Rising Star Scholarship Male Nominees (continued on next page)**

Basehor-Linwood                  Lane Barrette  
Blue Springs                         Aidan Henry

MORE

**Rising Star Scholarship Male Nominees (continued from previous page)**

|                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Blue Valley        | Jacob Jackson     |
| Central            | Carlos Gomez      |
| Leavenworth        | Thomas Yambo-Rios |
| Lee's Summit North | Reily Harker      |
| Liberty North      | Joe Lord          |
| Platte County      | Henry Lange       |

**Community Impact Award**

|                    |                                      |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Leavenworth        | <i>Disney's Descendants</i>          |
| Liberty North      | <i>Cinderella (Broadway Version)</i> |
| Notre Dame de Sion | <i>Little Shop of Horrors</i>        |

Follow Starlight on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @kcstarlight.

**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](http://kcstarlight.com).