

# Young Rivertime Players prepare to dazzle



Cast members of *Emma Lou and the Big Ragout*, from left, Andrew Lawlor, Molly Lawlor, Jenni Turner (in the background onstage), Cole Powers, Ryleigh Beecham, Amber Lyles (bending over), Madison Davis, and Stetson Copous get their grooves on while rehearsing for the upcoming play.



Before rehearsals even begin, Shane Bridges, center in background, uses creative exercises and games to foster a sense of camaraderie and teamwork in his young cast members. The lessons learned through their thespian activities carry on long after the stage lights have dimmed.

By Pam McGaha

Rehearsals are in full swing for the Young Rivertime Player's 2012 production of *Emma Lou and the Big Ragout* (pronounced Ra-goo).

The original play, written by Karen Boettcher-Late, has been described as a musical that "is kind of like the Wizard of Oz flipped on its ear." The story revolves around King Shank-pump, who will lose his kingdom unless his daughter, Emma Lou, can become enraged. Alas, Emma Lou, while attractive and bright, has no charm and is bereft of spit! Not only that, the only boy she likes, Prince Groddebuck, runs from the room every time he sees her. Emma Lou's only recourse is to go on a quest to seek assistance from the fearsome Big Ragout. Miss La-voone, a charm school matron, escorts Emma Lou on her hilarious journey.

The Rivertime Players are committed to creating unique

## Emma Lou and the Big Ragout

### Rehearsals for 'Emma Lou and the Big Ragout' in full swing

opportunities for young people to learn the craft of theatre and express themselves through the dramatic arts. No matter what future endeavors children pursue, experience onstage prepares them for confident communication before a wide range of audiences.

Bridges is also directing the play, and incorporates life lessons and the value of teamwork into the rehearsals and games that are played before the real work begins at every session. The young actors learn to trust and rely on each other in order to hone their performances.

They also become privy to a myriad of character qualities that develop in young thespians that reach far beyond the stage. Youth who participate in the arts are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement; four times more likely to participate in a math or science fair; three times more likely to win an award for school attendance; perform community service more than four times as often as others and have lower truancy rates and higher graduation rates and generally have a higher sense of self-esteem.

Veteran Rivertime Players Elicia Spain, who is serving as stage director, and Mark Tubbs, who is the set designer and co-director, are working with the rest of the cast to make these performances "Do Not Miss" events.

### Emma Lou and the Big Ragout

Produced and directed by Shane Bridges

**Performances will be held at the Parsons Municipal Building  
March 30 & 31  
Showtime is at 7 p.m.**

Briley Lee-Emma Lou  
Hannah Mills-Glorious Lavooone  
Hunter Jordan-Parthebump and Ragout  
Andrew Lawlor-Bucky

Brett Jordan-King  
Keisha Lyles-Queen  
Jenni Turner  
Jake Lyles  
Amber Lyles  
Cole Powers  
Madison Davis  
Stetson Copous  
Natalie Brooks  
Victor Evans  
Jerry Evans  
Ryleigh Beecham  
Madison Cagle  
Molly Lawlor  
Haylee Duncan