

KELLEY HUGHES

Mayde Creek High School's theatre director has starred in many productions, but his biggest role has been changing the lives of his students

Written by Lorrie Crow Kimble | Photography by Christi Hartwell

WORDS FROM HIS STUDENTS

"This is my last year under his leadership and I am following his footsteps in becoming a theatre educator."
- Alyssa Miller

"He is willing to put students' needs first. I am very thankful that I had Mr. Hughes as a high school educator."
- Danielle Kimball

Kelley Hughes is the theatre director at Mayde Creek High School

His students call him a hero, "But our hero doesn't wear a cape or mask; he wears glasses, Sketchers, and sometimes a Superman shirt or hoodie," says Mayde Creek High School's (MCHS) theatre student Alyssa Miller. Their hero is theatre director, Kelley Hughes. Although inspired by several teachers, Hughes says the turning point in becoming a teacher was when he was freelance directing at several community theatres and began working with school-age actors, and realizing how much he enjoyed it.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Hughes emphasizes that theatre teaches empathy by instructing what it's like to step into someone else's shoes. "It seems to me the world would be a much better place if we all were more empathetic." Besides students and audiences saying how much they loved participating in or watching a production, Hughes says his most rewarding moments have been when graduates return or contact him to let him know what he or the theatre program meant to them. "It's not until they tell you years later that you realize you were doing something besides producing good theatre."

FEELS LIKE HOME

Walking into Hughes' classroom or rehearsal space makes Miller feel safe. "Mr. Hughes makes the theatre company what it is, and without him, it wouldn't be 'home' for many of his students. He is our biggest fan, cheering us on when we succeed and comforting us when we fail or feel down."

Miller's favorite production was *Tom Jones* because it was the first time Hughes entrusted her with leadership. "He guided me into becoming his best light technician, showing me I have a passion not just in acting, but also as a lighting designer," she adds.

DEDICATED TO STUDENTS

Hughes is who made Matthew Young, a 2009 MCHS graduate, interested in the technical side of theatre. Hughes took extra time on the weekends to teach him the basics of lighting. "He's extremely dedicated to helping students who want to move forward with theatre as a career or in finding opportunities that otherwise may have been unknown or unavailable," says Young.

Young graduated from Webster University in St. Louis where he majored in lighting design. "I then moved to New York where I am a freelance video designer and programmer. I recently programmed the projections for the Broadway show, *On Your Feet!*, the Gloria Estefan musical."

ALWAYS MOTIVATING

Handling several roles in the Mayde Creek Theatre Department, Joseph Villanueva says he plans on being involved with sound technology when he graduates. "I want to be either a DJ/producer or work live sound mixing at musical events or theatre," he says. Villanueva credits Hughes in pushing him to go further than he would otherwise go. "Mr. Hughes inspires me to learn new things, and makes it a point to treat all of his students with respect. He runs the company really well without taking the fun out of it."

ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE

Danielle Kimball, currently a managerial associate at IMG Artists in New York, NY, graduated MCHS in 2009 and says Hughes made a huge impact on who she is today. "He gave me the confidence at a very young age that a career in theatre arts was possible," she says. Hughes cares very much for his students

and is willing to put their needs first. "I am very thankful that I had Mr. Hughes as an educator when I was in high school."

THE BIGGEST INFLUENCE

College freshman Stephanie Perez says that Mr. Hughes will always be that one teacher she never will forget. "He helped me grow as an actor and theatre technician, and I have decided to keep on pursuing theatre in college," she says. Hughes has a deep passion for what he does, so whenever you are in his class, it doesn't feel like work or school, according to Perez. "You are there because you want to be there and not because you have to."

Perez says that Hughes was the biggest influence in her receiving the Katy ISD Award of Excellence for Fine Arts. "He

recommended me for the award and because of his support, I chose him as my Teacher of Excellence," she says. When students are too embarrassed or shy when acting things out, "He will get up and do it too, no matter how silly he looks." One of the many traits that makes Hughes stand out in the crowd. **KM**

LORRIE CROW KIMBLE has been to several impressive Katy ISD plays and productions.

PLAYBILL

ALL ABOUT HUGHES

Acted professionally in
The Threepenny Opera,
Lady in the Dark,
and more

Taught theatre
for 15 years

Favorite MCHS
production was *Over
the River and Through
the Woods*

