

## DUDS: Getting Involved

With Lizzie Reams and Dana Sumner-Pritchard

### **What does your position on DUDS entail?**

LR "As the director of Business and Alumni Relations, I oversee all of the DUDS finances and coordinate Pub/TOE Theater."

### **How do they interact with the Drew Theater Department?**

DSP "DUDS services as student representatives for the department. We work with the faculty to improve the student experience."

### **What type of programs does DUDS put together?**

LR "We produce workshops on special topics that interest students. DUDS also produces special events such as Cabaret and DUDS Ball to celebrate a great year from the Drew Theater. "

### **How can one become involved with DUDS?**

DSP "Be a participant, go to a build, run crew, board op. To be a member, you need a subscription, so you can be an audience member at every show."

## Freshman Getting Involved

With Jennifer Witherow, Hallie Isquith, and Samantha Steele

### **What was it like getting cast in a show like Spelling Bee as your first show?**

JW "Getting cast in this show was unbelievable; I've always loved "Spelling Bee" and getting the chance to play Logan has been amazing."

### **How easy was it to get involved with DUDS?**

HI "The fact that auditions are open to everyone makes the process a lot less intimidating. Drew's theater department is competitive but bursting with opportunity so everyone should take advantage."

### **Any valuable lessons you want to pass on?**

SS "Dive in head first. There are so many opportunities and so many things you can try so why not get involved?"



## Can You Spell...History?



The origin of the word Bee can be traced back to boon, from the English dialect. It means voluntary help, given to a farmer by his neighbors in time of harvest. Bees would provide food and entertainment to reward the people helping. Soon spelling Bees were used as teaching devices in American schools. In 1871 the term 'spelling bee' was first printed in a newspaper. Some spelling bees ran as acts in Vaudeville shows.

In 1874 competitions started charging an admission fee for contestants, but handed out prizes. Then in 1875 Bucks County, located in Pennsylvania became the first recorded county to hold a spelling bee. Spelling Bee fever had hit. The popularity of spelling bees redefined the word bee to mean public competitions, like today's geography bee.

The first national spelling bee occurred in Louisville Kentucky in 1925, with only eight contestants. The winning word was Gladiolus. Since 1925, there has always been a Scripps Spelling Bee, with the exception of 1943-1945 because of the war. It was first broadcast on television in 1946 on NBC. Nine million students across the country participate in school and city spelling bees every year but only 250 students qualify for nationals each year.

## Discussion Questions

1. What kinds of resources do the contestants have? Sponsors, tutors, and experiences...
2. Why are the contestants there? Are they there to win? If they don't how will it affect them?
3. How will their lives change if they win?

## Interviews with the Cast

With Sam Dedian, Stephanie Weymouth, Jake Sachs, Hallie Isquith, and Riley Newman

### **Why do you think Spelling is still relevant?**

SD “Spelling is directly linked to language, which to me, is linked to eloquence. Without spelling, written forms of communication wouldn’t exist.”

### **What was it like playing a child?**

SW “It was so much fun but challenging at the same time. I believe we all have a piece of our childhood inside of us and channeling that made it easier to play the role. It was hard playing a little boy but I had a great time learning how to do it.”

### **What is your favorite word?**

JS “Some of my favorite words are juxtaposition, draconian, hypersonic, and harmonic.”

SD “I like the word bloated, because when you say it out loud, your mouth actually expands and is bloated with air.”

### **Do you look at the idea of growing up differently now that you have worked on a show like Spelling Bee?**

HI “I really do; it’s remarkable how different we look at things from age to age and there’s no way to understand a development period without living through it first.”

### **What do you think this show says about the pressures of growing up?**

RN “It shows that people don’t often grow up to be who they thought they would. It is rough for anyone, child or adult, to give up who they thought they were or accept what they have become.”



## Interview with the Director: Nick Martin

### **Why is a production of Spelling Bee relevant today?**

Spelling Bee, at its heart is a play about growing up. It is a play about children learning to face their fears and becoming more of who they want to be. I thought it really applied to college kids as well. We are in the process of growing up and becoming who we are meant to be, just like the kids in this play.

### **What are some themes you focused on during the show?**

Something I am trying to highlight is the pressures that these kids are facing. They are facing pressure from their parents, their rivals, and themselves. It’s ridiculous that these kids ranging from 9-12 years have all these pressures to be the BEST at everything. Winning isn’t just about the trophy, it’s about getting acceptance and living up to the expectations placed upon them.

### **Why Are Spelling Bees so popular?**

Spelling Bees are the perfect place to look at how competition affects people. It’s like a little microcosm of the worlds. You have all different kinds of kids from all different regions of your state, with racial and economic backgrounds and you place them up against each other based on what their parents want and put that much pressure on them. Yet we’re fascinated by it. Be the best! It’s ridiculous, which I think is half of the point this play is making. It makes us look at just how ridiculous these worlds we force our kids to compete in are.

### **What have you learned about the show by directing it?**

Directing this show has been so much fun. The cast is incredible; they are all so talented and willing to just have so much on stage every day. I went into this show knowing how funny it was, but as we worked on it, I saw how real the kids were too. There are some really adorable, sad, beautiful moments in this show and I’m glad that we discovered them.