



Our Mission: Empower people with disabilities and their families through creative expression and sensory exploration.

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STEPVA CAST SPOTLIGHT: MACKENZIE WALKER AND JOEY SERGI

April 7, 2022 by Brigid O'Leary

FREDERICKSBURG, VA—It wouldn't be Disney's *The Lion King, Kids!* without a menagerie and that takes actors to step up and dance and that's no different for STEPVA, which has its own dancing animal ensemble. STEPVA is a local 501(c)3 non-profit that is designed to "empower people with disabilities through creative expression and sensory exploration," and while Disney's *The Lion King, Kids!* is the organization's first licensed musical, it's the organization's second musical in as many years, having produced and staged one completely in-house last year.



Mackenzie Walker has been involved with STEPVA for the last four years and has been excited about the musical since it was announced in December. After a promotional photo shoot over the weekend, she's looking forward to donning the baby giraffe costume and face paint for the show, which will be held at the end of the month.

"It's fun to be with my friends," said Walker, 12, her eyes lighting up with enthusiasm when she talks about the experience. It's not easy, though. Walker admits that it's been a challenge learning all the lyrics for songs on which she will be singing backup, even if "Circle of Life" and "Hakunah Matata" are two of her favorites.

Still, the Spotsylvania resident is excited to be part of the cast and has been practicing the choreography at home when she doesn't have rehearsal and hopes to see "many fans" at the show.



Twelve-year-old North Stafford resident Joey Sergi has also been with STEPVA for four years, and is channeling the skills he learned in the summer programs to make his way on stage with his first musical. He thought the idea of being in Disney's *The Lion King, Kids!* sounded like fun, and after auditions in January he landed the role of a dancing antelope.

While Sergi hasn't found any of the production process particularly challenging yet, he—like Walker—is enjoying the rehearsal process, especially as it allows for so much movement as they learn the choreography for multiple dances.

Adoring fans can come see Walker, Sergi, and the rest of the STEPVA cast perform Disney's *The Lion King, Kids!* on Saturday, April 30 at 7 p.m., and Sunday, May 1 at 3 p.m. Performances will take place at Fredericksburg Christian School, 9400 Thornton Rolling Rd., Fredericksburg, VA 22408. Tickets are \$10; children 5 and younger are free.

To purchase tickets click [HERE](#).

For more information or to donate, visit www.stepva.org.

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