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### **Homegrown Theatre Camp empowers kids to make theatre at home**

(Lincoln, July 7, 2020) A new digital theatre camp is providing young people the tools they need to make theatre at home while social distancing. Homegrown Theatre Camp offers a series of free virtual camps, giving students a creative outlet to bring adventure and the arts home to their families this summer. The camps are held exclusively online via YouTube and the camp's website and are produced by Blixt Locally Grown, a Nebraska-based nonprofit that grows goodness with the arts.

Homegrown Theatre Camp is led by a diverse group of young Nebraska artists including theatre director and Mayor's Arts Awards recipient Mackenzie Davenport as the lead teaching artist and filmmaker Sasha Sepahpur as the camp videographer. Mackenzie and Sasha are joined by actors Chandler Boyte, Kaedyn Campbell, Kathryn Evans, Raimy Washington, and others to create the curriculum for Homegrown Theatre Camp, covering all aspects of theatre production, with an at-home spin. Many of the artists involved study at Nebraska Wesleyan University, where Davenport is a student, and where Blixt Locally Grown Co-Founder and Creativity Engineer Becky Boesen is an Adjunct Professor in Playwriting.

Unlike much virtual theatre education programming this summer, Homegrown Theatre Camp is not a synchronous event, and does not occur on Zoom. Homegrown Theatre Camp rehearsals can happen at any time, anywhere, allowing even young people with a busy schedule to take part. In this way, Homegrown Theatre Camp does not close when the summer is over; it can be used as a free theatre resource for young people following COVID-19, allowing children without access to a theatre camp to make their own play and develop their talent indefinitely.

Homegrown Theatre Camp is another way that Blixt Locally Grown is creating pandemic-sensitive theatre resources, building on their virtual production of CAPTAIN SOAPMAN which was released in May. Homegrown Theatre Camp performances are live, performed for an in-person audience of family in students' own homes.

The adaptations commissioned for the camp center on themes of adventure and growing up, starting with ***Sword in the Stone***, adapted from the Arthurian Legend by emerging playwright Anthony Delaney with subsequent camps written by Kathryn Evans and Ryan Furlong, playwriting students at Nebraska Wesleyan University.

“The theme of young people creating this opportunity for other young people is really exciting to us,” says Blixt Locally Grown Co-Founder and President, Petra Wahlqvist.

Homegrown’s unique digital format poses an exciting challenge for the young playwrights, as each play must be flexible, produced with materials that can be found around the home, and performed by anywhere between 1-4 campers.

“In times of stress or trouble, a creative outlet can be an effective way for kids to express their feelings and exercise control,” says lead teaching artist Mackenzie Davenport. “Homegrown Theatre Camp has been designed to promote this, giving kids the structure they need to create a play, but with the creative freedom to make it their own.”

Becky Boesen adds, “Mackenzie and Sasha, and this remarkable group of young adult artists are the future of the theatre. Their innovation and perseverance is a strong model for artists of all ages navigating this time of social distancing.”

Scripts & camp materials are currently available on [homegrowntheatrecamp.org](http://homegrowntheatrecamp.org) at no cost. ***Sword in the Stone*** rehearsal videos can be accessed July 13th on Homegrown Theatre Camp’s Youtube channel. A showreel and promotional images are available at [homegrowntheatrecamp.org/presskit](http://homegrowntheatrecamp.org/presskit). Homegrown Theatre Camp is supported by Nebraska Arts Council, Nebraska Cultural Endowment, Pearle Francis Finigan Foundation, Union Bank & Trust and individual donors.

### **Coming Next**

Homegrown Theatre Camp will offer the following camps next. Dates, and times, TBA.

***Alice in Wonderland*** adapted by Kathryn Evans

***Peter Pan*** adapted by Ryan Furlong

### **About Blixt Locally Grown**

Blixt Locally Grown grows goodness with the arts and is a Nebraska-based arts organization that specializes in the development of new works, education and engagement, community building, and the integration of arts and culture into all facets of life. [www.blixt.space](http://www.blixt.space)