

A vintage microphone with a gold grille and a gold ring around it. The microphone is decorated with green pine branches, red berries, and two gold bells at the bottom. The background is a gradient of red and orange.

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

A Live Radio Play

Adapted by Joe Landry

An "All Age" Production of
Excelsior Arts Academy & Youth Theater
November 2023



Our Staff

Director - Kent & Shelley Johnson

Sound - Jack Every & George Trovinger

Costumes - Signa Shuff, Terri Turner, Shelley Johnson

Lights - Andrew Hathaway, Kent Johnson

Sets - Kent Johnson, Shelley Johnson, Andrew Hathaway & Alyssa Ropa

★ Foley Artist - Jack Every

Special Thank You to the countless parent volunteers not mentioned by name who give their time during and after rehearsals to make our shows the incredible experience they are to our students and the public.



This show sponsored by





Our Cast

Alex Smith (Uncle Billy Bailey) - Alex is excited to be in his 2nd Excelsior Production “It’s A Wonderful Life - Live Radio Play”. Alex is 15 years old and in the 10th grade at Garrett High School. When Alex isn't studying or running lines, he likes to spend his time playing video games! One of Alex’s favorite things about Excelsior is that he loves the season show choices and the leadership behind the productions. Alex’s favorite Christmas movies are *Rudolph* and *The Polar Express*!

Aurora Miser-Buhite (Matilda) - Aurora is pumped about being back on the Excelsior stage for her 13th production! Aurora is 16 years old and in 10th grade at DeKalb High School. Aurora is often found on stage, whether that be for dance or show choir! Being involved of all aspects of the arts is her passion. One of the things that Aurora loves about excelsior is the fun work environment! Her favorite Christmas time movie is *The Santa Clause*!

Brianne Lees (Ernie (Cab Driver) / Edwina) - Brianne is extremely excited to be making her Excelsior debut in this production of “It’s A Wonderful Life - A Live Radio Play”. Brianne is an optician at Midwest Eye Consultants here in Auburn. Even though this is Brianne’s first time on stage with Excelsior, she is not unfamiliar with the theater life, as both of her children have been seen in Excelsior performances! In any spare time she has, Brianne enjoys traveling to concerts, plays and musicals with her son and daughter! Brianne loves how inclusive Excelsior is, making everyone feel welcome and supported. When asked what her favorite holiday movie was, she stated it was a tough choice between *Home Alone* and *The Santa Clause*!

Cambree Tolley (Angel Chorus) - Cambree is pumped about making her Excelsior debut in our holiday production of “It’s a Wonderful Life - A Live Radio Play”. Cambree is 14 years old and in 9th grade at DeKalb High School. When Cambree isn’t studying or at rehearsal, she enjoys spending time with her friends and reading! Even though this is Cambree's first show with Excelsior she is already loving how nice everyone in the cast is and looking forward to being in future productions! Cambree’s favorite Christmas movie is *Home Alone*!

Chloe Zuehsow (Young Violet / Angel Chorus) - Chloe is excited about being in her second Excelsior production! Chloe is 15 years old and in 10th grade at Garrett High School. Chloe loves acting, singing, dancing, and performing! In any spare time she has you will probably find her on the stage or in a rehearsal. Chloe loves everything about Excelsior - the people, the performing, the audience, and the friendship she has made! Chloe couldn’t decide on her favorite holiday movie - she loves watching all of them!

CAST CONTINUED ~

Chris Refner (Peter Bailey) - Chris is glad to be back on the stage for his second Excelsior holiday show - "It's A Wonderful Life - A Live Radio Play"! Chris is a teacher at Waterloo Elementary School. In any spare time that he has, he enjoys woodworking, art projects, hunting and fishing. Something that Chris loves about Excelsior is being able to watch the students step into, and learn different character roles and styles of acting. Watching the actors grow from show to show has been very rewarding. Chris' all time favorite Christmas movie is *A Christmas Story*! He hopes that no one shoots their eye out this holiday season!

Clayton Brown (Harry Bailey / Bert / Sam Wainwright) - Clayton is over the moon to be in his first ever Excelsior show! Clayton is 19 years old and a freshman in college at the University of Northwestern Ohio (UNOH). Even though this is Clayton's first stage production with Excelsior, he has participated in the Excelsior Singers for a few years! When he is not studying and at rehearsals Clayton enjoys woodworking, running, going to theater shows, being in theater shows and singing! One thing that he loves about Excelsior is how inclusive and welcoming all the adults, students, and leaders are and how well everyone comes together to make an outstanding production. His favorite holiday movies are the classics *White Christmas* and *Holiday Inn*!

Cody Eyster (Mr. Gower / Mr. Welch) - Cody is pumped about being in his second holiday production with Excelsior! Cody works as a handy man and considers himself an amazing trophy husband! When Cody isn't learning script lines or working, he enjoys tinkering with different objects, computers, and pieces of machinery. He loves that Excelsior has provided such a welcoming community and enjoys watching his children grow and learn. Cody's all time favorite Christmas movie, however, some say it's a Halloween movie, is *The Nightmare Before Christmas*!



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CAST CONTINUED ~

Courtney Barse (Ruth Bailey / Bridge Keeper) – Courtney is excited to be in her 5th Excelsior production “It’s A Wonderful Life – A Live Radio Play”. Courtney is 19 years old and a recent graduate of Garrett High School. Courtney is currently working at Garrett Bowl and County Line Church of God. In her spare time, you’ll probably find her making music or helping out at church. One thing that Courtney loves about Excelsior is how it gets all ages involved in the arts! Her favorite Christmas movies in ranking order are: 1. *Elf*, 2. *A Christmas Carol*, 3. *The Polar Express*!

Cynthia DeCook (Rose Bailey) – Cynthia is thrilled about being back again on the Excelsior stage for our production of “It’s A Wonderful Life – A Live Radio Play”! This is Cynthia’s 10th performance with Excelsior! Cynthia has recently retired and is loving her new free time. She now has time to direct, as well as, act in many more productions, not only with Excelsior, but with other theater companies in Northeast Indiana! Something that Cynthia loves about Excelsior is how easy it is to get involved, and how welcoming everyone has been over the years. Cynthia’s favorite Christmas movie is *Dr. Suess’ The Grinch*!

David Seiy (Joseph (Angel’s Superintendent) / Nick / Charlie) – David is excited about returning to the stage for another Excelsior production! David is 99 ¾ years old – just kidding – but age is really just a number, and we are all just kids at heart. David was a graduate of St. Francis University in Fort Wayne and made a career as a graphic designer for the Boeing Company out of Seattle, Washington. In his spare time, he enjoys directing and acting. His two favorite holiday movies are *Miracle on 34th Street* and *It’s a Wonderful Life* – which makes being in this production extra special!

Diane Vance (Dr. Campbell (Board Chair) / Mrs. Hatch / Mrs. Martini) – Diane is very excited about being in her first ever Excelsior production “It’s A Wonderful Life – A Live Radio Play”. Diane is a nurse for Dr. Mason through the Parkview Physician’s Group. When she’s not working, she enjoys spending time with her children and family. One thing that she loves about Excelsior is the opportunity to be on stage with her children – it’s fun to be able to do an activity together that everyone enjoys. Diane’s favorite Christmas movies are *It’s a Wonderful Life* and *The Santa Clause*!

Jason Rohrbach (George Bailey) – Jason is glad to be back for another Excelsior production and to bring to life the character of George Bailey! You may remember him last year as Eddie in the production of “Who Stole the Cookies”! Jason is currently employed at Endeavor I.S. In his spare time, he enjoys traveling and seeing new parts of the world. One of the things that Jason loves about Excelsior is the heart and enthusiasm of the leaders of this great organization. Jason’s all-time favorite Christmas movie is *Elf*.



CAST CONTINUED ~

Jayna Sparkman (Angel Chorus) - Jayna is pumped about being back for her 2nd Excelsior show - "It's A Wonderful Life - A Live Radio Play"! Jayna is 11 years old and in 6th grade at DeKalb Middle School. When Jayna isn't busy at school or with Excelsior rehearsals she enjoys learning and playing guitar. Something that Jayna likes about Excelsior are the shows! She enjoys performing and being on stage. Her favorite Christmas time movie is *Home Alone!*

Jessalyn Watson (Angel Chorus) - Jessalyn is excited to be back for her 2nd performance with Excelsior! Jessalyn is 13 years old and in 7th grade at DeKalb Middle School. When she's not in rehearsal or at school, Jessalyn enjoys running, playing games and sewing. She enjoys Excelsior because it gives her the opportunity to expand her acting skills, along with the new friendships she has made. Jessalyn's favorite holiday movie is *The Polar Express!*

Joey Snider (Old Man Collins / Schultz / Horace / Cop / Sheriff) - Joey is over the moon to be back for his 3rd Excelsior show! Joey is employed at the YMCA in Auburn. In his spare time Joey enjoys volunteering for Excelsior and at McKinney Harrison Elementary School. He also enjoys playing video games and hanging out with his cats! A few things that Joey loves about Excelsior is having the opportunity to work with students, making new friends, and that every show is different, fun, and exciting! His all-time favorite Christmas movie is *The Santa Clause!*

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Kartyr Sobol (Angel Chorus) - Kartyr is glad to be back on the Excelsior stage for her 3rd performance "It's A Wonderful Life - A Live Radio Play"! Kartyr is 12 years old and in the 7th grade at Eastside Jr/High School. Kartyr enjoys playing Splatoon 3 and performing in productions at school - with Excelsior this makes 8 productions she's been in. One of the things that Kartyr enjoys about Excelsior are the shows we put on, as well as the cast pizza parties! She stated there are too many good Christmas movies that she couldn't choose just one!

Klaire Ellis (Angel Chorus) - Klaire is excited to be in her 3rd Excelsior show "It's A Wonderful Life - A Live Radio Play". Klaire is 12 years old and in the 7th grade at DeKalb Middle School. In Klaire's spare time she enjoys watching TikTok videos, going on walks, drawing, and reading. She enjoys being in Excelsior because she is learning and getting experiences that will help her reach her goals and dreams, plus everyone is super nice! Klaire's favorite all time Christmas movie is *The Grinch!*

Korey Sipe (Sadie (Bank Examiner) / Angel Chorus) - Korey is pumped about joining in the cast of "It's A Wonderful Life - Live Radio Play" for her 3rd Excelsior production! Korey is 16 years old and in the 10th grade at DeKalb High School. When Korey isn't studying or at Excelsior rehearsal she enjoys baking - every kind of dessert imaginable! Korey loves everything about Excelsior! The shows, costumes, friends, performances, and even the rehearsals! Her favorite holiday movies include *White Christmas* and *Rudolph!*

Lydia Gage (Young Mary / Angel Chorus) - Lydia is excited to make her Excelsior debut in this production of "It's A Wonderful Life - A Live Radio Play"! Lydia is 15 years old and in 9th grade with K-12 Online School. When Lydia isn't studying, she enjoys doing diamond art projects and crocheting! She can't quite put her finger on what she loves about Excelsior but is very excited to be part of the group! Lydia's favorite Christmas time movie is *A Christmas Carol*.

Macie Hathaway (Angel Chorus) - Macie is excited to be back with Excelsior for her 7th production! Macie is 11 years old and in 6th grade at DeKalb Middle School. In Macie's spare time she likes to do lots of different things, a big one is FaceTiming and hanging out with her friends. One thing that she loves about Excelsior is that she gets to be a part of a real theater family, while meeting new people with every show that she participates in! Macie's favorite Christmas show is *Santa Clause - The Series*.

Madyson Wilson (Frosty/Angel Chorus) - Madyson is pumped about being back on the Excelsior stage for her 10th performance - "It's A Wonderful Life - A Live Radio Play". Madyson is 15 years old and in 9th grade at DeKalb High School. When Madyson isn't doing schoolwork, you can find her hanging out with her friends or on stage! The friends that she has made through Excelsior is one of her favorite things about this theater group. Madyson's favorite holiday time movie is *The Grinch!*

Magnolia Remington (Angel Chorus) - Magnolia is over the moon about being in her first Excelsior show! Magnolia is 7 years old and in 2nd grade at Peace Montessori School. After school one of Magnolia's favorite things to do is to eat snacks and watch the TV show *Chip and Potato!* One of the things that Magnolia is loving about Excelsior is the choreography that goes with the Christmas songs in this production! Her favorite Christmas movie is *Frosty the Snowman!*

CAST CONTINUED ~

Mary Eyster (Clarence Oddbody (Guardian Angel)) – Mary is excited about being back on stage for her second Excelsior holiday show – “It’s A Wonderful Life – A Live Radio Play”! Mary works for Parkview Occupational Health. When she isn't at work or volunteering for Excelsior, Mary enjoys reading and eating tacos! Mary thinks that Excelsior is a wonderful place for students – and adults – to have a real theater experience! Her favorite Christmas movie is *Mickey Mouse Christmas Carol!*

Michael Gulick (Pete Bailey / Young Harry / Angel Chorus) – Michael is delighted to be in 4th Excelsior production, “It’s A Wonderful Life – A Live Radio Play”! Michael is 11 years old and in the 6th grade at DeKalb Middle School. After school, on weekends, or when he’s not rehearsal you can find Michael on the basketball court or spending time with his new puppy, Teddy! One of the things that Michael loves about Excelsior are the performances – acting up on stage for amazing audiences! His favorite Christmas movie is *The Christmas Chronicles!*

Myla Scheumann (Zuzu Bailey / Angel Chorus) – Myla is glad to be back on the Excelsior stage for the 7th production! Myla is 13 years old and in 7th grade at DeKalb Middle School. When Myla isn't at rehearsals you can find her playing Lego and video games! She loves everything about Excelsior – her friends, rehearsals, performances, pizza parties, even the costumes! Myla’s all-time favorite Christmas movie is holiday classic *Elf!*

Natalie Vance (Angel Chorus) – Natalie is excited to make her Excelsior debut in our production of “It’s A Wonderful Life – A Live Radio Play”! Natalie is 9 years old and in the 4th grade at McKenny-Harrison Elementary School. When she’s not at school Natalie loves to play outside, even when it's a little cold during the fall and winter. One thing she likes about Excelsior is the show and being up on stage! Natalie’s favorite Christmas movie is *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer!*

Sally-Ann Wiley (Tommy Bailey / Angel Chorus) – Sally-Ann is over the moon to be back for another amazing Excelsior production! This is Sally-Ann’s 14th production with the Excelsior Theater. Sally-Ann is 15 years old and in the 10th grade at DeKalb High School. In any spare time that she has you can find Sally-Ann here at the Excelsior Theater. One thing that she loves about Excelsior Arts Academy is how close all the actors become with the directors and fellow actors and the family atmosphere that produces. Sally-Ann’s all-time favorite Christmas movie is *Jingle All the Way!* She recommends everyone watch it this holiday season!

Serenity Reeves (Angel Chorus) – Serenity is pumped to be back for her 2nd Excelsior production! Serenity is 9 years old and in 4th grade at JR Watson Elementary School. In her spare time, Serenity enjoys playing with Barbies. Her favorite thing about Excelsior is being able to be up on stage and performing in front of a big audience! Serenity’s favorite holiday movie is “the the the *The Grinch!*”

Shannon Scheumann (Mary Bailey) – Shannon is over the moon to make her debut on the Excelsior stage as Mary Bailey in our production of “It’s A Wonderful Life – A Live Radio Play”! Shannon is a graduate of Saint Francis University and works currently as a registered nurse. Even though this is Shannon’s first time on stage with Excelsior she is not unfamiliar in working with Kent and Shelley Johnson, as she was in their show choir program when she attended DeKalb High School! When Shannon isn’t working or memorizing lines she enjoys crocheting, organizing and redecorating her home! One thing that Shannon is loving about the Excelsior program is being able to watch her daughter bloom under the direction of Kent and Shelley, not only in the performing sense, – but life lessons as well! Shannon’s favorite Christmas movie is *The Santa Clause!*

Silas Refner (Announcer) – Silas is glad to be back on the Excelsior stage with bringing to life the roles of the Announcer in our production of “It’s A Wonderful Life – A Live Radio Play”! Silas is 16 years old and in 11th grade at DeKalb High School. Silas has been in so many Excelsior shows he can't remember how many, he just knows that our production of “The Nutcracker” was his first! In his spare time, Silas enjoys playing video games and singing. One thing that he likes about the Excelsior program is how involved everyone is – from students to directors and from board members to parents! Silas’ favorite Christmas movies are *Elf* OR *Christmas Vacation*, he couldn’t just pick one!

Sophia Eyster (Angel Chorus) – Sophie is excited to be back for her 6th Excelsior production! Sophia is 8 years old and in 4th grade at Waterloo Elementary School. Sophia enjoys spending time playing with toys and singing and dancing, which is one reason she enjoys being in Excelsior. Another thing that Sophia enjoys about Excelsior is all the friends she made from the different schools in the area! Her favorite Christmas movie is *Mickey Mouse Christmas Carol!*

Susan Anderson (Janie Bailey / Angel Chorus) – Susan is pumped about being back on the Excelsior stage for her 6th show – “It’s A Wonderful Life – A Live Radio Play”! Susan is 12 years old and in 7th grade at DeKalb Middle School. When Susan isn't at school or Excelsior rehearsals, she enjoys reading, drawing, and watching YouTube videos. Her favorite thing about Excelsior is learning how to act, taking what she’s learned and performing it on stage for people to see! This production is extra special because Susan’s favorite Christmas movie is *It’s a Wonderful Life!*

Theo Rowe (Young George / Angel Chorus) – Theo is excited about appearing as Young George in Excelsior’s production of “It’s A Wonderful Life – A Live Radio Play”! This is Theo’s 7th production with Excelsior. In his spare time, Theo enjoys reading, playing video games, and watching YouTube. What he loves most about Excelsior is the friends that he’s made, and that they get to hang out not only during rehearsals but also on-stage during performances. Theo’s favorite holiday time movie is *A Christmas Carol!*

Titus Refner (Henry Potter) – Titus is glad to be back for his 5th production with Excelsior! Titus is 15 years old and in 10th grade at DeKalb High School. When Titus isn’t at school or rehearsals he enjoys gaming – all kinds – video, board, card, and computer. One thing that Titus likes about Excelsior is the acting and performing. He also enjoys being able to spend time with his friends. Titus’ all-time favorite Christmas movie, which some can catch during its 24 hour marathon, is *A Christmas Story!*

CAST CONTINUED~

Tori Perkins (Violet / Mrs. Thompson) - Tori is excited to appear again on the Excelsior stage in this production of “It’s A Wonderful Life - A Live Radio Play”! This will be Tori’s 3rd show with the Excelsior theater. Tori is a sophomore at Purdue University - Fort Wayne. She also works as a substitute teacher for Garrett High School. In any free time that Tori has you can find her spending time with her family, reading, bingeing TV shows, or practicing the flute. Some of the things that Tori loves about the Excelsior program are the vibes in the atmosphere as soon as you walk in the door. How wonderful everyone involved in a production is - from lighting crews, to set builders, costume designers, and the other actors! She also thinks that Kent and Shelley are amazing directors! Tori’s favorite Christmas movie is the debatable holiday classic *Gremlins!*

Vera Barriente (Angel Chorus) - Vera is glad to be back for her 2nd production with Excelsior! Vera is 9 years old and in 4th grade at JR Watson Elementary School. When Vera isn’t at school or rehearsal she enjoys singing and making up songs! Some of Vera’s favorite things about Excelsior are the cast pizza parties at the end of a production, as well as the snacks that sometimes happen at the end of practices! Vera’s favorite holiday movie is *The Nightmare Before Christmas* - dual holidays - Halloween and Christmas!

Zoey Every (Angel Chorus) - Zoey is pumped about being in her 2nd Excelsior show “It’s A Wonderful Life - A Live Radio Play”! Zoey is 7 years old and in 2nd grade at McKinney-Harrison Elementary School. When Zoey isn’t at school or practicing on stage, she enjoys watching TV! One thing that Zoey loves about Excelsior is getting to see her friends during rehearsals! Zoey’s all-time favorite Christmas movie is *Elf!*



We are always looking for encouraging and creative adults who would like to volunteer with our theater program.

We need **all kinds of talent in our theater family!**





MONTHLY DASHBOARD

November 2023



Downtown Auburn Holiday Parade

We're all stronger when we work together! Here are some of the many ways our Excelsior Family has supported the Important works of other community programs locally In 2023:

- Annual Coat Drive Collections
- DABA Holiday Parade
- DeKalb Fair Saturday Parade
- American Legion Memorial Day Ceremonies
- Auburn Main Street's Seasons Greetings Videos
- DeKalb Outdoor Theater Concessions
- Downtown Caroling
- 1st Fridays Street Theater

REGULAR NOVEMBER DONATIONS
\$172.00

OCTOBER DONATIONS
\$500



OUR 5TH BIRTHDAY PARTY AND FUNDRAISING DINNER IS COMING SOON!

WATCH FOR MORE INFORMATION.

THE GOOD WORD!



Excelsior has been such a blessing for our family because of how inclusive and kind everyone has been. My kids have definitely found their people and we are so thankful for that!

~Anna Every

HELP US DO MORE IN

2024



Your monthly gifts help us plan ahead and do more for our students.

Please scan here to be a monthly donor in 2024.