

The Levittown

weekend

August 13 - 19, 2014

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Levittown

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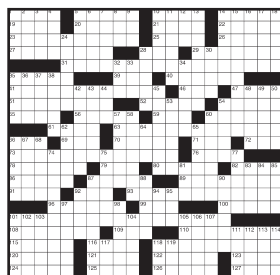
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Levittown

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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Family-Run Acting Studio Opens

BY MARLO JAPPEN

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One local mom was concerned about her shy daughter's first acting class at the newly opened Neighborhood Entertainment Arts and Theatre (NEAT) at 166 Center Lane in Levittown; but after her daughter's lesson with Theatre Director Watson Miller, she was surprised to hear her daughter broke out of her shell, singing not one, but two songs for the class.

"My husband has a very special gift with kids," Koula Miller said. "He brings out the best in them."

The Neighborhood Entertainment Arts and Theatre celebrated its grand opening on Aug. 2 with a series of theatre games for the children. Watson and the kids also watched the classic 1946 family drama *It's a Wonderful Life*, starring James Stewart and Donna Reed, after which they discussed and analyzed scenes from the film.

"We're having more fun than I ever imagined," Watson said. "I teach in Levittown and I love the kids and families in this community."

The studio is run entirely by Watson and Koula, along with their six musically inclined children: Lauren, 19, Elizabeth, 20, Kurt, 14, Jake, 15, and Jack, 24.

Apart from his new role as director of the Neighborhood Entertainment Arts and Theatre, Watson works full-time as a fifth grade teacher at Northside Elementary school and has over 15 years experience teaching theatre. He said he decided to bring NEAT to Levittown because he noticed nothing like it exists in the community.

"More than anything, I want children to develop a love for the arts and theatre," Watson said, "but also for them to build confidence and feel good about themselves. If they don't fit in somewhere else, I want them to fit in here."

NEAT offers students in grades 1-12 classes such as beginning acting, drama, improvisation, glee and singing. At the end of the month, Watson said, the children will perform an original comedy that he wrote and directed. He also plans to put on a theatrical version of the 2013 Academy Award winning Disney film



Frozen sometime this fall.

"The kids have a lot of fun," Koula said. "They make a lot of friends and they seem very eager to come back

the next day."

Those interested in registering for summer or fall classes can call 516-520-6328 or visit www.urneat.com.