LAMORINDA WEEKLY



**Published September 3, 2008**

# Town Hall Kids-Getting into the Act

*By Andrea A. Firth*

Town Hall Kids Shelby Johnston, Jennifer Lo, Olivia Lowe, and Madison Wheeler in "Once on this Island" Photo provided by Town Hall Theater

Town Hall Kids-the children's education arm of Lafayette's Town Hall Theatre-will kick off another season of theater arts classes this month. Over 150 area children from preschool to high school will act, dance, and sing their way to local stage stardom as part of the popular performing arts program. There are two main reasons that Town Hall Kids has become so popular," notes Janice Peacock, Director of Education for Town Hall. "We have fantastic instructors. They are all professional actors who work actively in local theater." As examples, instructor Joel Roster will direct Town Hall Theatre's upcoming main stage production of The Graduate, and instructor Dennis Markam will star in the play. We also do shows that kids want to be in," adds Peacock. Town Hall Kids Fall classes will include performances of Disney's The Aristocrats and the musical Willy Wonka based on Roald Dahl's much-loved story Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. Who wouldn't want to make their mark on stage as a cool cat or oompa loompa? Peacock renovated the kids' theater program when she came on board as Director of Education two years ago. "My background is in building curriculum for high tech companies. I tried to apply that knowledge base to create a series of theater arts classes that build upon each other," she explains. "Each program exposes children to theatre arts while developing self-esteem, confidence, leadership, team-building

skills and advanced acting techniques and culminates in a performance." Town Hall Kids classes for ages 4-11 start the week of September 8th. Classes for teens and tweens begin the weeks of September 15th and September 22nd. To register for any of these classes and for more information visit www.townhallkids.com or call the Town Hall Kids Hotline at 925-262-1159.

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