

# METRO SCHOLARS

## EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT

**T**wo River's Metro Scholars program, which launched in the 2005/06 Season, is an extraordinary year-long opportunity for high school students from across the state of New Jersey to be part of the work of our theater. The program, which is highly competitive for applicants—and free for participating students—is open to high school juniors who are interested in exploring acting, design, or technical theater/stage management. Metro Scholars assist Two River's staff in departments including Education, Development, Marketing, and Production. In addition to seeing every show at Two River for free, the students participate in moderated conversations following each production; enjoy a backstage tour of each set; and take specially designed master classes with theater professionals on such subjects as playwriting, directing, design, casting, and season planning.

"The Metro Scholars program engages a wide range of students with many different interests, who all want to learn about the professional theater," says Kate Cordaro, Two River's longtime Director of Education, who has overseen the program since its inception. "Many of our past Metro Scholars have gone on to attend some of the country's best training programs and pursue a career in the performing arts; others just enjoy the creative opportunities of working behind the scenes. All of the students make a significant contribution to Two River during their time here, and enjoy the benefits of conversations with artists, learning from theater professionals, and being part of the daily work of the theater."

Some Metro Scholars are fully immersed in the life of the theater even before joining the program. Patrick Monaghan, for instance—a Metro Scholar in the 2014/15 Season—started attending student matinees here as a high school freshman, and performed in our *A Little Shakespeare* productions of *As You Like It* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as a sophomore and junior. Patrick went on to make his professional acting debut here in his senior year as a cast member of our world-premiere play *Lives of Reason*.

**O**ther students—like Lucas A. DeGirolamo, a Metro Scholar in the 2015/16 Season—come to the program without any prior Two River experience. "I had never even seen a Two River show before auditioning for the program," Lucas says. But having heard about the opportunity (and the work of the theater) from a friend, he decided to apply as a way of broadening his own horizons beyond his interests in acting, directing, and writing. "I started acting when I was eight, in community theaters and in shows at my school. The idea of being involved in a professional theater was spectacular to me, and the program came at a time when I didn't know what I wanted to do, beyond being involved in the theater."

At the start of each season, each Metro Scholar picks between three and five areas that they are interested in, and they are then placed with different departments in the theater for the year of their internships. Lucas chose Development and Marketing, areas that he hadn't worked in previously. "I wanted to branch myself out a little bit and see what else there was that I could do. I think what surprised me most about the program was how welcoming everybody in the administrative office was, and how they put us to work. That's the coolest thing about the Metro Scholars. You get to meet your own little family within the Metro Scholars program, and you are part of the Two River family."

"It was valuable and so inspiring to see all of these professional adult people who are actually making a living being involved in the theater," Lucas continues. "There are so many ways to be involved in the theater—jobs I didn't even know existed—and I don't think that people realize that all the time. It was uplifting and hopeful. And what's great about the Metro Scholars program is that it isn't for one type of person. It's for everyone."



2014/15 Season Metro Scholars with Composer and Lyricist Joe Iconis, promoting *Be More Chill* at the Jersey Born Musical Festival in Asbury Park.



2015/16 Metro Scholars' last day selfie.