

GREENFIELD



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Members of the Greenfield Players rehearse for their upcoming performance of "Much Ado About Nothing."

'Much Ado About Nothing' performances coming to Energy Park

By MARY BYRNE
Staff Writer

GREENFIELD — The Greenfield Players, a community theater company established last summer, is bringing Shakespeare to the park for a second year with its upcoming performance of "Much Ado About Nothing" at Energy Park on Saturday.

"Much Ado About Nothing," which opens Saturday at 2 p.m., is described by Producer Rachel Cronen-Townsend as a play about the ridiculousness of romance, and the confusions and misunderstandings that can aggravate people. A second show on Saturday is scheduled for 6 p.m., followed by a show on Sunday at 2 p.m.

The following weekend, on Saturday, May 21, shows will take place at 2 and 6 p.m., followed by a performance on Sunday, May 22, at 2 p.m.

"I'm just really excited about the fact that the Recreation Department has given us this opportunity to have a place to perform, and the town has really embraced it," Cronen-Townsend said.

She said she is grateful for the partnership between the all-volunteer theater company and the city.

"They've been amazing about supporting us, which I think is super important," she said. "I'm from New York City ... where there is no community theater. You can't be an amateur actor in New York."

Cronen-Townsend explained that last summer, after a year of being unable to perform due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a group of friends from a local theater group were trying to figure out a way to bring theater back to the community.

With fellow actress Beth Oliveira — and now director of the theater group — Cronen-Townsend considered the possibility of putting on a show at Energy Park. She sent an email through the City Hall website, and within five minutes received a response advising her to reach out to Recreation Director Christy Moore.

"I'm very grateful that the city of Greenfield is supporting the arts in this way," she said.

Last year, the Greenfield Players organized its first event at the park, with an estimated 250 audience members in total for its performances of "Macbeth," according to the theater company.

Cronen-Townsend said even with the challenges posed by the location of the park — namely, the train that regularly passes and the commotion of vehicles from the street — her 17-member company has enjoyed using it as a venue.

"Energy Park is great, because it's outside and Shakespeare is performed outside," she said.

With the Recreation Department as its sponsor, the show is free.

"We're bringing Shakespeare to anyone who wants to hear it," Cronen-Townsend said. "I think the main takeaway I have is how proud I am of the work everyone has put in. We're volunteers. We're donating our time to bring something wonderful to Greenfield, and it feels good to be able to do that."

Reporter Mary Byrne can be reached at mbyrne@recorder.com or 413-930-4429. Twitter: @MaryE-Byrne