

FFWPU USA: Bridgeport International Academy - A Little Piece of Heaven

Naokimi Ushiroda
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Photos courtesy of BIA

Have you ever lost anything that meant a great deal to you? After a three-year hiatus during the Covid-19 pandemic, on April 28 and 29 audiences of all ages will get to experience *A Little Piece of Heaven* - the debut play from Bridgeport International Academy ([BIA](#)) that addresses themes of love, loss, and redemption, as well as hope, friendship, and faith.

Co-director and BIA instructor Daniel Kingsley chose the Matthew Carlin dramedy for its "feel-good message and the story behind it," he says. "I did a lot of research, and when I came across this play I knew it was the one we wanted to do."

BIA is a cross-cultural institution founded by True Parents with students of diverse faiths and backgrounds, including a number of Unificationists. Kingsley said the script spoke to the underlying threads of love and hope that connect all of humanity. "This storyline has something for everyone," he says. "The premise is about an antique shop that the townspeople come to and find very important things that they lost, big and little things that had a lot of sentimental value."

But all is not what it seems.

"It's heavily alluded to that the two store owners are angels who set up 'shop' every 10 years in a town that needs it," says Kingsley. "However, it's not a real shop - there's magic there. There's a spiritual element underneath. It's a store of miracles and healing."



Without revealing too much, Kingsley says the characters find peace and solace in unexpected ways after visiting the shop and facing what troubles them. "They come to the shop seeking something that's missing and they leave more complete and whole," says Kingsley. "Everyone that enters the shop leaves with a

newfound sense about life. They feel hopeful and inspired and there's restoration."

Kingsley says this comforting message also crosses over to the audience, as well as the production members. "I wanted the audience to leave the show inspired by this play that touches them and that they will remember," he says. "The play is a lot of work where students have to go out of their comfort zone. I've seen our students grow as actors and build their character. There's so much character education that comes with a drama production."



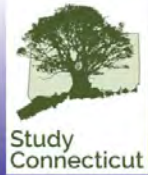
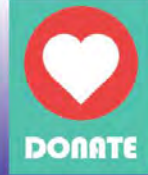
For one student, working closely on the play with their teachers and classmates has brought a new personal dimension to their relationships while also improving their study habits. "This is my first time in a drama production," says the student. "It has been a very interesting experience ... I get to interact with students more one on one and they get to know me more as well. Being in the play [has] helped me learn how to memorize lines, which has also helped me in instituting more effective study techniques for my other academic classes."



The show, co-directed by BIA Academic Dean Frederick Swarts and Kingsley, involves some 35 students, faculty, and staff. "It really is a full team production," says Kingsley of the 12-student cast and other members who have contributed to the rehearsals, set design, and various behind-the-scenes work. And with many people facing different challenges in everyday life, Kingsley says the production "leaves anyone with a great sense of hope and inspiration."

A Little Piece of Heaven runs April 28 and 29 at 7 p.m. at Paier College's Mertens Theater in Bridgeport, Conn. Tickets are available at the door - \$12 for adults and \$7 for students and kids. A family bundle of \$30 also covers two adults and two kids. Proceeds go toward the theater rental cost.

You can learn more about Bridgeport International Academy [here](#).



Where Students Meet the World!

Our holistic approach to education helps students develop the ability to use knowledge responsibly, choose and incorporate information most essential to their life goals, distinguish between useful or harmful exposures, and understand universally-recognized values. The multinational composition of the school community provides students with the opportunity to gain cultural competence and a broad understanding of the world in which they live.

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Fast Facts



6:1

Student/Teacher Ratio



44

Countries Represented



47,000+

Service Hours Logged



97%

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Upcoming Events

Thursday, April 27	
Friday, April 28	
Half day	
7:00pm	Drama
Monday, May 1	
Teacher Appreciation Week	
Tuesday, May 2	
Teacher Appreciation Week	
Wednesday, May 3	
Teacher Appreciation Week	
Thursday, May 4	
Teacher Appreciation Week	
Friday, May 5	
Teacher Appreciation Week	
Half day	
12:45pm	Community Service Project: Alaska

Events shown in time zone: Eastern Time - New York

Who We Are



**Mr. Gukwon An
(Faculty)**

"Each student can find, with his/her education, a role: to be purposeful by challenging academic interests, to be supported by seeking help from the faculty or diverse student body, and/or to be compassionate by serving others through



**Jaylin Padilla
(Student)**

"This school has really helped me change as a person on a positive level, and it has really shown me how fun learning can be. Being in this school for two years now has also shown me the responsibilities I have as a student and how to keep



**Jeanne Bessell
(Parent)**

"I can not think of any better school where I would want my kids to be. Great environment, great teachers, great kids. I love BIA!"



**Thu Pham
(Alumni)**

"BIA is small, but this house is also capable enough to contain all love from students, concern from teachers and sharing from everyone. As an international student, BIA gives me many opportunities to study, to try and reach out to my

his/her academic strengths."

up with

dreams."

ABOUT

Bridgeport International Academy,
where students meet the world!

BIA is a learning community where students grow in heart and mind as they gain an excellent academic foundation for their college careers. [more](#)

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