

Beaver Dam High School graduate Brianna Lerwick is the 2017 recipient of the Jerome H. Kamps Memorial Award, established by the Kamps family for the Beaver Dam Area Community Theatre. Brianna began participating in theater in 2008, when she performed in BDACT's Tell-A-Tale summer musical, *Annie Jr.* Following her appearances in several more productions, she expanded her theater experience by developing her behind-the-scenes technical skills and playing in the pit orchestra at Beaver Dam High School.

In her essay, Brianna told how her backstage work particularly captured her. "And once I stepped behind the curtain, I began to understand why theater is really important: any theater show is a group effort put together by many more people than get their pictures in the program. A theater show requires a unified effort by a large group of diverse people, each with separate special talents. Theater is unique in its ability to bring together all forms of art into a unified performance that each participant can be proud of."

In selecting the recipient, an appointed committee of theater and family representatives review the candidates' essays and theater experience resumes and then evaluate the applications based on participation points. To qualify for the \$500 annual Jerome H. Kamps Award, the recipient must be a graduating senior from Beaver Dam High School, Wayland Academy, or a high school from the surrounding area, who is pursuing post graduation education. Brianna will attend UW-Oshkosh to major in secondary education and Spanish.

BDACT's Jerome H. Kamps Award was established by Jerome's wife, Annette Kamps, and their children, Maureen Noe, Colette McLaughlin, Teresa McCulloch, and Jeremy Kamps, in memory of Jerome, a co-founder and charter member of BDACT. He was a dedicated art teacher at the Beaver Dam High School for thirty-four years and was set designer and director of set painting for more than sixty productions during his teaching career. From 1964 until just before his death on May 4, 2016, Jerome also designed and directed set painting for many BDACT productions. He particularly encouraged and gave enthusiastic support to young people as he helped them discover and demonstrate their art talents at school and through community projects. Among those projects was a large barn mural, part of a statewide project sponsored by the Wisconsin Arts Board, which he designed and implemented with the help of his students. One of his favorite BDACT projects was the creating of an extraordinary set for "Joseph and the Technicolor Dream Coat," in 1995. Given his example as a dedicated "back-stage worker" who gave his talents and love for the arts unconditionally, the Jerome H. Kamps Memorial Award, made possible by memorial contributions, will especially acknowledge those characteristics.