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## Williams Street Rep to present ‘Steel Magnolias’

Williams Street Repertory has announced rehearsals are under way for the final production of their second season, “Steel Magnolias.” The show opens at 8 p.m. Friday, April 26, at the Raue Center for the Arts in historic downtown Crystal Lake. Additional show dates are at 8 p.m. April 27, May 3-4, 10-11, and 3 p.m. May 11.

Robert Harling wrote the heartfelt play that is based on the true story of his sister’s battle with diabetes. In its searing depiction of a group of gossipy southern ladies in a small-town beauty parlor, the play is alternately hilarious and touching — and, in the end, deeply revealing of what it truly means to be a friend when the chips are up or down.

Kimberly Berg Sanders is the show’s director. Sanders began as a dancer/performer with Judith Svalander and attended high school from Crystal Lake Central High School. She transitioned into directing while in college and upon graduating she became a member of the Chicago Center Theatre Ensemble for five years. Sanders, who went to school for education, has directed shows at both Prairie Ridge and New Trier high schools, and now currently teaches English at Cary-Grove High School.

When asked to describe the show Sanders explained that the

show, put simply, is about “needing a strong support group to lean into your fears.”

Bringing to life these iconic women are Amanda Flahive (Annelle), Hannah Dawe (Shelby), Kate Hein (Truvy), Kellee Stall (M'Lynn), Shannon Mayhill (Claire), and Regina Belt (Quiser).

Behind the scenes, the crew includes Richard Kuranda (founding artistic director) and T. Paul Lowry (producing director) as well as Pat Henderson (stage manager), Rebecca Lowry (set designer), Dan Gallagher (lighting designer), Aaron Quick (sound designer), Clare Kemock (costume designer), Steven Spera (light board operator) and John Dwyer (sound board operator).

The theater company also presented “The Fantasticks”, “The Rocky Horror Show,” “It’s A Wonderful Life: A Radio Play,” “Company” and “Short Stories and Tall Tales of the American Hero” this season.

“Steel Magnolias” tickets start at \$29. Group pricing is available. Tickets can be purchased online at [www.wsrep.org](http://www.wsrep.org) or [www.rauecenter.org](http://www.rauecenter.org) or via the box office at (815) 356-9212 or 26 N. Williams St. in downtown Crystal Lake.

This show is sponsored by Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital, BMO Harris Bank and RFP Photography, Inc. The second week of shows is also sponsored by Countryside Flower Shop and Garden Center. Williams Street Repertory also thanks the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation and the MacArthur Fund for Arts & Culture at the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation.