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MILFORD – A unique musical production will take to the stage this week in Milford – and not only will it be fun and educational, but it will allow audience members to reunite with a TV series that has become part of American popular culture.

"Schoolhouse Rock" – the popular series of animated, musical and educational short cartoons from the '70s, '80s and '90s – is back.

Five local teens, along with members of the Boys & Girls Club of Souhegan Valley, have been working on a musical version of the series – a play called "Schoolhouse Rock Live! Jr." After months of hard work, the play will hit the stage Wednesday evening, with a second performance Thursday afternoon.

Andy Harris, 16, of Amherst, has been working on the production with four friends – Rachel Moss, Will Carbery, Patrick O'Mera and Katie Regan – as a summer community service project. The teens recruited a cast of children and teens for the play, several of whom are from the Boys & Girls Club.

Harris attends Deerfield Academy in Deerfield, Mass., a private school, which, according to his mother, Peggy Harris, encourages its students to volunteer their time with an existing organization over the summer, come up with an idea for a project and carry it through from planning to completion.

"They have a great program," Peggy Harris said. "They not only encourage the kids to do a community service project, but if they come up with a whole plan . . . then they'll even give them a grant for part of the cost. So when he came up with the idea for this, he included an idea for the licensing of the show, so their grant paid for (it)."

The generous grant that helped fund the production of the play, said Andy Harris, came from David Workman, an alumni of Deerfield Academy.

The five theater-loving teens are responsible for every aspect of the play, including directing, producing, choreography, music, lighting, sound and set design, Peggy Harris said.

The play is geared towards children, Andy Harris explained, which is why its title includes a "Jr." at the end. It is both educational and fun, just like the popular TV series was.

"It's about a teacher who is about to go to his first day of school, and he turns on the TV and sees 'Schoolhouse Rock' on," Andy Harris said about the play's plot. "And the characters jump out of the TV and do a bunch of the numbers from the TV show and prepare him for his first day of teaching at school."

Last summer, Andy Harris, along with Moss, Carbery and O'Mera, produced a musical called "How To Eat Like A Child." However, the teens didn't begin planning and advertising auditions soon enough and pulled in just 11 students between the ages of 8 and 12.

But even with such a small cast, the show went over well and the kids had a great time, said Peggy Harris – although it was certainly a learning experience.

This time around, the teens, determined to get a bigger cast, began meeting and planning well in advance and as a result reeled in a cast of 40. Regan joined the foursome for this year's production, lending additional assistance and creativity. Twice-weekly, two-hour rehearsals for the rockin' musical began in mid-June.

Moss, 15, from Amherst, said the group started planning for this year's play soon after last year's wrapped up. And this year's production has certainly not disappointed, either.

"The thing I've enjoyed most is having kids who have never done theater before coming in and looking for something fun to do this summer and seeing them perform really well and really enjoy it," Moss said. "We (the directors) all love theater, and we really wanted to show the kids the theater world, and I think they like it a lot, so that's good."

Andy Harris said the group settled on the "Schoolhouse Rock" idea because they were looking for a play that they could have a "big ensemble" for and get a lot of kids involved in.

"I guess the biggest goal this year, since most of us will be graduating high school in the next two years, is to get something that can be sustained so we can leave this project for other kids to pick up after we're gone," he said.

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