

CHALLENGING PERSPECTIVES

One Act tackles an impactful topic

“Okay Caitlin, it’s time to tell your story,” **Victoria Herda** ‘20 said. In order for a story of an autistic girl dealing with loss to be told, the One Act cast channeled immense effort to effectively represent the characters and the story.

“The show was about an autistic girl named Caitlin, and her dealing with the fact that her brother died in a school shooting and her mother had left unannounced,” Herda said. “Her dad is dealing with an autistic girl, an absent mother, and a dead son. They kind of just have to figure it out together.”

The characters needed to work together, and so did the One Act cast. Through in depth research, the cast connected with each character in their own way.

“Before I even knew that I really wanted [to be Caitlin], I tried not to get attached to her because I had never been in One Act before, but I definitely got attached anyway,” Herda said. “I did a lot of research because it was really important that I do the character justice and don’t offend anybody. I really liked the character. There isn’t a lot of theater about autistic children. I was very surprised about how much I learned and how much I didn’t know.”

Even so, research proved to be not enough. The cast members utilized internal emotion to connect with their roles uniquely.

“It was very different from any other role I had ever played before. I had played a dad [before], but it was completely different. I connected with this character through watching a lot of YouTube videos on parents talking about their children with autism,” **Eric Braun** ‘18 said. “I needed to find that root of emotion and where the conflict inside of myself would come from. I needed the character to come off correctly, which is just a scary thing. We wanted to make it a real, raw and emotional experience.”

The show gave the members a new perspective within their acting as well as affecting them in ways specific to each individual.

“[This play] was probably the most impactful thing I’ve ever done. I didn’t know how many people it would end up impacting,” Herda said. “To have a mom come up to me and say that made a difference for [her child] and touched [her child] was super impactful to me because I felt like I made a difference in someone’s life.”

-Eloise Hanson & Laila Ragab



▲ **Respect** Working together, Patrick Stonecipher ‘20 performs with Victoria Herda ‘20. Stonecipher performed to avoid disrespect. “I played Michael, another autistic character. I did a lot of research to portray it respectfully,” Stonecipher said. “If we hadn’t, it could’ve come across as stereotyping autistic people.” *Photo by Eloise Hanson*



▲ **All Natural** On stage, Jillian Elton ‘21 acts out a scene. Elton acted natural to be believable. “The main thing is being engaged even though I’ve done it many times,” Elton said. “I’m thinking ahead to my next line, but I have to remember to make it natural, new, and unplanned.” *Photo by Eloise Hanson*

◀ **Symbolism** Facing the stage, Ian Pappenfus ‘18 works with Victoria Herda ‘20 in a scene. The specific scene represented a unique aspect of the play. “The color red represented the heart, so when [Caitlin] hands me the red marker, it kind of symbolizes her opening up and accepting [the loss of] her brother,” Pappenfus said. *Photo by Eloise Hanson*



▲ **Adrenaline Rush** Talking with other cast members, Jack Lanners ‘20 engages in a scene. Lanners believed One Act contained a competitive edge. “One Act is exhilarating. Each performance brings a new sense of adrenaline that is different from the last,” Lanners said. “One Act brings a competitive level to traditional theatre.” *Photo by Eloise Hanson*