

Playhouse preps for anniversary

Molly Gilmore for The Olympian

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This season, Capital Playhouse is gearing up to celebrate next year's 25th anniversary of its Kids at Play program.

“We kick off each summer with the Page to Stage production, which is a children’s literature piece,” said Jeff Kingsbury, Playhouse artistic director. “So in celebration of the anniversary, we wanted to do something in our Season in a Box that is themed along the lines of the theme of the Kids at Play program.”

The summer program for children is a year older than the playhouse’s regular season. “We started Kids at Play first, and then I thought, ‘Good golly, why aren’t we doing things for adults here?’ ” he said.

Only “The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee” doesn’t fit the theme. It began as a nonmusical improv piece and incorporates audience members as guest spellers. “It is really an odd choice,” Kingsbury said, “but it’s really raucously funny, and I always think in January and February, when it’s still cold, you really want something that lifts you up, and that’s going to do it.”

When the playhouse first announced the season, the holiday show was slated to be “White Christmas,” but the show has been changed to “Little Women.”

Olympia Family Theater is also presenting a version of “Little Women.” That presentation is not the musical but a straight drama.

“We obviously play to decidedly different demographics,” Kingsbury said. “We won’t get the kids. We just don’t see that many young people coming into our shows, no matter what.”

“We have a completely different subscriber base,” agreed Jen Ryle, the family theater’s artistic director. “And our tickets are half as much.”

The Kids at Play season will also feature special events, Kingsbury said.

Alumni who want to make sure they’re notified of events are invited to go to Facebook and search for “Capital Playhouse Alumni Association.”

“We’re trying to get everyone who’s ever worked with the theater,” he said. “We’re hoping to get people from all over the map.”