

# oconee youth playhouse

## OYP presents 'Willy Wonka'

Oconee Youth Playhouse will present Roald Dahl's "Willy Wonka," the musical version of the popular children's book "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," the weekend of July 30-Aug. 1 at the Oconee County Civic Center.

The cast of more than 70 includes Simon Beckham, a seventh grader at Malcom Bridge Middle School, as Charlie and veteran performer Bryan Shaw as Willy Wonka. Shaw, who is director of worship and the arts at St. James United Methodist Church in Athens, played Father in OYP's recent production of "Children of Eden."



Willy Wonka (Bryan Shaw) is surrounded by several cast members at rehearsal.

Other adults in the cast include Richard Hoard, pastor at Oconee River Church, who plays Grandpa Joe, and Lynn Renna, a third grade teacher at Colham Ferry Elementary School, who plays Grandma Josephine.

Several of the main roles have been double-cast. Megan Hodgson, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader at Athens Academy, and Rachel Wolfe, a 9<sup>th</sup> grader at Oconee County High School, take turns playing the wealthy and spoiled Veruca Salt. Cooper Saunders, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader at Oconee County Middle School, and Thomas Peck, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader at Malcom Bridge Middle

School, share the role of Mike Teavee, a boy obsessed with television and video games. Antonia Bowen, an 8<sup>th</sup> grader at Malcom Bridge Middle School, and Jordan Richey, an 8<sup>th</sup> grader at Franklin County Middle School, play Violet Beauregarde, an abrasive girl who is constantly chewing gum. Andrew Youngerman, a 9<sup>th</sup> grader at Athens Academy is the gluttonous Augustus Gloop.

All find golden tickets hidden in Wonka candy bars. The tickets entitle them to tour Willy Wonka's world-famous candy factory, along with Charlie, who finds the last ticket. At the factory, they meet Wonka's servants, the Oompa-Loompas, and have a series of strange adventures.

"The show is very fanciful and a lot of fun," says Shane Hannon, who serves as OYP co-director with his wife Terra. "We have a lot of talented kids in the cast, ranging in age from first graders through high school students, and I think they're enjoying being part of this. Of course, we're very happy to have Bryan Shaw take on another major role in an OYP production as Willy Wonka."

"Willy Wonka" will be presented Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m., with matinees on Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$16 for adults, \$14 for students and seniors, and \$12 for age 12 and under and will be on sale in the lobby of the Oconee County Civic Center one hour before each show.