

OLNEY CENTRAL COLLEGE KNIGHTLINE



MARCH 2025

CALENDAR

MARCH

11 — Summer & Fall
Registration Opens

14 — OCC Ambassador
Applications Due

19 — OCC Spring Fling,
10:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Student
Union & Patio

21-22 — OCC Theater
Presents Disney's Tarzan,
7 p.m.

23 — OCC Theater Presents
Disney's Tarzan, 2 p.m.

26 — CTE Day for High
School Students

27-29 — OCC Theater
Presents Disney's Tarzan,
7 p.m.

29-30 — OCC Theater
Presents Disney's Tarzan,
2 p.m.

APRIL

2 — Jazz & Commercial
Music Concert, OCC Theater,
7 p.m.

College Visits

March 25 — Eastern Illinois
University Representative Bri
Dominguez will be here from
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

April 8 — University of
Southern Indiana Representa-
tive Simone Payne will be
here from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Broadway's Original Tarzan To Direct OCC Theater Production

In a full-circle moment, Josh Strickland, the original Tarzan of Disney's *Tarzan* on Broadway, is making his directorial debut with Olney Central College Theater's production of Disney's *Tarzan* for its 50th-anniversary season.

For Strickland, this return to the beloved production is more than just a new role — it's a homecoming.

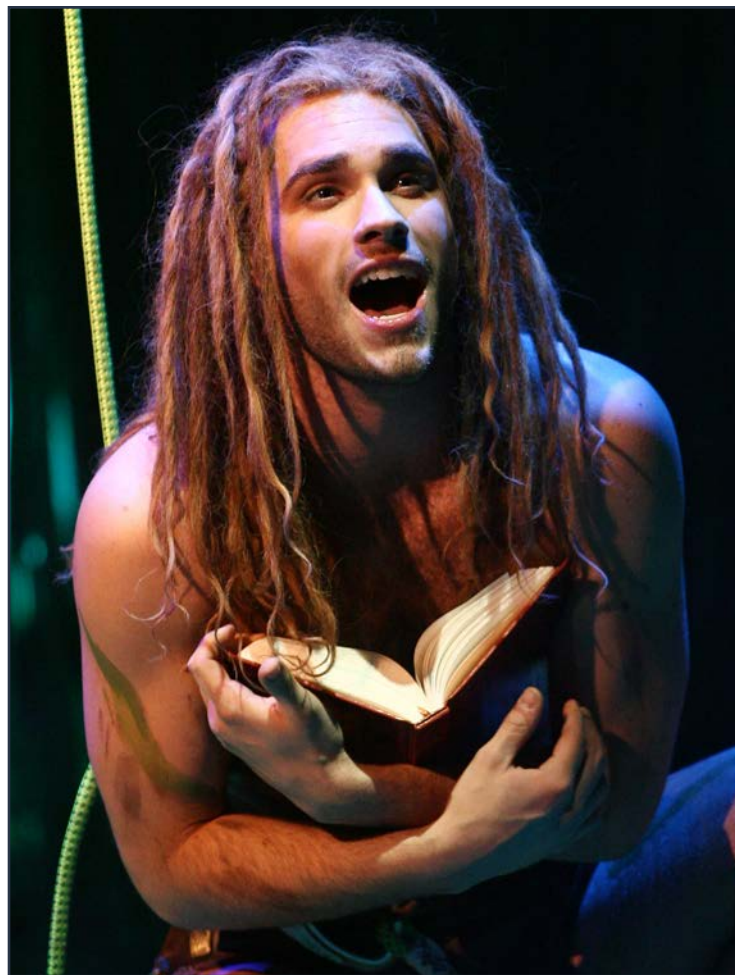
A native of Charleston, South Carolina, Strickland took Broadway by storm in 2006 when he originated the title role in Disney's *Tarzan*, bringing the iconic character to life with soaring vocals. His career has since spanned from the Las Vegas Strip — where he starred in *Peepshow* at Planet Hollywood and *Vegas! The Show* — to international stages, including reprising his role as Tarzan in Oberhausen, Germany.

His performances with Disney's Broadway Hits, including the Emmy-winning concert at Royal Albert Hall (streaming on Disney+), solidified his place as a celebrated Disney theatrical performer. He recently returned from performing in Disney World at Epcot's Festival of the Arts, celebrating 30 years of Disney on Broadway.

Now, Strickland steps into the director's chair for the first time, leading OCC Theater's production of *Tarzan* in celebration of its milestone 50th season. For Strickland, this opportunity is not just about directing — it's about returning to the world that held a defining chapter of his career.

"I am so excited to be making my directorial debut, especially with this production of *Tarzan* here in Olney as they celebrate their 50th anniversary," says Strickland. "This story and this character have shaped my career in ways I could only have dreamed of, and to be able to use 20 years of experience in the business to now look at this story from a director's point of view is something I am very excited about."

Strickland's deep connection to the material, combined with his firsthand knowledge of



Josh Strickland as the original Tarzan in Disney's *Tarzan* on Broadway.

the role, will bring a unique perspective to this production, ensuring an unforgettable experience for Olney and the surrounding communities.

OCC Theater's production of *Disney's Tarzan* will be a spectacular celebration of its 50-year legacy. Featuring the unforgettable music of Phil Collins, acrobatic characters, special effects, and an incredible set, *Tarzan* promises to be the largest musical production in the theater's history. With Strickland directing, this show will deliver a fresh, heartfelt interpretation of a beloved classic that will be enjoyed by audiences of all ages

In addition to Strickland, the OCC Theater is welcoming guest performer Ethan Hardy Benson who will play the role of Tarzan.

Benson is a musical theater actor who most recently performed on the 50th-anniversary national tour of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, where he played the role of Jesus. In January, he performed in *Two by Two: A Celebration of the Dynamic Duos of Broadway* at 54 Below in New York City.

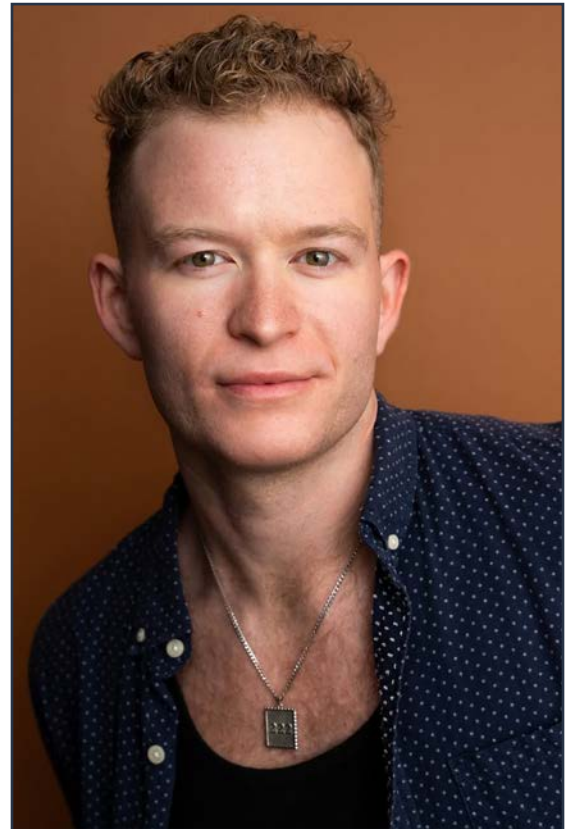
Benson has also played roles at a variety of regional theaters including Goodspeed Opera House, The Rev, Skylight Music Theatre, and Red Mountain Theatre.

Performances for OCC Theater's production of *Disney's Tarzan* are March 21, 22, 27, 28, and 29 at 7 p.m. and March 23, 29 and 30 at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$14 for reserved seating and can be purchased at www.iecc.edu/occ/theater or by calling 618-395-7777, ext. 2408. This production of *Tarzan* is sponsored by First National Bank.



Above, Jenn Gambatese as Jane and Josh Strickland as Tarzan in *Disney's Tarzan*. At right, Ethan Hardy Benson who will play the title role in the OCC Theater's production of *Disney's Tarzan*.



SNA Donation

The OCC Student Nurses Association collected pet food and other supplies during February for Claws and Paws Animals Rescue Center in Olney.



OCC Phi Theta Kappa Hosts *Bluey* Screening as Part of Honors in Action Project

Olney Central College's Phi Theta Kappa chapter hosted a special screening of the popular television show *Bluey* on February 26 as part of its PTK Honors in Action Project.

Last fall OCC's Alpha Theta Eta Chapter received a \$1,000 grant from the national PTK organization to assist with research and planning for the project, which explores how storytelling in movies and television shows, like *Bluey*, portray real-life situations.

The Honors in Action Project promotes undergraduate academic research and engages students in an informed, intentional action meant to foster student success and fulfill PTK's mission of providing college students opportunities to grow as scholars and leaders.

"HIA combines Honors Study Topic exploration, problem-solving, and action-oriented service to address real-world challenges in our communities," said PTK Advisor Dr. Sarah Bergbower. "Students gain job-related experience while creating lasting impacts in their communities as they engage in HIA."

The chapter's involvement in HIA is also part of a broader goal to achieve recognition as a Five Star Chapter. This initiative outlines 10 essentials to creating an engaged chapter and organizes them into themed categories or stars.

"Discover is just one of the five areas of involvement under the Five Star Status plan that our chapter is working toward. Last year, we achieved a 4-star status level," Bergbower added.

The *Bluey* Preview Event brought together college and high school students, staff and children from the Buckeroo Early Education Center at OCC. After viewing three episodes of the animated series, the children answered questions about the show while older students and staff completed surveys.

PTK will use the feedback collected to complete the required research paper, which is due in May. Submissions will then be judged and winners announced in the fall.

"We had great support from not only faculty, staff and students at OCC, but also from the ROE and Buckeroo's daycare. This wide variety of age groups provided some phenomenal — both interesting and surprising — survey result data from the screening event that we will use to finalize our research paper."

PTK President Courtney Crawford is also pleased with the OCC community's support of the *Bluey* Preview Event.

"I feel it was very successful," Crawford said. "It was great seeing all the different ages coming together. We had wanted to gather research from a variety of ages and we were able to do that."

Those also assisting with the project included PTK Vice President Brandy Cochran and Advisor Shasta Bennett.

OCC welcomes 88 students on Fine Arts Day



Olney Central College welcomed 88 students from eight area high schools for its Fine Arts Day on February 26.

The event featured instrumental and vocal performances by students from Wade Baker's and Dr. Andrew Pittman's classes, highlighting the talent and opportunities available at OCC.

OCC Theater Director Jon Wright encouraged students to explore the diverse opportunities at the college and urged them to take advantage of scholarship initiatives.

He also introduced special guest Ethan Hardy Benson, a seasoned musical theater performer. Benson, who will play the title role in the upcoming production of Disney's *Tarzan*, recently completed the 50th anniversary national tour of *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

Benson shared insight into his stage experience with the students and sang *Santa Fe* from the musical *Newsies*.

Art Instructor Mari Yamato organized a student artwork exhibit and treated visitors to a live pottery wheel demonstration, showcasing the creativity and hands-on learning experiences offered at OCC.



Upcycling Fund-raiser benefits Art Club and the environment

Learn how to transform old materials into exciting new crafts during the Olney Central College Art Club's Upcycling Fund-raiser on April 21 in the Student Union.

During the event, Art Club members will teach participants step-by-step how to crochet and sew enabling them to create DIY fabric brooches and crocheted items from old T-shirts. The public is invited to attend beginning crochet at 1 p.m. and introductory sewing at 2 p.m.

The cost is \$3 per class or \$5 for both. All materials will be provided. The event, which precedes Earth Day on April 22, highlights the benefits of Upcycling as a means of re-purposing materials for artistic and environmental benefits.

Today's "fast fashion" is a major contributor to pollution as dyeing fabrics can pollute clean water and washing synthetic clothes releases millions of microplastic fibers into the ocean. Also, unsold stock often is trashed in landfills.

"We're giving old items a second life and new function," said OCC Art Club Advisor Mari Yamato.

Participants will not only be helping the OCC Art Club, but the environment as well as they reuse materials that might otherwise be tossed away.

The club is seeking donations of T-shirts, jeans, beads, buttons, safety pins, needle thread and thread glue. Items are needed by April 7 and may be dropped off in Dr. Kent L. Wattleworth Hall Room 202.



Midterm Meltdown

OCC Active Minds and the IECC Student Advisory Board gave students and staff the chance to take a break, recharge and enjoy some delicious ice cream sundaes during Midterm Mettdown on February 28 in the Student Union.

Sharing Success

Ryann Klier, a second-level nursing student and Alpha Delta Nu honor society member, shares tips for success in the nursing program with first-level students. To remain an active member in Alpha Delta Nu, students must complete a project or presentation and maintain a B average.



OCC SPRING FLING
Wednesday, March 19th, 2025
Attention OCC Students, Faculty, & Staff

Join us for:
FREE LUNCH, GAMES, MUSIC & PRIZES
Where: The OCC Student Union & Patio
When: Wednesday, March 19th, 10:30am-1pm

BONUS EVENTS:
OCC Baseball Home Game at 2pm & OCC Softball Home Game at 2pm

Spring Fling Event & Lunch are courtesy of:
OCC Student Senate
& OCC Foundation

Cosmetology Program accepting new students

Olney Central College's Cosmetology Program is accepting new students for Fall 2025.

As enrollment is limited, students are asked to apply and register for classes by July 15 to reserve their spots.

For more information or to meet with an advisor, contact Student Services at 618-395-7777.

To learn more about the program, visit www.iecc.edu/occ.

Registration now open for Summer and fall

Summer and Fall registration is now open at Olney Central College.

For more information or to schedule an advising appointment, contact OCC Student Services at 618-395-7777.

Keep vehicles locked

Students utilizing the OCC parking lots are advised to keep their vehicles locked when unattended.

Sports Schedule

Baseball

March 13 — at Frontier, noon
March 15 — vs. Frontier, noon & 3 p.m. at home
March 18 — at Wabash Valley, 2 p.m.
March 19 — vs. Vincennes, 2 p.m. at home
March 21 — at Walters State, 1 p.m.
March 22 — at Walters State, 11 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.
March 25 — vs. Wabash Valley, 3 p.m. at home
March 27 — vs. Rend Lake, 3 p.m. at home
March 29 — at Rend Lake, noon & 3 p.m.
April 3 — at Lincoln Trail, 3 p.m.
April 5 — vs. Lincoln Trail, noon & 3 p.m. at home
April 8 — at Southeastern Illinois, 2 p.m.

Softball

March 12 — at Lincoln Trail, 2 & 4 p.m.
March 15 — vs. Kaskaskia, noon & 2 p.m. at home
March 16 — at Spoon River, 1 & 3 p.m.
March 19 — vs. Southwestern Illinois, 2 & 4 p.m. at home
March 22 — at Shawnee, noon & 2 p.m.
March 23 — vs. Frontier, noon & 2 p.m. at home
March 26 — vs. Lake Land, 2 & 4 p.m. at home
March 29 — at John A. Logan, noon & 2 p.m.
March 30 — at Wabash Valley, noon & 2 p.m.
April 2 — at Southeastern Illinois, 2 & 4 p.m.
April 5 — vs. Rend Lake, noon & 2 p.m. at home
April 6 — vs. Lincoln Trail, 1 & 3 p.m. at home
April 9 — at Kaskaskia, 2 & 4 p.m.



Blue Knights Sophomore Night

The OCC Blue Knights honored Jahlil Bethea on February 26 during Sophomore Night.

He was accompanied by his father, Dell Bethea, who played for the Blue Knights under Coach Jim Glash from 1999-2000, and Brenda Glover, a devoted supporter of OCC.

Dell Bethea spent a few moments chatting with his former coach before the game.



Lady Knights Sophomore Night

The OCC Lady Knights celebrated Sophomore Night on February 22. The players and their families were honored prior to the Women's Basketball game against John A. Logan.



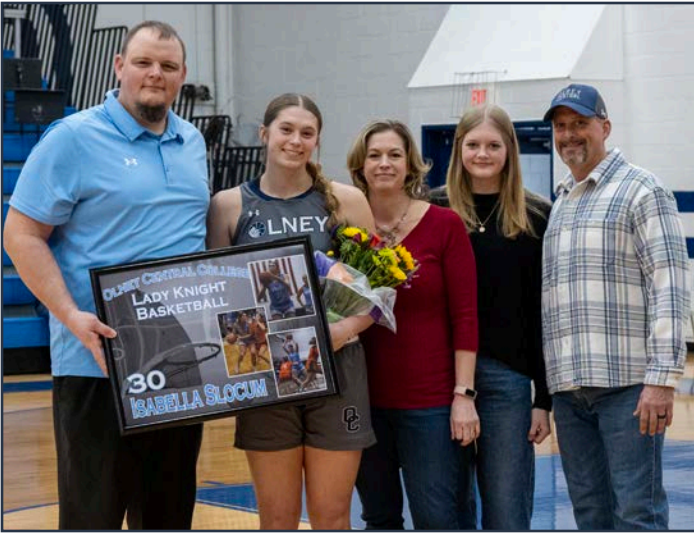
Macey Timberman



Brock Bittermann



Isabel Adkins



Isabella Slocum



Jorri VanDyke



Karmen Bruton



Laney Hawkins