

2017 Best Idea of the Year

Shakespeare at the Lake

When I arrived for my first day as the Director of Mendocino College's Lake Center on July 5, 2016, I walked into the final days of preparation of what I immediately thought was a great idea, the inaugural Shakespeare at the Lake production. The performances of the first production, a midsummer's night's dream, occurred at Library Park on July 30 and 31, 2016.

The genesis of the idea belongs to John Tomlinson, theatre instructor for Mendocino College, the Lake County friends of Mendocino College, an affiliate group of the Mendocino College Foundation, and the Lake County Theatre Company. The successful execution of the project is owed to the tireless work of those already named, along with assistance from the Lakeport Unified School District, the City of Lakeport, and Steve Hixenbaugh, acting Dean of the Lake Center during the projects development.

The show played for 2 lovely summer evenings on the shore of the lake in Library Park to the delight of a crowd numbering over 200 for each performance. There is no admission charge for viewing the production, under the direction of John, student actors alongside actors from the Lake County Theatre Company told the story, enhanced by a beautiful set and costumes created by students and members of the theatre company.

The Lake County friends of Mendocino College provided scholarship money to pay for the tuition for the Mendocino College class enrollments required of those involved in the production. It is goal of the group for this event to grow into an even larger fundraiser, helping them in their mission of supporting Lake County students of Mendocino College.

Plans are already underway for the second annual Shakespeare at the Lake. This year's production will be Much Ado About Nothing, and will again be presented lakeside in Library Park on July 29 and 30, 2017. This event has provided an excellent opportunity for student and community actors and support crew to display their craft to a large audience. The event has also provided an opportunity for members of the local community and visitors to enjoy an evening watching a high quality production at no cost in a beautiful setting. As the event builds, it will become a key fundraiser for the Lake County Friends group to fulfill their ongoing mission of supporting Lake County students.

