



COURTESY

From left are Norman Bulansky, played by Todd Hutchinson of Springfield, Vermont; Lucien P. Smith, played by Tuckerman Wunderle of Bellow Falls, Vermont; and Jack Palmer, played by Scott Stearns of Ludlow, Vermont.

Springfield Community Players to present 'The Boys Next Door'

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. — All are welcome to join the Springfield Community Players beginning Aug. 17 as they bring "The Boys Next Door," a humorous set of vignettes, to the stage.

First produced in 1988 and written by playwright Tom Griffin, "The Boys Next Door" is set in a Boston area group home. Through a series of vignettes that take place over a two-month time period, the audience follows around the lives of four men with various mental disabilities. This play provides not only humorous commentary on the men's lives but also moments of vulnerability among the men as people enter and exit their lives. "The Boys Next Door" was adapted into a television film in 1996 for the Hallmark Channel starring actors Tony Goldwyn, Courtney Vance, Nathan Lane, Robert Sean Leonard, and Mare Winningham.

"The Boys Next Door" will introduce the audience to the five main characters and a handful of supporting characters. Arnold Wiggins is played by newcomer Dmitri Freeman. Arnold is a man who lives with a mild mental disability who works at a movie theater as a janitor. Norman Bulansky is played by

veteran player Todd Hutchinson. Norman is a middle-aged man with mental disabilities who works at a doughnut shop. Lucien P. Smith is played by Tuck Wunderle. Lucien is a young man who faces extremely debilitating mental disorders. Barry Klemper is played by newcomer and brother to Dmitri, Andrew Freeman. Barry is a 20-something-year-old man with schizophrenia who believes he is a pro golfer. Jack Palmer is played by veteran player Scott Stearns. Jack is the social worker for the four handicapped men.

Other supporting cast members include Shelia, played by the amazing Anna Kendall; Mr. Klemper, played by newcomer Barbara Ball; and Mr. Corbin, played by newcomer Chuck Austin. Husband and wife team Fred and Irene Ramen play the roles of Sen. Clarke and Mrs. Warren respectively. Mrs. Fremus is played by the fabulous Samantha Holmberg, Mr. Hedges is played by newcomer Stephen Lawrence, and Clara is played by newcomer Natasha Fortin.

Springfield Community Players President and Director John MacDonald makes his directorial debut with the Players. Among

his many responsibilities as president, he has also dedicated his summer to bring the community a groundbreaking play. The Players' overall goal is to reach new audiences and bring new community members through the door, through outreach and the type of shows that are put on at the theater.

Over the last year, the group has seen an upward trend in the number of auditions, and an increase in grant funding to keep the doors open. As the organization reaches its 100th year, John and Vice President Todd Hutchinson are looking to grow membership, grow show attendance, and gain traction in the theatrical world.

Performances will take place at the Springfield Community Players Studio, 165 South St. in Springfield. Show dates are Aug. 17, 18, 24 and 25, with all shows starting at 7:30 p.m. Doors open at 7. Tickets are \$12 for seniors and students and \$15 for general admission. Tickets can be purchased in advance at springfieldcommunityplayers.org or by calling the Ticket Box Office from noon to 8 p.m. at (866) 967-8167. Tickets may also be purchased at the door on a first-come, first-served basis.