

'Twas



quite a night...

A look back on the youngest stars of *Yuletide* in *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* and where they are now.



Mattie Mayer (1999–2001)

“Our mom is retired ISO harpist Diane Evans, and my twin brother Michael and I performed in three *Yuletides*. One of my favorite memories as a *'Twas* kid was playing hide and seek backstage with the actors and actresses. I also loved participating in the annual Secret Santa gift exchange. One year I received a beautiful porcelain doll—I have saved it all these years. I remember feeling very excited to be on stage. It was comforting to know that my mom was close by! I recall being fascinated realizing what went on behind the scenes in order to make a production come together. It felt special to be a piece in the overall *Yuletide* puzzle. I do recall some classic sibling brawls happening in that tiny wooden bed. It was so small that we would sometimes get in each other's way. After graduating from Kenyon College, I moved to San Francisco and now work at Genentech. I also lead Genentech's Women's Initiative Team with the mission of driving gender equity in the workplace. I'm a member of Roche's International Football team and plan to pursue an MBA degree. I also love skiing and backpacking with friends. I have maintained an appreciation for the arts and love playing the piano and painting. Despite living across the country from one another, Michael and I are close and look forward to trips to Indianapolis to visit our parents and friends.”



*Jerry & Kathy Hacker with
Michael & Mattie Mayer*



Mattie & Michael, 2021

Michael Mayer (1999–2001)

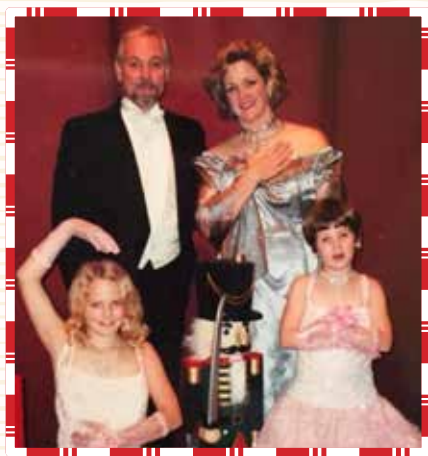
“Spending time backstage between shows and making friends with the staff and the dancers and performers was great. I remember being excited on stage. Since I couldn't see out into the crowd because of the lights, I sometimes forgot there were so many people watching. In the scene where the kids go to bed, there were a few nights of battling my twin sister for space while also trying to remain motionless so the crowd thinks we're sleeping. I now work at a financial software company in New York but unfortunately did not do any more acting.”



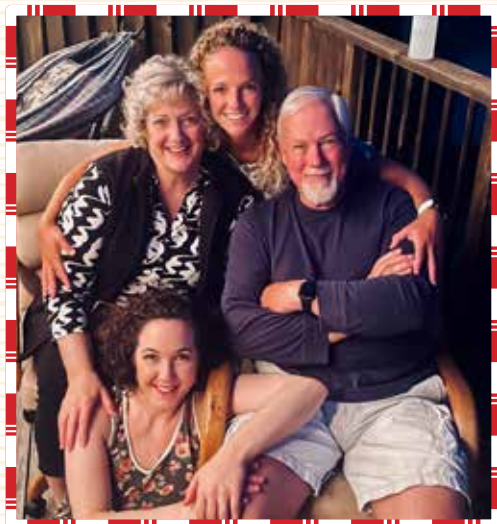



Madeleine Moore (Hacker) (2000–2001)

“My favorite part of being a ’Twas kid was being able to play the part of a family with my real family: my sister and my parents! What a cool experience that was for our family. I definitely remember being excited to go on stage, and thought it was so cool to have that as an excuse to leave early from school. I remember that Olivia and I would hide under the sheets in the bed (which was WAY too small for me) and sing along every show. You could say I ‘peaked early’ . . . that was sadly the end of my performing career. I’ll leave performing to the rest of the talented Hacker family. I’m now 31, happily married, and work as an ICU RN. *Yuletide* has meant so much to my family for the last 3 decades, and will forever hold a special place in our hearts!”



 *Jerry & Kathy Hacker (top) with daughters Madeleine (left) & Olivia*

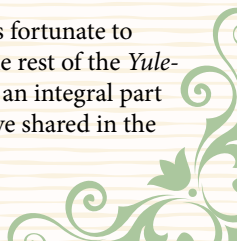


 *Madeleine (top), Olivia (bottom), with their parents, 2022*

Olivia Hacker (2000–2001)

“My sister Madeleine and I were the children in ’Twas when our parents performed in the show. My grandma would come stay with us from Thanksgiving until January in order to help out the family during the holidays. I remember a time, the year after we had grown out of the bed, one of the children got sick at the last minute. *Yuletide* producer Ty Johnson called my mom and she raced to school to pick me up. We flew down to the Circle Theatre and they were there waiting for us at the back door with pajamas in hand. I remember Ty grabbing me and running me to the backstage stage left entrance. One of the dressers got me into the PJs just as the music for the number began. Ty placed his hand on my shoulder, pointed me toward the chimney, and told me to hurry onstage to hop into bed! It was close, but the show went on without a hitch!

Since that time I have earned a music degree and am now living in Omaha. I was fortunate to come back for the 2015 season and perform as an adult alongside my dad and the rest of the *Yuletide* cast. It was a full circle moment for me I will never forget. The ISO has been an integral part of life in our family and has touched us all. Looking back, I feel so grateful to have shared in the *Yuletide Celebration!* #CJ4E”





 *Raegan Keller & McKenzie Witherell*

as a Customer Care Representative for the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra and pursuing an associate's degree in paralegal studies. After my time in *Yuletide*, I acted in high school theatre productions and came back as a Penguin and an inflatable Nutcracker in the 2012 *Yuletide*. Returning to the *Yuletide* stage was a dream come true, I had always wanted to be in the Toy Shop scene ever since I was little, and I was so happy to be in it."

McKenzie Witherell (2003–2005)

"The best part is how you become like a family with the entire cast and crew. I still see so many of the people that were on stage with me at many of the performances here at the ISO. You just develop such strong friendships and they are amazing and the people are amazing. At first I was nervous, but as the show went on I ended up relaxing and having fun. The main challenge was staying still in the bed. It wasn't that long but it felt like forever! I am working part-time



 *McKenzie Witherell & Anthony Gosling*

cast and with my 'Twas counterparts, McKenzie Witherell and Lauren LaMothe. I was, and still am, a huge fan of HotWheels cars, so our dressing room was always full of them. I remember being nervous during my first few *Yuletide* shows, but after 60 of them over two years, I became very comfortable on stage. Thanks to *Yuletide*, I've never been afraid of the spotlight and putting on a great performance! I am now 24 and I live in Chicago. I graduated from IU in 2021 with a degree in media advertising. I have been on many stages since *Yuletide*, including piano recitals and high school plays. And I still find myself on stage now as a DJ. I play at bars and clubs throughout Chicago and have been doing so since college."

Anthony Gosling (2005–2006)

"My parents both played in the ISO, so performing in *Yuletide* seemed perfectly normal to me at the time. Sandi Patty was the host during my first year. In addition to being in the 'Twas scene, I appeared as the final elf to go through the 'Santatizer,' a device that turned elves into tap-dancing Santas. However, when I went through, I turned into Sandi Patty! A lot of my best memories were made backstage with the



 *Anthony, 2022*

Emmett Bailey (2008–2009, 2013–2014)

“My favorite memory of being a ’Twas kid was probably the exhilaration of performing in front of so many people. I loved singing along when the other actors would sing ‘Goodnight’ to Santa, even though I didn’t have a microphone. When I was on stage, I remember a distinct feeling of determination. I had a job to do, and I was going to do it well! I was always excited for my part. I loved being on stage and basking in the spotlight. I never felt too nervous, because I knew that everyone on that stage and backstage had my back if something were to go wrong. There were lots of fun moments backstage, like trying on character heads, or when another company member and I made ourselves into toilet paper mummies! Now, I’m about to graduate high school. I never performed again, but thanks to my mom who is a costume designer, and some theatre classes in school, I have plenty of backstage experience and a distinct appreciation for the inner workings of theatre.”




 *Sandi Patti and Emmett Bailey*



 *Robin Massie and Jerry Hacker (top) with Nya Beck and Emmett Bailey*



 *Jerry & Robin with Aria Foley (front left) & Nya Beck (right)*



 *Nya (left) & Aria, 2022*

Nya Beck (2013–2017)

“I loved to dance backstage to one of the numbers and by the end of December, a lot of the cast and even stagehands would join me for my dance party like it was part of the show. When it came time for my part, I remember being so excited to skip onto the stage. I also remember wanting to open my eyes the first few years when I had to pretend to be sleeping (I got in trouble a few times). It was just hard because I wanted to see the performers and flying reindeer! I have loved the arts ever since being in *Yuletide*. My best friend Aria Foley was in the bed with me the last year and we have both been in our school musicals every year. I’m in the eighth grade and take dance, voice, and play cello and piano. I also do theatre shows in and out of school at Civic Theatre in Carmel and was in a show at Actors Theatre of Indiana. I really want to be in *Yuletide* again and love to tap dance, so being a tap-dancing Santa is on my list!”

Jessica Rodgers (2015–2016)

“One of my favorite memories as a ’Twas kid has to be when the fire alarm went off in the middle of dress rehearsal. The entire cast was sent outside in costume until the building had been cleared. I will never forget the looks we got from people walking down the street.

Yuletide was the first show I had ever been in so I was very nervous before my first show. I remember stepping out onto the stage for the first time. Nervous is an understatement, but as soon as the lights hit me and the music started, everything felt right. I loved performing and I was very lucky to get to perform on stage next to all the amazing cast. It’s an experience that can’t be put into words.



 Jessica Rodgers (front left)



 Jessica (left) & Nya Beck

It’s been 6 years since I was last in *Yuletide* or even on stage. I am now a senior in high-school. I’m a four-year FFA member and I love all things cows. On the weekends you can always find me at our local dirt track working on my brother’s cars. After high school I plan to go to business school and open my own business one day.”

Sophia and Gwendolyn Foley (2010–2012)

“We are twin sisters and started our *Yuletide* journey in the second grade. Our mom had been a dancer in the show since we were babies, and later our dad was cast as a puppeteer along with other roles. We loved being in the show as a family. When we think about our time in *Yuletide*, we have fond memories from the opening and closing night parties, Secret Santa surprises, making friends within the cast, hanging out in the ‘Kidz Corner’ that we made in the basement

by our dressing room, and so many other countless experiences. Once we grew out of the ’Twas role, we moved up to tap-dancing Santas and other dancer roles as well as lobby characters. This was a very exciting transition for us because we had danced our whole lives and watched our mom as a tap-dancing Santa. We ended up doing this until our freshman year of high school. One of the funniest memories we can remember was that, for the first couple years we were in *Yuletide*, the




 Gwendolyn (left) & Sophia Foley




show was sponsored by Duke Energy. At the beginning of every show, it was announced as the 'Duke Energy's Yuletide Celebration.' When we heard this, we thought that Maestro Jack Everly's name was Duke Energy since we had only ever heard him referred to as 'the Maestro!' Now, we are juniors at Indiana University Bloomington. Gwendolyn spent her first two years at IU on the rowing team and is now on a Little 500 biking team. She is in the media school and is majoring in advertising and minoring in Spanish. Sophia is chair for the Student Athletic Board and helps to lead the student section for all 24 varsity sports and is a member of the Hoosier Hype Crew. She is a public relations major in the media school and is pursuing a minor in Spanish. We are both very proud Hoosiers and love being super involved at IU."



 Sophia (left) & Gwendolyn, 2022



 Robin Massie (top) with Ella Smith (right) & her sister, Delaney

Ella Smith (2018-2019)

"My favorite 'Twas memory was hearing all the people clapping during our scene. My favorite part of being in *Yuletide* was all the performers and getting to hang out with them backstage. Each performer always made me feel so special and always made time to include the 'Twas kids. I have always loved acting and singing. I was so excited when I got the part. The second year, Lacey Schwimmer was there, and we would have private dance lessons with her. At one point we had all the dancers and some other cast members with us doing our 'sassy walk.' I am currently in fifth grade and I started doing *Yuletide* in kindergarten and ended in first grade. I have always loved singing and acting. This is an amazing show, and I was honored to have the opportunity to participate in it. I met many amazing talented people and it was just an amazing time."



 Ella (left) & Delaney

Coco Adler (2018–2019)

“My favorite memory was hanging out with Ella and all the fun we had backstage with the cast. I remember feeling happy and excited when I was on stage. I loved being a ‘sassy diva’ with Lacey and Frankie Moreno and practicing our silly walks. I’m now in third grade. I do cross country, cheer, soccer, soft-ball, kickball, and competitive dance.”



From left to right: Ella Smith, Lacey Schwimmer & Coco Adler



Coco, 2022

... and to all a good night!

