

## Local girl to perform in Macy's parade

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### **Mariel Weinand**

The 82nd annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade will air at 9 a.m. Thursday on NBC.

NAPLES — Mariel Weinand is ready to give her regards to Broadway.

And she hopes they remember her at Herald Square.

After all, there is no better place to be noticed on Thanksgiving Day than in a New York City parade route, performing in front of 3 million visitors at the event and more than 50 million people watching on television.

Mariel, a seventh-grader at St. Ann School, will be performing in the 82nd annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade this morning. She was selected to perform with a group called Camp Broadway, which hosts week-long "theater boot camps" taught by professional Broadway performers, choreographers and directors.

Mariel and 300 other children aged 10 to 14 will sing and dance to the song "I Believe in Santa Claus." They are the last musical number of the parade, and will usher in Santa Claus, who closes out the parade each year, to Herald Square.

"I am really excited," she said. "We are introducing him, in a way. There is pressure, but it is good pressure."

Mariel, who learned about the opportunity to perform on Camp Broadway's Web site, had to audition for her spot among 300 children. She sent a tape of herself singing a song from the musical "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown."

Mariel's mother, Carolyn Weinand, received an e-mail from Camp Broadway saying Mariel had been chosen.

"We were thrilled," said Weinand.

Mariel has been in New York City since Friday, Nov. 21, rehearsing and learning the choreography.

"It's a good dance because it keeps moving, so everyone gets a chance to be in front," she said.

She is also participating in mini-Broadway workshops with Broadway professionals, including those who have worked on "Shrek" and "Rent." Past workshops have included learning original choreography, scene study or song interpretation from contemporary Broadway shows.

Mariel is no stranger to performing. The 12-year-old was last seen on the Naples stage in The Naples Players' production of "The Goodbye Girl" and has been involved in the KidzAct Youth Theater.

"I love getting in front of people. I love hearing the applause," she said, giggling.

She said she was also excited to be in New York City and not worried about walking the entire 2 1/2 mile parade route in weather that is not expected to be warmer than 45 degrees.

"I have never been here in the late fall. It's beautiful," she said. "I like it. I like the cold."

Most importantly, she said, she is going to have fun.

"It has been a great experience," she said.

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