

Newport Harbor's "Empowered" Is A Sweet Success!  
written by Cecelia Joseph, a senior at Irvine High School

What would happen if a Girl Scout got a little too good at selling cookies? "Empowered" follows a young Girl Scout's rise to the top, transforming from the kind yet worst seller in her troop to a ruthless businesswoman running a multi-million dollar cookie empire.

Clarice Oliveira Negreiros plays Amaryllis, the Girl Scout destined to nearly destroy the economy. Oliveira Negreiros portrays Amaryllis' rise and fall masterfully, beginning the show with a more whiny, childlike tone of voice and ending it with a strong, stern one. In addition to tone, Oliveira Negreiros stands with a more timid, hunched over posture that transitions into a more upright, straight stance by the end of Act 1 and through Act 2.

Eden Newcott skips onstage as the kooky Beenie, Amaryllis' eccentric yet lovable best friend. The absurd and outlandish to Amaryllis' logic and reason, Newcott beams as she bounces about the stage, and her smile is infectious. Yet Newcott shows us Beenie's layers, too; the happy-go-lucky oddball turns into a worried friend at the sight of Amaryllis' transformation, and Newcott's concern is just as infectious as her happiness.

Heather Rivard is uproarious as the chaotic Kennedy, an absurd young Girl Scout with some self-proclaimed "mental problems". Rivard's comedic timing is on point, whether she's running across the stage screaming about Amaryllis' soaring cookie sales or latching herself to a chair leg to prevent getting kicked out of the Girl Scouts.

Sound designer Wesley Kaiser works tirelessly to ensure every actor can be heard clearly. Kaiser's work pays off, as the show progresses with nearly perfect clarity.

Publicity team Reiko De La Pena, Sophia Harris, and Rylee Richardson find creative ways to advertise the show, such as a lively car painting fundraiser and hand-making over 200 bracelets to give out to the community. They also create a fun, colorful website which they use to facilitate donations and engage the audience. Their eye for detail is not just limited to their publicity campaign; they include easter eggs on the program cover, including drawing the Girl Scout in the likeness of the lead actress and giving her a necklace featuring the character Sparkles the Unicorn from the show.

Wildly hilarious and entertaining, "Empowered" is just like a Girl Scout cookie - absolutely addicting!