

Tony-award winning Ali Stroker is first artist of RAC series

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The Ridgewood Arts Council is presenting an artist talk with actress and Ridgewood native Ali Stroker from 8 to 9 p.m. on April 19 via Zoom.

The talk is the first of a series that the council will host.

"Having Ali Stroker as our first artist talk speaker since shutting down due to the pandemic was Dana Glazer's amazing idea," said Sherry Frank, co-president of RAC. "Ali was the perfect person to ask to be our featured speaker and she was our first choice."

"Ali epitomizes the values that we hope will be associated with Ridgewood," said Glazer, co-president of RAC. "Beyond being a Tony Award-winning celebrity, she's considered to be a hero to many as she serves as an example of strength, resilience and hope."

Stroker won the Tony Award for Best Featured Actress in a Musical for her performance as Ado Annie in "Oklahoma!" She made history in 2015 as the first actor in a wheelchair to appear on Broadway. Stroker also has numerous television credits, including starring roles on "The Glee Project" and most recently in Lifetime's film, "Christmas Ever After."

"I loved performing and growing up in Ridgewood and am so grateful for the incredible support I received from this community," Stroker said. "I'd never be where I am today without all of you."

Laurie Sales, who directed Stroker in several plays at Ridgewood High School, will conduct the interview. "I'm so excited to be back in my hometown to chat about the last decade of my life with one of my favorite people in the world, Laurie Sales," Stroker said.

RAC's mission is to promote and support the vital part the arts play in enriching the lives of Ridgewood residents. "We feel passionate about creating meaningful experiences that'll help shape, connect and define the distinct character of our incredible town," Glazer said.

Arts events help foster a feeling of rootedness in the community, which is especially needed during the pandemic, according to Frank. "It helps us experience a deeper connection to our neighbors, friends and family, which will impact our local economies, as well," Frank said. "Our talented pool of local artists makes Ridgewood a lively and more robust place to be."

In addition to future artist talks, RAC is in the process of updating their website, which will include a community arts calendar where local organizations and artists can share information about their upcoming events. They also hope to have an art festival in The Village this fall.

The Ridgewood Arts Council's artist talks are free and open to the public. Contact RidgewoodArtsCouncilEvents@gmail.com to RSVP for the event. Those interested in joining RAC can contact RAC@ridgewoodni.net.



Ali Stroker PHOTO COURTESY OF JENNY ANDERSON