

# The Star-Ledger

## Jersey kids and Kermit help Santa arrive in style

By **ALLISON FREEMAN**  
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

Twelve-year-old Emma Touhey has always loved to watch the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, especially the finale when Santa Claus arrives on his sleigh with elves and reindeer.

This year, Emma, who lives in Middletown, will be part of the fun when Santa comes to town. She will be singing and dancing on the Winter Wonderland float as part of the Camp Broadway performance of "I Believe," the final number of today's 82d annual parade, with Kermit the Frog. The parade will be televised on NBC from 9 a.m. to noon.

"This is really exciting and a lot of fun," Emma said in an interview last week. "I will get to see Santa and everything up close."

This is Emma's fourth performance with Camp Broadway in the Macy's parade. The camp teaches kids to dance, sing and act in workshops and week-long summer programs throughout the country. It began sending kids to perform in the parade in November 2003.

"I love it," Emma said. "You get to meet new people and learn new things. I always liked to watch the parade on TV and now it is really cool to be in it."

The group of 300 performers from Camp Broadway began orientation Friday, with rehearsals Saturday through yesterday. The singers and dancers range in age from 10 to 17 and were selected through auditions across the country.

Thirty-three of the kids live in New Jersey, and 16 of them will be on the Winter Wonderland float, which depicts Central Park's Bow Bridge, while the rest will perform on the street.

"They work us really hard and it's very tiring," said Anna Langlois, 10, of Chatham. "We learn the (dance) number and the music in three days — it is pretty jam-packed."

Anna was planning to get up at 4 a.m. today to make it to the city on time. "The parade is really fun," she said. "It's your moment to shine. It's a tradition going on for a long time."

This is Anna's second appearance in the parade with Camp Broadway. "This year I will have a great time performing with Kermit the Frog," she said. "He is so cute!"

Elizabeth Stryker, 14, of Middletown, said she loves performing in the parade. "I think it is so magical for everybody. You go the whole parade route and wave to everyone on the sides."

This is the fourth time Elizabeth will perform with Camp Broadway in the parade, but her first time doing the whole parade route. For the past three years, the Camp Broadway kids performed the parade's opening number, she said.

"There is a very different kind of energy with this number," said Tony Parise, Camp Broadway's artistic director, who directs and choreographs the performance. "It will be more calm."

"The choreography for 'I Believe' is basic, and the song is a ballad. There will be lots of formations. It is a mix of jazz and theater dance, but it is more theater dance than anything else."

The song "I Believe," which runs about 2 minutes, is a new arrangement with original music written by Wesley Whatley and lyrics by Macy's creative director Bill Schermerhorn.