

NHS choral, theater director to receive RIC Alumni honor

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On Thursday, October 1, Rhode Island College will present Narragansett High School choral and theater director Sarah Prickel-kane with the 2026 Alumni Honor Roll Award for the Faculty of Arts & Sciences. The ceremony at the Providence Marriott Downtown will honor distinguished alumni for contributions to their respective fields. She is being recognized for her broad impact on music education across the state and her dedicated efforts to elevate and expand Narragansett's performing arts offerings.

Prickel-kane, a 2013 graduate of Rhode Island College, holds a bachelor's degree in music education with honors from the college and a master's degree in choral conducting from Florida State University. In her current position as choral and theater director at Narragansett High School, she guides the high school chorus, directs theatrical productions, and oversees performing arts programming across both the middle and high schools.

"I was surprised and really grateful, and I felt very humbled," Prickel-kane said of learning she had been chosen for the award. "This award is pretty special for me because many of my mentors have received it."

She explained that Rhode Island College once displayed the headshots of every Honor Roll Award recipient in a hallway in the music building. Among those pictured were several individuals who shaped her career and life, including her college voice teacher, the director of the Rhode Island Children's Chorus, who has mentored her throughout her adult life, and the teacher who supervised her student teaching. Also among them, and probably most important, was her father, who accepted the same honor when Prickel-kane was in high school.

"I felt pretty special to have been chosen," she said. "What's more important is kind of following in the footsteps of people who really shaped my education."

Prickel-kane learned she had been nominated for this honor by the parent of a former student. She said her connection to Rhode Island College has continued in the years since her graduation, in part through her mother, who remains on faculty in the college's music and theater department, and through former students who have gone on to attend the college themselves.

Under Prickel-kane's direction, Narragansett's musical ensembles have earned superior ratings and first-place honors at regional festivals. Her Advanced Treble Chorus was selected to perform at the American Choral Directors Association Eastern Region Conference in Boston in 2022 and the National Association for Music Education Eastern Region Conference in Hartford in 2025. The high school and middle school theater productions she directs have also become a fixture in the community, drawing large, enthusiastic crowds season after season.

Outside the classroom, Prickel-kane has accumulated years of leadership experience within music education. She served as a conductor for the Rhode Island Children's Chorus through 2021

and remained active with guest conducting appearances in subsequent years. She is also a former executive board member of the Rhode Island Music Education Association and a past president of the Rhode Island chapter of the American Choral Directors Association.

She has guest lectured in music education at Rhode Island College, the State University of New York at Fredonia, the Hartt School of Music, and the 2022 New England American Choral Directors Association Collegiate Conference. She has also led honors ensembles, including the Rhode Island Junior All-state Treble Chorus, the Kentucky American Choral Directors Association Children's Honor Choir, and district honor choirs throughout Massachusetts.

Today, however, Prickel-kane's focus is squarely on Narragansett. She noted that the unwavering support of the school's administration, along with the remarkable dedication of her students, has enabled her to build and fortify a strong foundation that will serve the district well into the future.

"I'm really grateful to have been in this school at Narragansett High School for so long and have been given the freedom and opportunities to build a program the way that I want to and the way that's been

working for students," she said. "We've had really supportive administration in the district that's allowed for that to happen. Any of the things that I've achieved, I couldn't have achieved without incredible students and really committed musicians. I'm very grateful to be part of the community."

Those who have witnessed her growing legacy, including students, colleagues, and longtime friends, affirm that this gratitude is mutual.

Daniel Healey, who serves as band director for both Narragansett High School and Pier School, has seen Prickel-kane's influence firsthand.

"It has been a privilege to watch Sarah develop deep, impactful relationships with our students," he said. "Her classroom culture is second to none, and she makes a tangible positive difference in the lives of her students on a daily basis. We are incredibly fortunate to have her as a part of the Narragansett Music team."

Marisa Maroni, owner of North Kingstown's South County School of Performing Arts, first connected with Prickel-kane at a high school music camp before completing their music degrees together at Rhode Island College. Throughout her career, Maroni, who remains a close friend and colleague, has routinely referred her students to Prickel-kane for private vocal instruction.

"Sarah doesn't just inspire young people to keep singing and make beautiful music," Maroni said. "She inspires them to be themselves and celebrate who they are. She has spent her career passing that gift on, and I can't think of a more deserving alum."

And her students seem to share that sentiment as well. Maya Gordon, a senior at Narragansett High School who participates in Prickel-kane's chorus and theater classes, highlighted that her teacher places equal weight on her students' personal growth and academic achievement.

"She makes the educational environment an enjoyable and comfortable experience for all of her students, and has created a home-like setting within all her different ensembles at Nar-

ragansett,” Gordon said.

Narragansett High School Principal Conor McCloskey said Prickel-kane’s influence on the school is hard to overstate.

“Her direction and inspiration have given students the ability to earn recognition far beyond the Narragansett High School community,” he said. “Her influence is evident not only in the quality of the performances we see on our stage, but in the confidence, relationships, and lasting memories she helps create for generations of Mariners.”

Prickel-kane said she plans to attend the October 1 ceremony alongside her wife and parents. While she typically avoids the spotlight, she noted that she is glad to have the community share in and celebrate the honor with her.

“It’s funny because my career is in the performing arts, but I’m definitely not a center-of-attention spotlight person,” she laughed. “I love to be in an accompanying role to help out, which is probably why I went into teaching and not performing.”

Prickel-kane has spent her career empowering and elevating her students, and this remarkable honor is deeply deserved. For just one moment, the stage that has always belonged to her students is, at last, entirely hers.