TRINITY – As the school year draws to a close, Wheatmore High School junior Ryan Young looks forward to doing more of what he loves this summer. Young is one of only four high school students in Randolph County Schools’ district selected to attend Governor’s School of North Carolina.

During the summer he will participate in an intensive five and one-half week summer residential program for intellectually gifted high school students, integrating academic disciplines, the arts and unique courses on each of two campuses – Meredith College and Salem College. It is the oldest statewide summer residential program for academically or intellectually gifted high school students in the nation. His particular area of study is theater arts.

Young will head to Meredith College in Raleigh to study theater arts.

Young, who is back in town after competing in the All State choral festival this past weekend in Raleigh is a part of the Wheatmore High School men’s chorus.

Young, 16, who is the son of James and Elizabeth Young, describes how he became enamoured of the field of theater arts.

“It all started the first year I was at Wheatmore,” he said. “I had a walk-on role in a two-act play called ‘The Traveling Lady.’ I walked on, I said a couple of lines and walked off. I absolutely loved it.”

The talented singer and actor sang in the ensemble for the school’s production of “Les Miserables.” Last year, he played the lead as the baker in “Into The Woods.” This year, he was “Beast” in the spring musical “Beauty and the Beast.”

“It was Disney theater, so there was a lot of magical stuff going on,” said Young. “It was a daunting task to transform the flamboyant Ryan Young into an accursed beast. We worked hard but it all just fell together. It was such a gratifying experience.”

Photo by Debbie Hightower

Known for his flamboyant side, Wheatmore High School junior Ryan Young was one of only four students in Randolph County Schools’ system selected to attend the 2016 summer session of N.C. Governor’s School. Young, who played the male lead in the school’s production of “Beauty and the Beast” will study theater arts during the 2016 session of N.C. Governor’s school on the campus of Meredith College in Raleigh.

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The actor’s favorite part about the spring production was the scene where, dressed as the beast, he sang, “If I Can’t Love Her.”

During his Wheatmore High School career, Young said he has had to overcome a particularly difficult obstacle. Last year, almost literally as he was supposed to walk onstage to perform the lead role, he was beset with stomach troubles, causing serious health issues. Being diagnosed with mild to moderate Crohn’s Disease was a huge obstacle, but Young refused to let it sideline him.

Young was very surprised over his selection to attend Governor’s School.

“I was surprised but I worked very hard on my application and had one of the best auditions I could ask for,” he said. “So even if I didn’t make it, I would have been content.”

Academic record is a consideration for Governor’s School. During the school year, he took Honors English, Honors American History, Honors Men’s Chorus and Honors Concert Choir, finishing his junior year with a grade point average of 4.25.

Chorus teacher Sarah Downey wasn’t at all surprised when she learned of Young’s selection.

“I have known Ryan for three years,” she said. “He is an incredibly talented, but also very humble person and actor. He has a great deal of intrinsic motivation for his craft and that makes it very easy to be his teacher and director. He’s just a lovely person overall and a wonderful performer.”

In the future, the rising senior wants to study theatre or creative writing at UNC-G, which will help him advance to a career in show business or film.

Staff writer Debbie Hightower may be reached at dhightower@atnonline.net or 336-888-3576.