

DAILY NEWS

# The Front Page

## From ice-cream shop to 'Hairspray' with Travolta

L.I. teen scoops up movie role

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Two years ago, Long Island teen Nikki Blonsky went to see the Broadway show "Hairspray" and thought to herself - "I could do that."

She was right.

Nikki, who scoops ice cream at a Cold Stone Creamery shop in Great Neck, won a worldwide talent search to star in the movie remake of the hit play.

"I remember sitting there, thinking to myself, 'I can do that, I can play that part,'" Nikki, 17, told the Daily News in her first-ever media interview.

A couple of days ago, she was just another recent high school grad whose biggest stage roles were in school productions of "Carmen" and "Sweeney Todd."

Now, she'll be co-starring with John Travolta and Queen Latifah in the remake of the 1988 cult classic.

Nikki, who went to her school prom last night, will play Tracy Turnblad, the plumpish teen who takes a '60s dance show in Baltimore by storm - then schemes to integrate the show.

"When I first saw her, I said, 'That's Tracy!'" said director Adam Shankman. "Nikki has a 'Let me show my stuff' kind of attitude. ... That's who Tracy is."

"She'll be able to hold her own opposite Travolta," said producer Craig Zadan.

The less-than-svelte Nikki tried out for the Broadway version of the show but was turned down because she was too young.

But her manager got her into an open casting call for the movie and she flew to Hollywood last month for a screen test.

The 4-foot-10 brunette got the news that she landed the part as a camera crew rolled into the ice cream store where she works.

Nikki insists she's not worried about trying to outdo Ricki Lake, who played the role in the 1988 John Waters



Farriella for NEWS

**Nikki Blonsky, getting ready for senior prom last night, will star in new "Hairspray" flick.**

film, or Marissa Jaret Winokur, who won a Tony for the role on Broadway.

"I respect those women so much, but I'm not scared," Nikki said. "I'm not going to try to fill anybody's shoes - I'm going to try to create a new pair of shoes!"

Nikki, who went to Great Neck's Village School, had planned to enroll at Long Island University's CW Post campus in the fall.

Instead, she'll be living out a dream.

"Tracy and I are very similar to each other - we're two girls trying to follow our dreams," Nikki said. "I'm not shy because I have a little extra weight on me. I've always been that way."

Just like Tracy Turnblad, Nikki said, she's the first one out on the dance floor at parties and the last one to leave.

"It doesn't matter what size you are, or color you are," she said. "It matters that you have it in your heart."

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