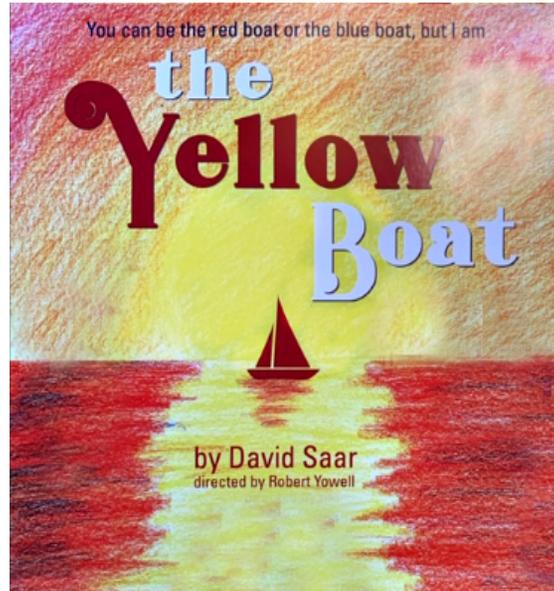


NAU Department of Theatre Presents



Directed by Robert Yowell
Scenic Design by Tori Niemiec
Costume Design by Natasha Harrington
Lighting Design by Ben Alexander
Stage Manager: Ella Johnson

CAST

Benjamin.... Kacie Debevc
Mother..... Emily Wood
Father..... Spencer Beckwith
Joy..... Nickela Rooney
Chorus..... Kelsey Brown, Carly Durrer, Caleb Ellis,
Ashley Fredricksen

Guide for Teachers and Parents

We hope that this guide helps your child/student understanding this entertaining and educational theatre experience. Inside you'll find topics to speak about before and after the play as well as learning activities to help guide the educational experience of the production.

About Benjamin and his Story

The Yellow Boat follows the story of Benjamin Saar through his short, creative life. He was born in 1979 with hemophilia and died in 1987 at the age of 8 due to AIDS-complications.

David Saar, his father, wrote *The Yellow Boat* as a tribute to not only his son, but to all children. Although the play touches on the sensitive topics of death, sickness and AIDS, it is a play about life and hope. It explores these ideas through Benjamin's eyes and artwork.

While showing the joys and sorrows of a "normal" childhood, the play also examines the stress and pain that Benjamin feels from the contraction of AIDS. The story monitors Benjamin through his treatments and moments of triumphs. He uses colors, shapes, and imagination, with the help of a Childcare Specialist, to show the doctors his pain and help them find him the right care.

The powerful imagination and hope of Benjamin Saar make this play about the celebration of life. It shows how art can help heal and inspire hope, transforming our lives with color, shapes, and humor.

Pre-Show Discussion Topics

This play will raise questions with younger audiences. Some of these questions will involve the circle of life and death, HIV/AIDS, hemophilia, fear and compassion. Here are a few topics to discuss before seeing the play in order to help children to better express their feelings after the play:

- Let the child/children know the play is based on a true story
- Share experiences of loss that you or the children may have had
- Speak on the play's effect on audiences to make the students feel a range of deep emotions
- Discuss the topic of hemophilia and HIV/AIDS in order to prepare for the question after the show
- Discuss the vocabulary of the show
 - Hemophilia
 - Blood transfusion
 - Factor 8
 - HIV/AIDS

Theater Etiquette

When you attend a live performance, it is exciting! However, there are some guidelines that should be followed in order to make the experience pleasurable and informative for all patrons.

Here are a few topics to discuss before viewing the performance:

- Stay seated during the performance.
- Performers can see you during the play so remember to not talk or move around during the play.
- Responses such as clapping, or laughter are always welcome!



About Hemophilia

Hemophilia is an inherited bleeding disorder that affects males almost exclusively. Most families have known cases of the disease prior to the birth of the child. However, one third of new cases occur in families without a history of the genetic disorder. Females may “carry” the gene for hemophilia, but rarely have the symptoms of the disorder.

There are two types of hemophilia:

- Type A
 - Caused by a lack or decrease of clotting Factor 8
 - 80% of hemophiliacs
 - Absence of a protein carried in the blood that is necessary for clotting. Factor 8 is the name of the missing protein
- Type B
 - Caused by a lack or decrease of clotting factor IX

Major problems for a hemophiliac:

- Uncontrolled internal bleeding which can start at anytime
- Bleeding in the joints and muscles causing crippling pain

The hemophiliac is treated with blood transfusions by infusing a clotting factor, derived from human blood, which remains active in their blood for a short period of time.

Although there are successful controls, there is no cure for hemophilia. A child born with the disorder will have it all their life.

For more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/hemophilia/facts.html>

About HIV/AIDS

- AIDS is an acronym for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. It is a disease caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). HIV may live in the human body for years and can be spread to others before symptoms appear. HIV makes you unable to fight other diseases that invade your body. These diseases can be fatal. There is currently no cure for HIV
- Although frightening, we cannot allow fear to block teaching children about this serious disease. It is important to know the facts regarding HIV/AIDS and help your children learn how the virus is and is not spread.
- AIDS is non-discriminatory and can strike any age, race or gender.
- High risk behaviors that can lead to HIV:
 - Unprotected sexual intercourse
 - Sharing hypodermic needles
- Giving blood does not put you at risk for HIV. The equipment that is used for blood donations is always brand new – used only once, then disposed of properly
- Receiving a blood transfusion no longer presents a risk for HIV. Some people (like Benjamin) were infected with HIV by getting blood prior to 1985. Today, all donated blood in the U.S. is tested to make it safe for transfusions. The risk of HIV transmission from a blood transfusion is less than 2%.

You cannot get HIV/AIDS from:

- Playing with other children
- Spitting
- Coughing
- A hug
- Tears
- Showers, toilets
- Kitchen utensils, bowls, plates, cups

For more information:

<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/>

www.hs.state.az.us/phs/hiv/englishfacts.htm

www.kaisernetwork.org/static/spotlight_hivaids_factsataglance.cfm

Activities for After the Show

Spark of Discussion

Here are some topics that can be discussed in detail as a class, as a small group, or with a partner:

- Did you or did you not like the play?
 - Was it believable?
 - Did the technical elements help convey the story?
- Why was it easier for Benjamin to draw his feeling rather than tell the doctor's how he felt?
- Discuss how different cultures celebrate life and death. If any student would like to share, encourage the student to tell the class about their families' traditions and culture
- Benjamin and his family felt prejudice from their friends and family. Have you felt prejudice against someone or possibly experienced it?
- Discuss the emotions the play produced in the students.
- What are some ways you can help bring awareness to HIV/AIDs to help people understand the disease better?
- What part of Benjamin's story is inspiring?



Ribbon Awareness

The ribbon for HIV awareness is red and the ribbon for breast cancer is pink. Research the different color ribbons for different disease awareness. Make a chart displaying each ribbon you find as well as what they represent and then present to the class.

Squiggle Start

Art can sometimes tell a story or convey a mood. Pictures also help us to communicate like Benjamin and his friends! Start with this squiggle line and add to it line by line with a friend. What could this line become? Complete the drawing!

