

## **A Note From The Artistic Director**

Psalm 127: 3 from The Message Bible says “children are God’s best gift”. After 40 years of working with children, I wholeheartedly agree. Though trying at times, the trials children bring me through always turn into triumphs and the triumphs are more precious than gold. I will be ever thankful for the children that I have the privilege and honor to lead, teach and direct. Spending hours with them only causes my love to grow deeper. The cast and crew of Elf Jr. is no exception and I am grateful to my God for giving me another great group of kids.

Just as the Bible speaks of using a child’s small donation of lunch and multiplying it to feed 5000 (John 6:8), each and every child in Elf Jr. will feed joy to the hearts of many. These children were challenged to go beyond what some believed impossible and have, by God’s grace, put together a truly spectacular show. I thank all who have dedicated their time and energy to giving “God’s best gift” a chance to shine and use their God-given talents to bless others.

Although Elf Jr. is a secular “Story of Buddy” (song from Scene 11), it portrays so many spiritual truths. Scene 1 takes place in the North Pole with the real Santa and the “Happy All the Time” elves. Hmm...just like heaven, where happiness abounds. Scene 2 sees Buddy, who is really human, leave to go to NYC to find his roots and spread that same happiness in a place where the CHRISTmas spirit has dwindled. Scenes 3, 4 and 5 show that a child-like faith, similar to Buddy’s, can cause blind eyes to open and see that what they thought imaginary to be real and once again sing “I’ll Believe in You.” Likewise, the Bible is clear that you must “become like little children” to see and understand that the Kingdom of heaven is not fiction, but fact. (Matthew 18:3). In Scene 8, though facing rejection by his father, Buddy’s sowing of Christmas cheer to the gloomy Macy’s Employees is reaped when the Macy’s manager learns that Christmas is about “giving people stuff” and not “what you’re gonna get”. Buddy’s persistent belief brings back the sChristmas spirit, causing all around to burst into song. I believe that after watching this story unfold and listening to the joyous voices of the cast, you, too, will believe and sing “There is a Santa Claus!” There is! There is! There is!

Thank you for joining us and and may the true spirit of Christmas find a place in your heart. Feel free to “just sing a Christmas Song, and keep on singing all season long. Think of the joy you’ll bring if you just close your eyes and sing!” Thank you for supporting BYT and giving us the opportunity to “give you a holiday that’s bright as can be and Sparklejollytwinklejingle!”

Merry Christmas!  
Cynthia Ford  
BYT Artistic Director

## **A Note From The Stage Manager**

Chaos. To some people, rehearsals and anytime the cast is backstage is absolute chaos. If you took a glimpse backstage during a show, you would see a lot going on: our backstage volunteers rushing to change costumes, a cast member tossing their costume onto the floor in a rush to get on stage, me yelling for the next scene to get ready, backstage crew scrambling around multiple cast members to change the scene and children running from place to place in a panic. However, if you took the time to look beyond the “chaos”, you would see something beautiful. You would see one of the cast members pause to help one of their fellow cast members change into their next costume. You would watch as some of the girls doing stage makeup offer to put some on one of the younger girls. You would notice a cast member step up to help a crew member with a large piece of scenery. If you looked beyond what some might say is chaos, you would see why I love this theatre and all the people involved.

Growing up, I went to plenty of different youth or theatre groups. Some of them, you could see as small groups of people formed into “cliques”. I could tell that unless you had been at this group previously, you would not be accepted. At Bluffton Youth Theatre, I have seen groups of members who have been in 3 plays together, welcome a newcomer with some of the kindest smiles you will ever see. As a cast member avoids the groups and sits alone, I watch when another cast member approaches them and talks to them during lunch. During social times, I can see people move from group to group, no one being left alone. During these times I like to pause and look over this group, who may have started out as strangers, connecting not just as friends, but as a family.

Jennifer Ford  
Stage Manager

## **A Note From The Assistant Director**

I have worked in theatre in numerous states, plus Tokyo, Japan. I've worked with children and adults of all ages but have never worked in a youth theatre per se. Parents, your children have been wonderful. They show respect for each other and for the adults. A show is a huge cooperative endeavor and it is only as good as each individual's contribution. Whether one is a soloist, chorus member or crew member, the audience reaction to the show depends on each individual. The students have been willing to accept responsibility. Cyndy's ability to rehearse four casts amazes me. Everyone gets rehearsal time and cooperates with each other. Many life lessons are learned here. Thanks, Cyndy, for inviting me to join you. A special shout out to crew members. You were fantastic!

Judy Fisher  
Assistant Director