

A Note from the Artistic Director

When choosing a play, several considerations come to my mind. The size of the cast, the popularity of the show, the challenges that may arise with set construction and costuming and most importantly, the message it brings. I gravitate towards plays that inspire people to believe that their grim circumstances can be changed by their own positive thoughts, their determination to overcome and, though seemingly contradictory, their reliance and trust in God to bring them up and out into a better place. Annie's attitude that "the sun will come up tomorrow" creates not only good thoughts in herself despite her current hopeless situation, but "clears away the cobwebs and the sorrows", helping her and others to look forward and not back.

As Grace Farrell, Mr. Warbucks secretary, stands up to the oppressive nature and negativity that Annie has lived under in the orphanage, the true grace of God stands up for us, reaching through our unbelief and bringing us up into the light. There is no place and there is nowhere that God's hand of grace cannot reach and He continually reaches towards us with arms open wide and eyes full of love.

I am blessed that God has given me the talent to direct and teach the youth of BYT. My amazement never ceases when I get to see a child overcome fears and shine on stage. My joy overflows when I get to see a child reach a goal they never thought they could reach. My heart bursts when I see youth who may never interact, come together, overlook any differences, encourage one another and work with all their heart to put on a show that brings giant smiles to anyone of any age. I will never stop thanking my God for giving me the privilege of serving the youth and families of BYT.

I want to thank all who have diligently worked to make the dream of BYT come true. It takes the dedication of many and countless hours to make any show happen. I believe I have the best cast and crew in the world and will never stop boasting of their true greatness. Annie is just a fictional character made up in the mind of a talented author, but all the kids of BYT are real, full of life, fun to be around and worth every minute of my time.

Thank you all for joining us and I know you will enjoy the show!

Cynthia Ford
Founder and Director of BYT

A Note from the Stage Manager

What is Bluffton Youth Theatre? To me, it is so many things. It is a chance to be more than what society might think about you. It is a place where every cast and crew member's personality is something to be cherished. It is a family that encourages each and every person who comes to a rehearsal. It is a safe place for children to express themselves through theatre, amongst a group of friends. It is a connected group of individuals who, through an amazing amount of teamwork, bring shows that surpass expectations. Without each child, parent, and volunteer, Bluffton Youth Theatre would just be a theatre. However, we are constantly striving to be more than that.

For this show, we tried something a little different. Our crew is made up almost entirely of our cast. We thought a long time about this decision and some people were wary of it at first. After all, children come to act and be in the spotlight. However, we are always reminding our cast that there is much more to a show than the "big parts" you see on stage. As Annie sings "Tomorrow" there is a crew working non stop behind the scenes. As Stage Manager I get a first hand look at all that goes on while the audience is enjoying the show. At Bluffton Youth Theatre we want every child to shine, whether they are on crew or in the ensemble. People can say that those "small parts" don't matter, but that couldn't be further from the truth. We don't have "small parts" because every single person has an important part to play, whether on stage or off. As you watch this show, remember that there is so much more to this show than the person with all the lines or the solo. Each child has worked hard to bring you this amazing performance and they are doing wonderful. Bluffton Youth Theatre isn't just a theatre. It's a place where every single child is reminded that their importance is not based on how many lines they have or how often they are onstage. Their importance is based on who they are and on their belief in themselves.

Jennifer Ford
Stage Manager