

A Note From The Director

When I was contemplating what play BYT would do in the summer, Shrek was not at the top of my list. I like plays that are inspirational and whose theme radiates hope, love and acceptance. I am not prone to “silly kid’s shows” like Shrek. But, when I finally read the story of the big green ogre and watched the movie, tears filled my eyes. How wrong I was. Yes, Shrek has some “silly kid moments”, and is a bit uncouth, but it drives home the same message that BYT is built on. If a person is different - like Shrek and Fiona are, they should not be hidden away and isolated. Instead, they should be included, befriended, loved and accepted. When Fiona asks, “Are you there, God?” I want to shout the answer to all kids. “Yes, He is and He made you, He made you perfect and He will help you to, as Gingy sings, “stand up tall” no matter what you look like! BYT’s doors will always be open to all kids no matter their mental, physical or emotional challenges, and will proudly proclaim that our “big, bright beautiful world” is indeed “filled with possibilities” for everyone. As I sit at the helm of this great theatre, I will purpose to help change the story of children who feel unworthy and unaccepted to the same story that the fairy tale freaks sing with gusto, “what make’s us special, makes us strong!” I am so very proud of all that have made this play happen, but I am even more proud to say that during these past few weeks of rehearsal and throughout my 40 years of teaching children, I have seen the hearts of children and families change from that of little belief in themselves to realizing that they can rise to the challenge and overcome any obstacle. The show ends with a truth that makes the impossible possible - God does bless! I will always give Him the glory and use the talents and gifts He gave me to encourage and bless everyone.

Thanks for coming and experiencing the outcome of hours of rehearsal, hours of commitment and buckets of love that make this show possible. May your hearts be filled with great joy as you watch, in my opinion, the greatest kids on earth!

Cynthia Ford
Founder and Director of Bluffton Youth Theatre

A Note From The Stage Manager

What is a family? Yes, it may be your parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles. Yes, it is the people with whom you are connected by blood. But, what about the family that you choose? That best friend you grew up with, the close friend that becomes closer than a sibling, and everyone like them. What about your cast? I have plenty of family members, not all related by blood or marriage, but rather because I have been in many musicals in my life. Each cast and crew member, another member to my ever growing family.

I love being backstage. That may not seem like an intense statement, but when you think of all the craziness that goes on behind the scenes, I sound like I'm insane. Contrary to what we all would like to believe, having almost 50 children backstage does not go smoothly. There are so many costumes, props and scene changes that it can be overwhelming for many people. When you sit in the audience you, hopefully, don't see all the craziness that is going on. On stage is an amazing performance, backstage we are searching for a lost prop that is probably just under the table. However, despite all the chaos, there are moments that make it all worth it. When someone is struggling with their costume and a fellow cast member steps into help, when a prop goes missing and cast and crew alike work together to recover what is lost, and when you see two people who were strangers before this all began, laugh with each other. When I see a group of strangers become a family, it's all worth it. As much as I love choreography and directing, nothing beats that feeling. I will never get tired of adding to my family, and I never will think it is getting too big.

Jennifer Ford
Stage Manager

A Note From Our College Intern

I have always been convinced that I would never be able to teach kids younger than 13, nor would I want to. While this process has been everything theatre is and much more (exhausting, stressful, dramatic, crazy, etc), I have come out of this experience with a very different perspective. The BYT kids are excited to learn and absolutely love theatre, exactly the kind of kids I am going to school in the hopes to teach. It is so inspiring to watch a group of kids come into camp as almost strangers and within a few short weeks they have become friends, a family, and a cast. At the end of the day, a show will never reach its full potential if its cast and crew have not bonded. However, this is not to say that there are no bumps in the road! Theatre families are just like regular families, loud and crazy at times, just with way more singing. I could really see the cast becoming that family and I am so so so thankful to have been a part of it. The BYT kids are unbelievably special. There is so much talent on that stage and each child will only go up from here! I am very proud of every single person within this show (cast, crew, Jenny, Cyndy, and all of the wonderful Drama Mamas) and I cannot wait to see what incredible thing you do with your amazing talent next.

Hannah Baird
College Intern