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BLUEBARN THEATRE VALUES

AT BLUEBARN, WE MAKE OUR VALUES CENTRAL TO HOW WE WORK AND CREATE TOGETHER.
THIS LIST OF VALUES IS ONGOING AND EVER CHANGING AND WILL EVOLVE AS WE DO.

We empower each other to try new things and be confident in their choices.

We crave meaningful discussions that teach us how to keep improving.

**WE WILL CREATE A SAFE
SPACE FOR BOLD
ARTISTIC CHOICES.**

We believe there is always more to learn.

We believe in challenging how we think, propelling us toward a future enriched by continuous learning & creative exploration.

We believe in change through the arts and by listening to one another.

We take pride in welcoming and supporting our artists' authentic selves.

We endeavor to create a safe space that encourages creativity, individuality, and bold thinking.

We work to make everyone feel welcome.



BLUEBARN THEATRE

PRESENTS

THE WORLD PREMIERE OF

MORE OF A HEART

BY DAVE OSMUNDSEN

Art by Sophia Kazmierski



MARCH 28 – APRIL 21

A mother's love. A son's need for independence. As Zachary, an Autistic teenager, comes of age in a world that rewards him for neurotypical behavior, he begins to question his feelings about his upbringing. When tragedy strikes, hidden truths rise to the surface in this beautiful drama about what it means to live a fulfilling life.

BLUEBARN has taken every effort to make each performance experience as friendly as possible from a sensory, emotional, and atmospheric standpoint. A detailed synopsis, what to expect when you arrive, and an experiential content advisory can be found on our "WHAT TO EXPECT" page, towards the back of this playbill.

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WELCOME FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT



Hello BLUEBARNERS!

Welcome once again to the BLUEBARN, a place where amazing things are happening every day.

You are about to experience the BLUEBARN's third WORLD PREMIERE production. If you've been a patron for long, you know our theatre strives to support incredible work, both new and established. In the new work vein, we introduced *City in the City in the City* to the world in 2018, and in 2019 we brought you *Red Summer*. And now this season we are proud to present *More of a Heart*. As an organization that has at the core of its mission the amplification of the voices of those around us that are often ignored, a work centered around neurodivergence and how society approaches it is well timed and so relevant. I am sure the work will prompt lots of thought and conversation amongst its audiences.

Thank you for joining us today, and continue to look for ways to support the BLUEBARN and all of those that work with us in our mission of provoking thought and fostering change. We thrive only through engagement with, through, and for you all. Enjoy the show!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Devin Fox".

Devin Fox, Board President

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Hello, and welcome,

I am delighted to welcome you to the world premiere production of Dave Osmundsen's poignant and deeply human new play, *More of a Heart*. When Dave brought me this script more than two years ago, I was struck not just by its urgency, beating heart, and frank discussion of important themes not often explored in media (let alone theater), but also by its vision. To me, galvanizing theater – the type of work that challenges conventional narratives, pushing audiences to examine their notions about the world – comes as the result of depicting society not as it is, but as how it could be. Of reimagining ways to conceive of and engage with the notion of community, the idea of care for the other. Beyond his beautiful words and characters, I am most thankful to Dave for the model he has provided, a framework for connection and real care rooted in the championing of true listening, recognition of autonomy, and celebration of the autistic community.

Throughout this process, this question of “care,” stemming from the text itself, has been a constant: What does it mean to actually care for others? Can care exist without communication? Who gets to determine whether an act is caring, and where does care diverge from kindness? The play, of course, offers its own suggestions, which in turn have informed every element of our process, from rehearsals to production decisions – and which I hope you ponder as you leave the theater and in the coming days. You may notice that there are no “sensory-friendly performances,” which center the neurodivergent community and offer reduced visual and auditory experiences, for *More of a Heart*. It is our aim that, in building this production, we have made every performance “sensory-friendly,” a space for everyone to witness and journey alongside Zachary and Mary-Ellen as they come to truly know one another.

As you view, I invite you to ponder these same questions, to feel deeply, and to reflect on your own experiences. Whether we know it or not, we are each on our own “autism journey,” and it is a privilege to have this work as part of yours.

Yours in care,

Allen MacLeod, Director

NOTES FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

In 2017, I participated in a talkback for the Tectonic Theatre Project's production of *Uncommon Sense*, a play that explored multiple facets and presentations of Autism. Afterward, I was talking to a mother who had brought her Autistic son to the show with her. She explained that he was trying to make it in the theatre as a stage technician. He was quiet, introverted, clearly accustomed to his mother speaking for him. His mother asked if I knew of any opportunities for him. I don't remember exactly what I said. But towards the end of our conversation, the mother turned to her son and aggressively said, "You have to speak up for yourself! Otherwise, you're not going to get any jobs and no one's gonna hire you!" It was clear to me, in that moment, that she had drilled him so far into the ground that it was impossible for him to come up for air.

I still think about this exchange years later. What was my role, as an artist, as a person, in this situation? To assure the Autistic son that he can succeed in an industry not designed for him? To assure his mother that her son will be all right if she just let him have some agency?

I wrote *More of a Heart*, at least in part, to say what I wanted to say during that conversation. I write for the Autistic son who hadn't been taught to self-advocate and to allow them to speak on their own terms. I also write for the mother who, intentionally or not, took up too much space in her Autistic child's narrative, and to tell her to let their children have their own voice and perspective.

More of a Heart is, on the micro level, about a mother and son who love each other very much but struggle to see and understand each other. On the macro level, it's about the ways in which care can manifest, both benevolent and harmful. Care (the benevolent kind) has been central to our rehearsal process. In working with this incredible team whose artistry you are about to witness, care has manifested in a cooked meal, a word of encouragement, a brief respite before moving onto a heavy scene, an offering of resources... I have rarely seen such genuine warmth, vulnerability, and care from a company of actors towards one another. Each rehearsal has been about uplifting and supporting each other, which you don't always see in the rehearsal space (or even, let's face it, in all interpersonal relationships). This care morphed into a language we have built in the space: A language of care. We hope to extend this language of care to you, our audience, as you watch a play that is at times difficult to watch. I also hope you walk away inspired to reconsider not just your preconceived notions of the Autism constellation*, but also what care looks like. And finally, I hope that mother and son at *Uncommon Sense* have since found a healthier language of care, like the one we have developed as a group of collaborative artists during rehearsals.

Either way, I'm so glad you're here.

* = Instead of "spectrum," I want us to start using the term "constellations," because constellations have many manifestations and stories behind them, and Autism has many manifestations and stories behind it.

Dave Osmundsen, Playwright

CAST

Zachary.....	Matthew Kischer
Mary-Ellen.....	Rachel Hauben Combs
Anne.....	Kathleen Combs
Rachel.....	Abz Cameron
Ben.....	Ben Pearson
ABA Instructor (recorded).....	Jessica Johnson

PRODUCTION CREATIVES

Director.....	Allen MacLeod
Stage Manager.....	Madelyn Hubbard
Advocacy Captain/ Assistant Intimacy Designer.....	Carrie Nath
Intimacy Designer.....	Kate Busselle
Scenic Designer & Scenic Artist.....	Craig Lee
Lighting Designer.....	Maya Pacana-Brendenkamp
Costume Designer.....	Denise Ervin
Production Manager & Props Design.....	Amy Reiner
Sound & Projection Designer.....	Bill Kirby
Sound Board Operator.....	Mindy Cotner
Master Carpenter.....	Shane Staiger
Master Electrician.....	Sally Grosenbach
Art Curator, Mammel Lobby.....	Jared Spence



BLUEBARN Theatre is an Associate Member of the **National New Play Network**.

NNPN is an alliance of professional theatres across the country that are evolving and exploring the frontiers of the American theatre. **BLUEBARN** has long been Omaha's home for professional contemporary theatre, bringing diverse perspectives, new voices, and provocative work to our community. The **National New Play Network** has become the most powerful, growing force in new play development, production, and promotion in the nation.

BLUEBARN is committed to seeking out collaborative relationships with other NNPN member theatres, producing and supporting the work of the most dynamic emerging voices in contemporary playwriting, and promoting local artists on a platform with national reach.

To support New Play Development at the **BLUEBARN**, contact Susan at sclement@bluebarn.org. To learn more about **NNPN** and its programs, visit NNPN.org.

CAST BIOS



Matthew Kischer- he/him - Zachary

Matthew Kischer is a stage, and film actor in Omaha, Nebraska. He is incredibly grateful to be in his 2nd production with BLUEBARN having last been in *King Lear* (OEA Award for Best Drama) as Edgar. Other notable theatrical credits include- Four Corner's Musical Theatre in: *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* as Ensemble/Joseph U.S. (performed 4 times), *Into the Woods* as Ensemble/Narrator, Mysterious Man U.S., *Spamalot* as Prince Hebert/Lead Minstrel/Not Dead Fred/Others- Omaha Theatre Company in: *Go Dog Go!* as Red Dog, *Dragons Love Tacos!* as White Dragon, *Sherlock Holmes, and the 1st Baker Street Irregular* as Toby/Tough #1. He deeply thanks the incredible director Allen Macleod, the insanely gifted playwright Dave Osmundsen, and the team for entrusting him to be a part of this vivid and beautiful story. He dedicates this performance to his mom who passed away from cancer on Thanksgiving. He hopes you enjoy this stellar cast put on this gripping production of *More of a Heart*.



Rachel Hauben Combs - she/her - Mary Ellen

Rachel Hauben Combs was a performer and playwright with the BLUEBARN Theatre for most of the 1990s, and she is delighted to be back on the BLUEBARN stage. Rachel and her family recently moved back to Omaha from Chicago; before leaving the Windy City, she returned to the stage after a long hiatus to play Francesca in *A Play About David Mamet Writing a Play About Harvey Weinstein* for the Refracted Theatre Company. Favorite BLUEBARN roles include Frankie in *Frankie and Johnny in the Claire de Lune*, Paulina in *Death and the Maiden*, and Frida Kahlo in *What the Mirror Gave Me*. Her last appearance with BLUEBARN was in *Hot L Baltimore* in 2000. As a playwright, she was commissioned to write two plays for young audiences for the Nebraska Theatre Caravan and was part of the collaborative playwriting process for three original plays produced at BLUEBARN during her time with the ensemble. She holds a BFA in Acting from the State University of New York at Purchase, and an MA in Writing and Publishing from DePaul University.



Kathleen Combs - she/her - Anne

Kathleen Combs is excited to make her BLUEBARN Theatre debut in *More of a Heart*. Current and previous credits include Hoshi the Starkeeper in *Starshine!*, an interactive performance experience for Vroom!, Omaha Community Playhouse's Sensory Friendly Mobile Theatre, Della in *The Cake* (2022) at OCP, Olga in *The Three Sisters* and Antonietta Pirandello in *Pirandello's Wife* (1989) at Cal Poly Theater in California, Holly in *Last Bus to Palookaville* (1987) at Circle Theater, Nora in *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, Brooke Ashton in *Noises Off* and Harriet Fitzpatrick in *Tom Jones* (1986-87) at OCP. Kathleen has been teaching creative drama for over 38 years from Omaha to Los Angeles to Tokyo and back again. She is currently the managing director for the WhyArts, Inc. revival of *Kids On The Block*, a free educational puppet program that enlightens K-4 students about what it's like to live with a disability. Kathleen thanks the universe every day for her amazing family, Greg, Evan and Eirin. "You are my heart!"

CAST BIOS



Abz Cameron - they/them - Rachel

Abz Cameron is a queer and neurodivergent actor bringing over 15 years of theatrical magic back to the BLUEBARN stage! You might remember them from captivating roles like Katrina in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* at BLUEBARN and Rose in *Dogfight* at the University of Nebraska, Omaha. Their journey has taken them across Omaha and even across the world, performing in the devised movement piece, *Little Wars*, at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Beyond the theatrical realm, Abz fuels their creative spirit with drag performance, baking delicious treats, making art, and hanging out with their cat - Mojo Jojo. Currently, Abz is pursuing a degree in graphic design, further expanding their artistic horizons. Driven by a desire to exemplify the human spirit in all its diverse experiences, Abz invites you to dive into the world of this show. Enjoy the journey.



Ben Pearson - he/him - Ben

Ben Pearson is thrilled to making his debut at BLUEBARN Theatre! Ben had previously played Zachary in the staged reading of *More of a Heart* with the Great Plains Theatre Commons last year. He graduated from the University of Nebraska at Omaha with a B.A. in Theatre in 2019. Past theatre credits include Oliver Costello in *Spider's Web* (Bellevue Little Theatre), Idek in *God on Trial* (Brigit Saint Brigit Theatre Company), and King Krak in *Dozynki: A Celebration of Polish Tales* (Art of Imagination). He is also a member of the Kids on the Block puppet troupe, a WhyArts program that helps to raise disability awareness for elementary school students. Ben hopes that this show will lead to more acceptance of neurodivergent artists, and an appreciation for the wonderful things they do!



Jessica Johnson - she/her - ABA Instructor (recorded)

Jessica Johnson is a multi-hyphenate theatre artist and filmmaker based in Omaha, Nebraska. This is her first production with the BLUEBARN and she could not be more thrilled that it is as the ABA instructor in *More of a Heart*, a role she was lucky enough to do as part of the staged reading of the play at GPTC in 2023. Other favorite Omaha stage credits include Mamie Flannigan in *The Field* and The Tour Guide in *God On Trial* with Brigit St Brigit Theater Co., Ruby/Sharon et al in *The Real Professor* for the fifth annual Omaha Fringe Festival and as Fran Fogg in *Up And Away* at the Rose Theatre as part of the Common Senses festival. Jessica is also a practicing Speech Language Pathologist and would like to dedicate with performance to all the neuro-spicy families she has worked with over the years. You truly have more heart than anyone will ever know.

CREATIVE BIOS



Allen MacLeod - he/him - Director

Allen MacLeod is a New York-based director of new plays and musicals. Recent credits include *Love + Science* (New York City Center Stage II), *Light Switch* (Spectrum Theatre Ensemble), *The Trade Federation: or, Let's Explore Globalization Through the Star Wars Prequels* (IRT Theater); and *Prophesy* (The Wild Project; best direction award, Fresh Fruit Festival). Select associate/assistant credits include: *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (The Kennedy Center); *Frozen: A Musical Spectacular* (Disney Cruise Lines); *Presto Change-o*, *A Little More Alive*, and *Man of La Mancha* (Barrington Stage); *I Hate Hamlet* (Bucks County Playhouse); *We Are the Tigers* (Gallery Players); *Cory and Smin's Love Conquers the Universe* (Smiling Hogshead Ranch).



Dave Osmundsen - he/him - Playwright

Dave Osmundsen is a queer and Autistic playwright and dramaturg whose work has been seen and developed at KCACTF Region 8, the Kennedy Center/NNPN MFA Playwrights Workshop, the Great Plains Theatre Conference, Purple Crayon Players, B Street Theatre, the William Inge Theatre Festival, the Midwest Dramatists Conference, Phoenix Theatre Company, Clamour Theatre Company, Premiere Stages, the Valdez Theatre Conference, and more. He was one of two recipients of the Blank Theatre and Ucross Foundation's inaugural Future of Playwriting Prize. His play *Light Switch* received its world premiere with Spectrum Theatre Ensemble in April 2022. *Light Switch* was also the 2021 Distinguished Achievement recipient of the Jean Kennedy Smith Playwriting Award, an Honorable Mention finalist for BAPF 2021, longlisted for the Theatre503 International Playwriting Award, a finalist for the 2020 Carlo Annoni Playwriting Prize, and a semi-finalist for the 2020 National Playwrights Conference. His one-act, *A Firework Unexploded*, was a semi-finalist for the NYC Audio Theatre Writing Contest and was produced by Pint-Sized in London. His plays have been published by The Dionysian, Canyon Voices, Exposition Review, Fresh Words: Contemporary One Act Plays Volume 5, Smith & Kraus' Best Men's Stage Monologues 2023, and Broadway Play Publishing. MFA: Arizona State University



Carrie A. Nath - she/her - Advocacy Captain/ Assistant Intimacy Designer

Carrie A Nath is Managing Director, The Art of Imagination, Ollie Webb Center, Inc., serving adults experiencing intellectual and developmental disability. She served as Managing Director, BLUEBARN Theatre; Executive Director, The Kentucky Center Governor's School for the Arts; Director of Education, Kentucky Arts Council; Associate Director of Education, Seattle Opera; and Education Consultant, Ford's Theater, D.C. Artistic credits include Manhattan School of Music; Cornish College of the Arts; multiple Shakespeare companies; Seattle Repertory Theater; Actor's Theater of Louisville; Washington National Opera. Ms. Nath serves as a Nebraska Arts Council (NAC) roster artist and on their inclusion committee and is a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts and NAC. Carrie is very excited to work with the fine folks of BLUEBARN creating this new advocacy position tailored to respond to the needs of this production with a goal of providing care for the cast, the crew, the audience, and the community.

CREATIVE BIOS



Maya Pacana-Bredenkamp - she/her/hers - Lighting Designer

Maya, an Omaha native, earned her BFA from the University of Nebraska – Kearney and her MFA from Northwestern University – Evanston. She is excited to be back at BLUEBARN for her 4th production. Previous lighting design credits include *Every Christmas Story Ever Told*, *Macbeth*, and OEAA nominated *The Chinese Lady*. She would like to thank BLUEBARN for the opportunity to collaborate with this talented group. And she would like to thank her family for their continued support.



Denise Ervin - she/her - Costume Designer

Denise is a graduate of the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising in Los Angeles, CA. She has been designing and creating costumes and custom clothing for over 35 years. Denise has extensive experience in designing for live theatre, film, and dance. As head designer for the Omaha Playhouse, she was responsible for overseeing the design and production of 5-8 shows per season. While living in Los Angeles, Denise worked as a senior designer and developer for AGRON Inc, an accessories licensee of ADIDAS while also maintaining a freelance design business. Among her credits, she was commissioned to design Marilyn Quayle's gown for the 1989 Inaugural Ball, selected as Official Couturier for the AK-SAR-BEN Coronation and Ball in 1992, 2019, 21,22. She was awarded the Bob Mackie scholarship at FIDM in 1988.

website: dervin8.wixsite.com/denise-ervin-designs

Craig Lee - he/him - Scenic Designer & Scenic Artist

Mr. Lee has lived in the Midtown area of Omaha since 1985. His work has appeared on virtually every local live theatre stage since then, as well as in movies, television, and publications. He has worked with the finest designers in the area on countless shows and has painted indoor and outdoor murals all over Omaha. At his studio, he has completed commissioned paintings, drawings, and production designs. He has taught scenic painting and worked with students on many university productions. He has proudly supported and collaborated with BLUEBARN Theatre for much of its existence and is extremely fortunate to call the talented, passionate professionals who work here some of his very best friends.

Madelyn Hubbard - she/her - Stage Manager

Madelyn is an arts manager and theatre professional in Omaha, Nebraska, where she was born and raised. Madelyn truly loves the arts. Being a part of the process from the first design meeting to taking down the last piece at strike is what drives her every day to become a better professional. @lilmisshubbard

Mindy Cotner - Sound Board Operator

Mindy has been involved in Omaha-area theater since age 11, first appearing onstage as Lullaby League #2 in a production of *The Wizard of Oz*. After earning a B.F.A from the University of Nebraska Omaha Writer's Workshop, she came to roost in technical theater and discovered the joys of working on the "dark side." Favorite productions in her 18 seasons with BLUEBARN include *The 39 Steps*, *Spring Awakening*, and *Every Brilliant Thing*. She has also worked on several productions with the Ollie Webb Center's Art of Imagination, appearing onstage as the Banshee and Selkie Queen in *Fear Liath*, and running follow spot for *The White Gander* and *Morozko*.

RESIDENT CREATIVE BIOS

Susan Clement - She/Her - Producing Artistic Director

Susan has served as BLUEBARN's Producing Artistic Director since 2002. She has directed numerous productions at the BLUEBARN, beginning with *The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me* in 1993. OEAA Awards – Best Director: *Red Summer* (2020), *Indecent* (2019) *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (2018), *Our Town* (2015), *39 Steps* (2013), *Spring Awakening* (2012), *Seascope* (2008); Best Play - *Our Town* (2015), *Red* (2013), *The Pillowman* (2006). As director of the BLUEBARN, Susan alongside Shannon Walenta (Managing Director at the time) spearheaded the capital campaign that enabled the BLUEBARN to build its own stand-alone theater and saw the dream fulfilled when BLUEBARN moved into its new home at 10th and Pacific in 2015. Susan holds a B.F.A in Theatre/Film from the State University of New York at Purchase Conservatory.

Amy Reiner - She/Her - Director of Production & Props Designer

Amy joined the BLUEBARN in 2012 as Production Manager and Properties Master. Amy went to college at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln where she received a B.F.A. in technical theatre with an emphasis on Scenic and Lighting Design. After leaving Lincoln, she spent three years freelancing in Los Angeles in the fields of film and television. Returning to her hometown of Omaha in 2000, she worked as Properties Master for 12 years at The Omaha Community Playhouse where some of her favorite shows were *Violet*, *The Battle of Shallowford*, and *The Fantasticks*. Some of Amy's favorite BLUEBARN shows include *Red*, *American Buffalo*, *the 39 Steps*, and *A Very Die Hard Christmas!*. In her free time, Amy enjoys volunteering at a few places including HETRA, a Gretna-based equine therapy program. She especially loves her fur children Ethel, Norman, Pearl and Rose, as well as her goldfish Sylvester, Tweety, and Granny.

Bill Kirby - He/Him - Technical Director, Sound & Projection Designer

Bill joined the BLUEBARN staff as the Resident Creative and Technical Director in 2019, after working as a freelance designer for the two previous seasons. Favorite BLUEBARN productions include *Venus in Fur*, *Wakey, Wakey*, *Indecent* (OEA Award for Outstanding Sound Design), and *Red Summer* (OEA Award). Before relocating to Omaha in 2017, Bill spent 10 years as the resident sound designer and head sound engineer at Princeton University's McCarter Theatre Center. Bill's favorite McCarter productions include sound designing the original workshop production of Danai Gurira's *Eclipsed* and serving as the production sound engineer for the world premiere of Christopher Durang's *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, which would go on to win the 2013 Tony Award for best play. Kirby has worked nationally and internationally, including productions at the New York Fringe Festival, LA's Kirk Douglas Theatre, the Wuzhen Grand Theatre in China, and the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis. Bill is a graduate of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. **web:** kirbysound.live

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The BLUEBARN Theatre stands in honor of the first inhabitants and our ancestors. We acknowledge the land on which The BLUEBARN stands — the unceded territory of the Umonhon ('um AHhah") and ochethi Sakoiwic. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory. We honor the generations of stewards, and we pay our respects to the many diverse Indigenous peoples still connected to this land.

Visit native-land.ca to discover the native land on which you reside or currently find yourself.

ANTI-RACISM | ANTI-OPPRESSION ETHOS

BLUEBARN Theatre owns that systemic racism is real, always at play, and intersects with multiple systems of oppression and that all must be fought against wherever and however they show up - in our community, in our theater, in ourselves.

ANTI-HARASSMENT & INCLUSION

BLUEBARN Theatre is committed to fostering a culture of civility, dignity, and respect as a right and responsibility of all who walk through its doors. Employees, guest artists, volunteers, and patrons are entitled to and responsible for maintaining an environment of mutual trust - free from intimidation, exploitation, harassment, and discrimination. Offensive, abusive, or unwelcome verbal or physical conduct will not be tolerated. Adhering to this standard is vital to the BLUEBARN's mission.

DIVERSE AUDIENCE PRACTICES PRINCIPLE

Hospitality has always been one of BLUEBARN's core values. Welcoming you to this space is our great joy. You are invited to bring your full self to the experience. Audible reactions and responses are absolutely welcome. For some people, this is church, for some a meditative space, for others an escape, and we invite you to respect the ways that others engage in the experience based on their individual or cultural practices. By gathering at the BLUEBARN, you have committed to a shared experience in community with others, free from etiquette shaming, microaggressions, and entitled behavior.

ACCESS

BLUEBARN Theatre is committed to ensuring that our boundary-breaking theatre is accessible to everyone. We are committed to easing cost barriers for young professionals and students. We are committed to providing low-cost, last-minute opportunities for anyone to see a show. We are committed to recognizing those who give the most in service to our community.

BLUCrew - Young Patron Development Program

Anyone 35 or under is eligible. Members receive discount pricing for most Sunday and Thursday shows throughout the season with no upfront cost. Contact Sydney at sreadman@bluebarn.org to join BLUCrew.

35 ↓

Rush Tickets

Every unsold seat. Every show. \$20. Available only at the box office, 45 minutes before curtain. If we're not sold out, you have a new way in.



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Radical Hospitality

Sometimes you need a break. It doesn't matter why. For pay-what-you-wish tickets to any show, contact Sydney at sreadman@bluebarn.org.



Assisted Listening Devices

are available at the box office for mainstage productions. BLUEBARN also utilizes **Listen Everywhere**, a smartphone application that allows you to stream audio directly to your own headphones and Bluetooth-compatible hearing aids. See our box office staff for assistance or scan the QR code provided.



An American Sign Language

performance is offered for More of a Heart on Friday, April 5.



Audio Description Services

are provided through Radio Talking Book Service upon request. Audio Description for this performance will be available on Friday, April 12.

Sensory Kits and headphones

are available at the box office and sensory stations will be available as a respite from the performance environment in both the north and south hallways.

Sensory items provided by



**Autism
Action
Partnership**

To request these or additional accommodations, or for more information, Please call (402) 345-1576 or email Sydney at sreadman@bluebarn.org.

Afterwords: Post Show Talkback w/ Cast and Creatives

Friday, March 29th | on stage, immediately following our 7:30 pm show

This intimate extension of the theatre experience offers audiences a chance to connect with performers and creatives. It's a heartfelt opportunity to dive into the emotions and insights sparked by the show, fostering a deeper appreciation for the art form and the people behind it.



Saro Cider & BLUEBARN Theatre present...

Video Game Themed Trivia Night

Wednesday, April 3rd | 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Location: Saro Cider | 1012 S 10th St, Omaha, NE 68108

Hosts: Ben Beck and Bill Grennan

Gear up for a wild ride at our Video Game Trivia – the ultimate showdown for gamers of all levels! Dive into a world of nostalgia and excitement as we test your knowledge on everything from classic consoles, iconic characters, to epic storylines. Grab your 1337-team and get ready to level up your Wednesday evening with epic gaming trivia!

1st Place team: two single tickets for *More of a Heart* & one \$50 gift card to SARO Cider

2nd Place team: \$20 gift card to SARO Cider

Embracing Discovery: Autism and Late Diagnoses

Saturday, April 6th | on stage, immediately following our 7:30 pm show

Panelists:

Amy Lane & Donovan Lane, Julien Wulfgar & Murphy Scott Wulfgar, Pegeen Reilly

Directly following *More of a Heart*, our panelists will engage in a vibrant conversation, aiming to articulate the play's resonance within their personal experiences, familial perspectives, and the impact of autism in their lives. Through this dialogue, we hope to forge meaningful connections with those directly experiencing autism and those seeking insight.

"MORE OF A HEART" ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMMING

Adah and Leon
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Autism Action Partnership's Sensory Station

Location: North and South Hallways



**Autism
Action
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We offer optional sensory stations in our hallways for guests seeking moments of relaxation or sensory stimulation. These stations provide an opportunity to unwind and engage with diverse tactile and visual experiences at their leisure, enhancing your overall stay with us.

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute SPOTLIGHT

Sunday, April 14th | Table with presented information

Discover the intersection of theatrical arts and lifelong learning as we showcase the collaborative initiatives between these two organizations. Come down and immerse yourself in an enriching experience, gaining insights into BLUEBARN's dynamic productions and OLLI's commitment to lifelong education.



ART IN THE BLUE
CURATED BY JARED SPENCE



"Beyond Boundaries: Navigating Independence"

More of a Heart Art Exhibit

BLUEBARN Mammel Lobby
Curated by: Jared Spence



Works by Michael Zimmerman and artists from the Angel Guardians, Inc. ArtWorks program. Beyond Boundaries includes artistic narratives of finding independence by artists of varying abilities and neurodiversity.

Pre-Show Art Chats with Curator, Jared Spence

Please join us for two pre-show conversations with Jared and the artists.

April 7 @ 1:30 pm, before the 2 pm show | with Angel Guardians, Inc. ArtWorks

April 20 @ 7 pm, before the 7:30 pm show | with Michael Zimmerman

All art proceeds go directly to participating artists.

The "Beyond Boundaries: Navigating Independence" exhibit is on display to the public, 45 minutes before the show, M-F during Box Office Hours, 10 am-4 pm.

For full Engagement Info visit bluebarn.org/engagement

TERMS AND GLOSSARY

ABA (Applied Behavioral Analysis): Behavioral engineering/training therapy. Highly controversial in the autistic community for its focus on encouraging autistic people to “mask” their autistic behaviors.

Ableism/Ableist: Discriminating in favor of able-bodied and/or neurotypical people. In the context of autism, looking at autistic people as needing to be “fixed” to make them “normal” or to suppress their autistic behaviors.

Allistic: Not Autistic.

Autistic Burnout: Exhaustion from extended social interaction.

Autistic Shutdown: Withdrawing, selective mutism, disassociating.

Echolalia: Repetitive language, often used as a self-soothing method.

IEP (Individualized Education Program): A plan used for students in grades pre-k-12 that lays out the special education instruction, support, and services a student needs to thrive in school.

Masking: Intentionally modifying or hiding autistic behaviors.

Meltdown: Overstimulation causes sensory overload/implosion (not the same as a “tantrum,” which is when a child acts out in order to get something).

Neurodivergent = Single Person

Neurodiverse = A group of neurodivergent people

Neurodiversity = Meant to include different neurotypes

Person-First/Identity-First Language: People who “have autism”/People who “are autistic.” Identity-first language is mostly preferred, but several autistic people use person-first language.

Scripting: Using pre-scripted language to get by in everyday situations.

Sensory Friendly: An environment built to not overstimulate the senses.

Sensory Overload: One of your senses is overstimulated to the point of causing burnout/shutdown.

Stimming: Self-soothing and stimulating behavior autistic people use to regulate their reactions to stimulations.

SPD: Sensory Processing Disorder, overstimulation from certain senses. Not always connected to autism.

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our 35th year of kick-ass theater!

Season Producers are patrons who have made contributions in addition to their TruBLU memberships. The donations we receive above and beyond our ticket sales and subscriptions are vital to BLUEBARN's artistic success, and to the livelihoods of the artists responsible for that success. Thank you for believing in our work and supporting professional theatre in Omaha.

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EST. 2009

At BLUEBARN we believe that artists should be honored for their work not only with applause but with a paycheck. We believe that every theatre artist deserves to be paid fairly for their work, and we are committed to providing payment to every actor or artist working in our theatre. To honor this commitment, BLUEBARN established The Artists' fund in 2009, to support the creative spirits who help continue and propel the life of the BLUEBARN.

We recognize the following donors who have made contributions to The Artists' fund, and we'd like to add your name to this list! If you would like to contribute, please email Heather Hoyt at hhoyt@bluebarn.org, or donate online at www.bluebarn.org.

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WHAT TO EXPECT

Content below may contain show spoilers

DETAILED SYNOPSIS

More of a Heart takes place from 2013 – 2017. Mary-Ellen's son Zachary was diagnosed with Autism at a young age. After years of being his fiercest advocate, she finds herself challenged when Zachary grows up and begins to have his own thoughts and feelings about his upbringing, particularly the behavioral “therapy” his mother put him through. When Zachary’s first semester of college goes awry and Mary-Ellen receives her own fatal diagnosis, the two must say the things they need to say to one another before time runs out.

ARRIVAL

Welcome to The BLUEBARN Theater. When you arrive, you will enter the lobby. Pre-show music at medium levels and medium lighting set the atmosphere. The box office is directly to your left. You do not need physical tickets. You will need to check in at the box office. You may request sensory items, a full sensory kit, and/or audio enhancement devices at the box office. Stanchions featuring experiential information will be stationed throughout the lobby.

Bathrooms are in the hallway to your right from the box office window.

The theater will open one half-hour before the show. The lobby can get lively before the theater opens. If you need a less lively space, the hallway nearest to the box office features dimmer lighting and lower sound levels.

You will enter the theater from a medium-lit hallway across the lobby from the box office. The theater is proscenium style. There are 96 seats. You may sit anywhere not taped off for season subscribers.

If you need a break during the show, there will be stations in the lobby featuring sensory kits and live feed of the show on a screen located above the box office.

EXPERIENTIAL CONTENT ADVISORY

BLUEBARN has made every effort to make each performance experience as friendly as possible from a sensory, emotional, and atmospheric standpoint. Below is information for each area that may be helpful based on your interests.

Sensory

There are scenes with bright lighting and bold sounds. The theater is intimate, and some scenes are emotionally intense. If you need a break during the show, there will be stations in the lobby featuring sensory reduction items and a live feed of the show on a screen located above the box office.

Atmospheric

There will be pre-show music in the lobby and in the theater. This performance features projections and lighting designed to make the room appear as if it is waving, trembling and collapsing. At the top of the show, you will experience a loud level of “convention pre-speech” audience activity sounds. There is a restaurant scene that will be accompanied by “busy restaurant” sounds. Transitions will be underscored by music.

Emotional

This performance features depictions of the following: grief, stimming, anxiety, meltdowns, isolation, heightened emotional moments, yelling, ableist language and imagery, terminal illness, and death. At any time, you are welcome to leave the theater space and utilize the lobby which will have sensory kits and a live feed of the production available via a screen mounted above the box office.

Photos by Thomas Grady

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Dave Osmundsen, 2023 GPTC PlayLab development of *More of a Heart*



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