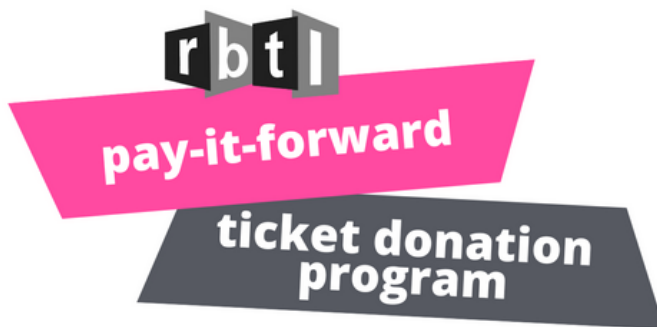


DECEMBER 2022



# FROM THE WINGS

## RBTL LAUNCHES TICKET DONATION PROGRAM



Sponsored by: GARBER  
AUTOMOTIVE ROCHESTER

RBTL has launched a new program, to help underserved youth and families experience the arts. The PAY-IT-FORWARD Ticket Donation Program allows patrons the opportunity to donate tickets prior to a show. RBTL will then coordinate with its community partners and agencies to distribute the tickets to eligible families – giving them the experience of a live performance at RBTL's Auditorium Theatre. In addition, Garber Automotive Group will match the value of donated tickets up to \$15,000, doubling the impact.

Supporting RBTL's nationally-recognized arts education through the PAY-IT-FORWARD Ticket Donation Program is an innovative way to give back to the community, while fostering an appreciation for the performing arts.

"When a student attends a live event for the first time, the experience provides excitement, inspiration and joy like no other," said RBTL Director of Education, Holly Valentine. "Unfortunately, a major barrier to participate in the arts is cost. RBTL's PAY-IT-FORWARD Ticket Donation Program is an effort to help lessen that obstacle in the Rochester region."

To donate tickets, call 585-222-5000 or email [mail@rbtl.org](mailto:mail@rbtl.org). All donations are tax-deductible. Do you prefer to make a monetary contribution to RBTL's PAY-IT-FORWARD Program instead? You can make a donation on [GiveGab.com](https://www.givegab.com) or send a check payable to RBTL by mail to:

RBTL  
Attention: PIF Program  
885 East Main Street  
Rochester, NY 14605

For more information, visit [rbtl.org/pay-it-forward](https://rbtl.org/pay-it-forward) or call 585-277-3338.

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

### VALENTINE'S SOUL JAM

February 10

### BEETLEJUICE

February 14-19

### BLUEY'S BIG PLAY

March 10-11

### HADESTOWN

March 14-19

### BLUES IS ALRIGHT TOUR

March 25



RBTL'S AUDITORIUM THEATRE

885 EAST MAIN STREET

ROCHESTER, NY 14605

585.222.5000 - [RBTL.ORG](https://rbtl.org)



@RBTLAUD

## NEW “BROADWAY BOOST” PROGRAM LAUNCHES AT RBTL

“Come From Away” brought the launch of one of RBTL’s newest arts education programs, “Broadway Boost”. The program, a four-day intensive, is led by three teaching artists, all with various areas of expertise in theatre. It’s designed to connect national and area professionals with local high school and college students and focuses on themes of a touring Broadway show and, of course, the main areas of live theatre: singing, dancing and acting.



“I think this program benefits students in a way that other programs don’t because we look at every aspect,” said actor, director, fight choreographer and acting coach, J. Simmons, who is one of RBTL’s teaching artists. “There’s so much that goes into it – from creation of a concept, to building the verbiage, to the music, to the movement, to the acting but the ‘why’ is always more interesting. Instead of just replicating a dance number or replicating a song, we start at the ground and build every single layer up, so [the students] understand the whole piece from all angles and all the concepts that went into creating the piece.”



Sean Michael Flowers is another one of RBTL’s teaching artists. He’s a music director, conductor, composer and arts educator. He said he hopes the students participating in “Broadway Boost” take away a sense of empowerment and a “yes I can” attitude.

“What is different about this program than perhaps other offerings that are out there is that it is 100% process-focused,” said Flowers. “This doesn’t culminate in a performance for family or for friends. It is about getting into the work, getting messy with the work and having a good time with the work. And I think in that way, the safe space that it has created allows students to explore and to take risks that maybe they wouldn’t if they know Grandma’s going to be sitting there in a day.”

This first “Broadway Boost” was centered on “Come From Away” and allowed a group of eight students to gain insight as both a performer and an audience member. The artists helped the students with character work, storytelling through movement and applying what they learned from the show into their own work as a performer.

“Coming from a dance perspective, this wasn’t dance technique-based,” said RBTL’s third teaching artist, Mandi Lynn Griffith, who is a local choreographer, performer and director. “The stuff I was doing with them was very natural and organic movement. They still felt like they were dancing, but it was a different aspect of it. And then to see it on stage, and to see similar movement that the cast was doing, and to feel the beats and the rhythms... I could tell the kids felt connected in that way... So that to me was just really exciting.”

As part of the program, the students had the opportunity to attend a performance of “Come From Away” and see all the concepts they



(continued on page 3)



(continued from page 2)

learned be applied on stage by National Touring professionals. After the show, the students were also able to participate in a Q&A with some members of the cast.

“My favorite part of the week was probably the talkback with the actors from the show,” said student Katiclaire D. “Hearing about meeting the people that this story is based off of and [learning] how to really embody these characters and tell the story in a way that allows the audience to perceive it in the way that they want to.”

“The most important thing that I learned was doing the research behind your character and developing the character,” added student Cora P. “Specifically for this show, since it was based on real people, we talked a lot about the history, the events of the people, and I think that was really important to learn.”



For more information about RBTL's "Broadway Boost" program, go to [rbtl.org/broadway-boost](http://rbtl.org/broadway-boost). "Broadway Boost" will be offered for all five remaining shows in RBTL's Broadway Season. Schedules for each intensive will be released at later dates.

## WAYS TO SUPPORT RBTL - A 501(c)3 ORGANIZATION - THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

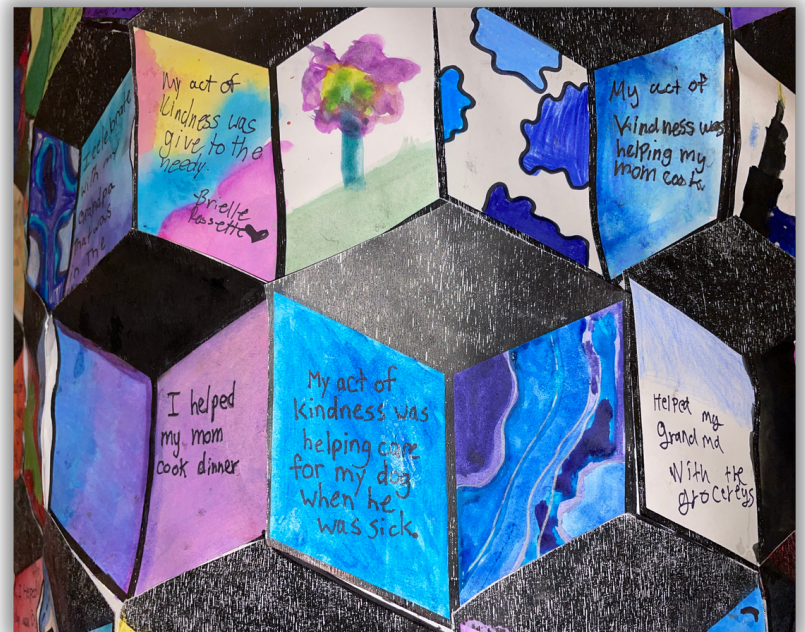


# EXPLORING THE THEMES OF "COME FROM AWAY" WITH A.R.T.S. PARTNERS



RBTL's A.R.T.S. Partners education program continued this Season with "Come From Away", which held performances at the Auditorium Theatre at the beginning of the month. A.R.T.S. Partners integrates arts education into curriculum at local schools. For "Come From Away", the lessons looked at multiple themes, including culture and differences, kindness and paying it forward, freedom and stories matter.

Students at School #19 and Gates Chili Middle School were among those who learned these themes. They then applied them to art, which was displayed in the second floor lobby at RBTL's Auditorium Theatre during the run of "Come From Away".



# ENHANCING THE TOURING BROADWAY EXPERIENCE FOR THOSE HARD OF HEARING & DEAF WITH OPEN CAPTIONING

RBTL prides itself in being able to provide a more inclusive and enjoyable theatre experience for patrons who are hard of hearing or deaf. To that end, Open Captioning is currently offered during Sunday matinee performances of the Broadway Season. Located on the left side of the stage, a text display on a screen shows the lines in time with the actors' delivery.

"Open Captioning allows access to people who are hard of hearing or deaf and do not use ASL as their primary mode of communication," said Jennifer Horak, who operates the Open Captioning live at RBTL's Auditorium Theatre. "It also provides access for people who may use English as a second language and the text assists them in understanding what's going on in the show."

Horak has provided Open Captioning with RBTL since 2019. Her first shows were "Waitress" and "Miss Saigon". Preparing for a live performance with Open Captioning starts about a month in advance, when she first gets a look at the script. She then takes the time to remove stage directions, add pertinent sound cues and format to accommodate for pauses and to ensure punchlines are revealed at the right time. The process also involves watching the show to tweak the script for actors' beats and identify purely visual scenes. After all of that, it's time for the live performance on Sundays.

"There's really a bit of an art to formatting and having the lines come up as the actors say them," said Horak. "The line that is being said comes across letter, by letter, by letter at the bottom of the screen. And when the next line comes, that first line goes up as a whole line, so the next line can go up letter, by letter, by letter. Which is really nice because it says 'this is the line that's being said' and 'oh by the way, if you didn't get to read it all yet, it's still here.' So it scrolls up three lines at a time."

However, sometimes, in most shows, the screen does appear blank at certain points in the production. That's giving the viewer a cue to place their full attention on what is happening on stage.

"I want the audience, the deaf viewer and the hard of hearing viewer to be able to look," added Horak. "By giving them a blank screen, that cues them in to looking at the stage – that there's something happening there that they need to see... There's something to also understanding the deaf viewer and deaf culture when you're doing the programming. You're giving them visual cues as well."

Open Captioning at RBTL's Auditorium Theatre is made possible by the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA). Sue Miller, who is a founding member of HLAA, helped spearhead the service more than a decade ago and it's the funding provided by HLAA that keeps it going.

"Without [Open Captioning], people with hearing loss really miss so much. And also, many of them don't bother attending the theatre. Why would they go if they don't know what is being said? Especially if they lost their hearing later in life (because they know what it is to hear)."

Miller said the idea to bring Captioning to the Auditorium Theatre came in 2007, after an HLAA member, who was hard of hearing, went to a Broadway show in New York City that was Captioned – leaving him in awe. After returning to Rochester, he gathered a small group of people, who then approached RBTL about establishing this service locally. Miller credits former RBTL Event Operations Manager Shannon Struzik with making Open Captioning happen, saying it was her who "took [them] under her wing" and advocated for the service. It was in 2010 that the first show was Captioned – at a Special Engagement of "Mamma Mia!"

"It was just a godsend," said Miller. "I sat there with tears, because I remember attending, when I was 10-years-old, a play, "Kiss Me, Kate" – and I've always had hearing loss – and I remember sitting there... just in awe of the whole theatre and being so taken with how it looked and the people that were there, the dancing, the costumes, but I never heard anything. I didn't know what anyone on the stage was saying. But I was used to that, I accepted that. That was just my life. So I was always daydreaming or taking in what I could see. And so, 60 years later, they brought that 'Mamma Mia!' show to RBTL, and it was Captioned. It was unbelievable. It was like a miracle. I knew every single word. I read every word that was spoken and it was just like a dream come true."

While Open Captioning is primarily intended for those who are hard of hearing or deaf, Miller added even people who are hearing can benefit from the service. "My son and his fiancé just went to see ["Come From Away"]..."



(continued from page 5)

"... and I asked him what he thought of the Captioning and he said, 'It was great, we really didn't need it, but I realized I'd miss a word every once in a while and it was great to look over at the Captioning and see what the word was.' So even people who are hearing are able to appreciate the Captioning."



The Rochester Chapter of HAAA will be celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2023. Miller said that back when the organization started, while venues had sign language interpreters, none really had options for those who didn't know American Sign Language. But, thanks to funding from organizations like HAAA, that has changed.

"I think gradually, people are beginning to realize there's a difference between people who are deaf and depend on visual language, like interpreting and sign language, versus people who are hard of hearing who depend on technology – hearing aids, Cochlear implants, assisted listening devices and, of course, Captioning," Miller added.

While Open Captioning is beneficial for scripted performances, the software that provides it, CaptionView, does not allow for ad-libs or any type of improvisation. Horak, who also trains others to use CaptionView, believes a newer, more robust software needs to be developed to better serve the community.

"Do we need to reinvent the wheel? At this point, I think that we do," Horak said. "Personally, I think Rochester is the place to do it because we have the highest per capita of deaf people in the United States."

It is facts like that, that make services like Open Captioning so important– so that everyone can come out and enjoy live theatre. RBTL is committed to continuing those opportunities. The next show that will be Open Captioned at RBTL's Auditorium Theatre will be "Beetlejuice" on Sunday, February 19 at 1:00 p.m. The full, remaining Captioning schedule for the Season can be seen below:



**BEETLEJUICE**  
February 19 at 1:00 p.m.



**DISNEY'S ALADDIN**  
April 16 at 1:00 p.m.



**HADESTOWN**  
March 19 at 1:00 p.m.



**SIX**  
May 21 at 1:00 p.m.



**TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD**  
June 18 at 1:00 p.m.

To book seating in view of the Captioning screen, call 585-222-5000 or email [mail@rbtl.org](mailto:mail@rbtl.org). For more information, visit [rbtl.org/accessibility-services](http://rbtl.org/accessibility-services).

## BROADWAY-THEMED COCKTAILS TO SPICE UP THE HOLIDAYS

### Founders' Fizz ("Hamilton")

1½ oz. gin, 1 oz. simple syrup,  
splash of lime juice & top with seltzer

### Sweet Intoxication

("The Phantom of the Opera")  
Sage, lime, blackberries, 1½ oz. dark rum  
& top with ginger beer

### The Desert Bloom ("Disney's Aladdin")

1½ oz. vodka, ½ oz. St. Germain, 1 oz. lemon juice,  
1 oz. simple syrup, ¼ tsp rose water,  
2 dashes Scrappy's Cardamom Bitters  
& 1 dash Peychaud's Bitters

### The Toast of Mayfair ("Cabaret")

4 raspberries, ½ oz. lime juice, ½ oz. simple syrup,  
1 fresh bay leaf, 4 drops Bittermens Burlesque Bitters,  
1 oz. London dry gin, ½ oz. cherry liqueur  
& 4 oz. sparkling Riesling