

For Immediate Release

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Theater is for audiences of all abilities at The Rose

Omaha's Rose Theater ensures that everyone has an entertaining experience

(OMAHA, NE) In order to ensure a positive theater-going experience for all audience members, The Rose Theater now provides a variety of accommodations addressing the functional needs of people with disabilities.

“We are committed to removing obstacles and opening up new opportunities for people with disabilities,” says Rose artistic director Matthew Gutschick.

For Guests who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing

For several years, The Rose has provided American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation of its mainstage productions, which will continue at select performances. In addition, this season, select performances of First Stage shows will also be ASL-interpreted. After experimenting with different systems, The Rose will also provide individual closed-captioning of all shows via dedicated iPads which can be checked out from the Box Office. Assistive listening systems are also available for those who require them.

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For Guests who are Blind or Have Limited Vision

The Rose will continue to offer audio description services for guests who are blind or have low vision. Audio description involves a specialized narration service that describes the action taking place on stage and includes commentary of scenes, settings, costumes, body language and more. Users hear the audio description through a small ear piece connected to a wearable receiver. Audio description services are provided in cooperation with Outlook Nebraska and are provided at select mainstage performances. Requests for audio description services should be made at least two weeks prior to the performance to guarantee availability, but requests made with less than two weeks notice will be honored to the best of the theater's availability.

Additional accommodations for guests with visual disabilities include large print and Braille programs and free touch tours of The Rose Mainstage before a performance, which gives audience members who are blind the opportunity to feel the props, set pieces and costumes being used during the show. Visitors who require these services should call The Rose Box Office at least one week prior to their visit to arrange for the printing of the program.

The following 2019-20 Rose performances will feature ASL-interpretation, captioning and audio description services:

- ***Go, Dog. Go!***, Saturday, September 7 at 2 p.m.
- ***The Cat in the Hat***, Saturday, October 5 at 2 p.m.
- ***A Bucket of Blessings***, Saturday, Nov. 2 at 11 am
- ***Ella Enchanted***, Saturday, November 2 at 2 p.m.
- ***Elf the Musical***, Saturday, December 5 at 2 p.m.
- ***Howie D: Back in the Day***, Saturday, February 8 at 2 p.m.
- ***The Little Engine That Could***, Saturday, March 7 at 11 am
- ***The Diary of Anne Frank***, Saturday, March 7 at 2 p.m.
- ***Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed***, Saturday, April 4 at 2 p.m.
- ***Corduroy***, Saturday, May 2 at 2 p.m.
- ***The Sound of Music***, Saturday, June 13 at 2 p.m.

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For Guests with Autism and Atypical Sensory Processing

Select performances of each mainstage show during The Rose season are designated as “sensory-friendly,” which means special accommodations are made for families attending with a child on the autism spectrum or with other special needs. Some of the accommodations available for these families include reduced ticket prices (when purchased in advance via phone), a private room for congregating before the show and a private post-show question-and-answer period following the show. Families may also check out sensory bags from the Box Office; these kits include noise-reducing headphones, fidget devices and other tools to help children manage the noise and sounds that accompany a live performance.

The theater also publishes an online social story to help families prepare for their experience at The Rose. A social story is a learning tool that uses pictures and text to walk children through every step of an experience. The Rose social stories feature photographs of every aspect of the theater -- from the exterior to the lobby, the auditorium, stairways, restrooms and, of course, the performance itself. Special care is given to highlight any moments during the show which may trigger a negative response, such as loud sounds, blackouts, or intense onstage events. The social story helps reduce anxiety by helping readers anticipate each step of seeing a show at The Rose. Social stories are available on The Rose website the week before each show opens.

This season’s sensory-friendly performances include:

- ***Go, Dog. Go!***, Saturday, September 7 at 5 p.m.
- ***The Cat in the Hat***, Saturday, October 5 at 5 p.m.
- ***Ella Enchanted***, Saturday, November 2 at 5 p.m.
- ***The Diary of Anne Frank***, Saturday, March 7 at 2 p.m.
- ***Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed***, Saturday, April 4 at 5 p.m.
- ***Corduroy***, Saturday, May 2 at 5 p.m.

The Rose’s First Stage two productions -- ***A Bucket of Blessings*** and ***The Little Engine That Could*** -- are presented in a sensory-friendly environment with minimal lighting changes, no full black-outs and gentle sounds. The shows are performed on The Rose’s smaller Hitchcock Stage that allows for a more intimate setting and often features nontraditional seating. This environment gives students the opportunity for active engagement and interaction.

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For Guests with Physical Disabilities

For guests with physical disabilities, The Rose offers wheelchair-accessible seating on its main floor. Depending on the size of the wheelchair, up to ten spaces are available per shows. Courtesy wheelchairs are available onsite for guests who need assistance. Elevators are available for accessing the mezzanine and lower lobby, where wheelchair-accessible restrooms are located. Several parking spaces for patrons with disabilities are available on the street directly outside The Rose. Up to six spaces are available on Friday evenings, and ten spaces are available on Saturdays and Sundays.

Class Opportunities

In addition to onstage performances, The Rose offers many opportunities for students with special needs to participate in classes.

The Rose offers several classes that are ASL-interpreted for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, year-round classes for students on the autism spectrum, and support for students enrolled in inclusive classes for both typical children and children with special needs. Scholarships are available for students in need of financial assistance.

“The Rose Theater is proud to cultivate an intentionally welcoming and inclusive space for people of all abilities, ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, sexual orientations and gender identities,” says Fran Sillau, Rose accessibility coordinator. “Our staff is happy to meet your family’s physical, learning and social needs.”

For additional information about services available for people with disabilities, please visit The Rose website at www.rosetheater.org, or call The Rose Box Office at (402) 345-4849.

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About The Rose

For 70 years, The Rose Theater has been providing Omaha-area families with the best in live theater and arts education. The Omaha Theater Company was one of the first in Omaha to offer classes in the theater arts, and today The Rose stands as a leading program and training ground for young artists interested in pursuing a career in theater.

Students enrolled in classes at The Rose learn from some of the best educators in the region. Rose teachers include professional actors, accomplished dancers, award-winning playwrights, highly-decorated directors, renowned choreographers and more. Rose classes encourage creativity and imagination while enriching the understanding and enjoyment of theater. Many classes offer performance opportunities, and all classes promote ensemble work and skill development. Dance, acting and voice classes emphasize technique and professionalism, giving students the tools they need to succeed in the classroom, their schools, in the community, and on stages around the world.

Onstage, The Rose is one of the largest and most accomplished children's theaters in the nation, with a reputation for enriching the lives of children and families through top-quality professional productions. In 2016, American Theatre magazine named The Rose one of the 20 top children's theaters in the United States.

The Rose is committed to making the arts accessible to all children, providing opportunities for thousands of children throughout the community to attend shows and participate in classes each year. Over the course of a year, approximately 70,000 people attend the public performances held at the theater, and nearly 30,000 students attend field trip shows annually.

The theater strives to introduce young people to a mix of both traditional favorites and groundbreaking original productions. A number of plays and musicals have made their world premiere on The Rose stage, including *Van Gogh & Me*, *The Meaning of Maggie*, *Pete the Cat: The Musical*, *Sherlock Holmes & the First Baker Street Irregular*, *Zen Ties*, *Leo Lionni's Frederick*, *A Palette of Possibility*, *Thumbelina*, *Buffalo Bill's Cowboy Band*, and *The Grocer's Goblin & The Little Mermaid*.

We take pride knowing that The Rose is the place where children of all ages experience theater for the first time, and we are dedicated to helping them appreciate theater for a lifetime.

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