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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Dallas Children's Theater Reveals Innovative, Interactive Audience Experience in Groundbreaking Play ANDI BOI

Play is a world premiere production of one transgender teen's journey and will be supported with a community action event in late-February

DALLAS, TX (JANUARY 27, 2020) – Dallas Children's Theater (DCT), recognized as one of the leading professional family theaters in the United States, revealed new details about its upcoming groundbreaking play ANDI BOI, a world premiere production focused on one transgender teen's journey. DCT, in conjunction with Grob Technologies, Inc., will be launching new innovations in storytelling via the use of 3D model projections and augmented reality. These explorations will bring gaming special effects into a theater setting. ANDI BOI will run at DCT from **February 7 – February 16, 2020** for a limited engagement of six performances. Tickets are currently on sale at dct.org/andiboi.

ANDI BOI is about a transgender teen entering his first day of high school identifying as a male. Former classmates recall his last name when they hear it, but there is something different about Andi that keeps the dots from connecting clearly in their minds. As they learn more about each other, Andi and his classmates bond over a popular virtual game called Bidybeasts. During certain moments in the production, audiences will meet the animated Bidybeast characters of the virtual game via 3D model projections and an augmented reality application via the use of their smart phones. Following the show, audiences will be able to meet the stars of ANDI BOI, as well as enjoy more augmented reality fun with the Bidybeast characters.

"DCT has made it a priority to present stories about teens caught in difficult situations and the tough barriers they face, in part, because so little energy is focused on teens. Adding in the elements of 3D projection and augmented reality helps us to not only tell the story, but also to connect with teens even more," said Robyn Flatt, Founder and Executive Artistic Director of DCT. "By increasing our awareness and understanding of these young people as human beings, as vulnerable young people among us, we can provide a supportive space during their search to find true identity, and as a result, we hopefully make the journey less painful."

Inspired by one teen's journey, ANDI BOI is told with a sensitivity towards Andi and uses wit, heart, and warmth to help audiences find their way to greater compassion and awareness. Post-show conversations with subject matter resources will also follow every performance.

In a demonstration of their desire to truly have impact in a city that has struggled to embrace these young people, the collaboration invites interested participants to a dialogue dinner event on Saturday, February 29 from 6:00 – 9:00 PM at First Unitarian Church of Dallas, located at 4015 Normandy Avenue. During this community gathering, participants will have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of transgender topics and to practice their skills for being a great ally. Presenters will share stories and statistics about the challenges transgender youth face and talk about how allies can help ensure that marginalized voices are recognized and supported. This is a great experience for educators, therapists, champions for the underserved, and those simply seeking to grow in their understanding. Everyone will walk away with some tangible actions they can take to support the transgender community. To participate in the community gathering, register at dct.org/andiboi.

According to the Center for Disease Control, the nation's health protection agency, two percent of high school students in the United States identify as transgender. Yet, it is clear that the experiences of each child are distinct and run the gamut from very difficult and life threatening to that akin to any teen going through a challenge. As such, the producing team wants to be clear that this play is far from an attempt to suggest every child's journey is the same. ANDI BOI is one story about one life that is largely devised by a playwright. It is not intended to represent an entire community, but rather be a starting point for conversation.

DCT commissioned local playwright, Bruce Coleman, to write ANDI BOI. His first decision was to speak with some of the two percent of high school students who identify as transgender. For Coleman, this included talking to a young boy who recently transitioned and his parents. Using these conversations and research as inspiration, Coleman said he deliberately decided to use honesty and humor as tools for telling this story in hopes that it would have the broadest possible appeal. Coleman hoped to create an atmosphere of good will and understanding that will help audiences begin an important conversation around this topic. "I hope as our audiences get to know Andi, they'll also get to know something about themselves," Coleman said.

"As a gay man, I too kept a secret from my family until it became impossible to deny who I was anymore." Coleman continued, "I feared rejection from family and friends as they discovered who I am, but I ultimately took that rejection and turned it into strength. I have been pushed at by a society that wants to squeeze me into a box and force me to be a thing that goes against everything that makes me this person I am. But when all has been said and done and because of a strong belief in myself, I can finally achieve my heart's desire: To be seen, to be respected, and to be treasured. It's all Andi and I are asking for."

DCT is co-producing ANDI BOI with Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts and in partnership with First Unitarian Church of Dallas. Additional support for the production comes from collaborating partners and sponsors Texas Instruments, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), and Capital One, which has national lead funding support from the Theater Communications Group and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

Over the past 15 years, DCT has offered several teen issue plays that examine topics including bullying, learning differences, teen brain development, eating disorders, and dating violence. Subject matter resources lead a discussion after each of these types of performances. At the performances, teens and parents are provided information and perspective on the topic, as well as guidance on how to navigate the inherent trauma imbedded in these situations. ANDI BOI's dialogue dinner event on February 29 is

another example of DCT's commitment to social justice topics of benefit to the community and our teens.

Theatre Communications Group (TCG) awarded DCT and its partners a grant to support the production and the events surrounding ANDI BOI as part of its second round of Audience (R)Evolution Cohort Grants. Funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the program gives awards to theater organizations to implement and refine ways to increase audience engagement and community development with a focus on young audiences. The grant will support the project's goal of building a community to support teens and their parents and encouraging conversation and understanding of transgender youth in a safe and open environment.

"I love how Bruce's use of the gaming framing device is coupled with technology to convey a relatable and powerful story. We expect everyone who sees the show to relate to ANDI and his desire for friends and his drive to do great things." Flatt said. "It is up to us to help all our children, irrespective of color, creed, or gender orientation, to have a safe space for physical growth, an environment for creative discovery, and an open door for tolerance and acceptance."

TEEN SCENE PLAYERS PRESENT

ANDI BOI

Written and Directed by Bruce R. Coleman

Co-produced with Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts
in partnership with First Unitarian Church of Dallas

February 7 – 16, 2020

Created especially for ages 13 and up and those who love them...
(Contains adult language)

Performance Dates and Times:

- Friday, February 7, 7:30 PM
- Saturday, February 8, 1:30 PM
- Sunday, February 9, 1:30 PM
- Sunday, February 9, 4:30 PM
- Saturday, February 15, 1:30 PM
- Sunday, February 16, 1:30 PM (ASL)

Ticket Prices: \$16 for single tickets. Prices are subject to change. Call the Box Office for details, 214-740-0051. General tickets are available online at dct.org

A weekday student matinee shows for this production is available on Wednesday, February 12. Call Dallas Children's Theater at [214-978-0120](tel:214-978-0120) or visit dct.org/fieldtrips.

Cast:

Kai – Christian Arrubla – Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts
Jeremy – Wynn Droz – Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts
Drew – Kadar Price – Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts
Hannah – Shyperia Brown – Grand Prairie Fine Arts Academy

Andi – Zander Pryor – Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts

Mrs. Winters – Jennifer Kuenzer

Mrs. Lewis – Catherine Whiteman

Mrs. Tate – Lee Jamison

Production Team:

Director & Playwright – Bruce R. Coleman

Education Director – Nancy Schaeffer

Executive Administrator – Coy Covington

Scenic Designer – Lauren Wheat

Lighting Designer – Jason Monmaney

Master Electrician – Allie Butemeyer

Costume Designer – Bruce R. Coleman

Props Designer – Kasi Flores

Sound Designer – Marco Salinas

Production Manager – Justin A. Miller

Stage Manager – Gabriela Leodiou

Production Intern – Kristen Ramirez

Photo Credit: Karen Almond

Dallas Children’s Theater

Rosewood Center for Family Arts

5938 Skillman Street

Dallas, Texas 75231

ANDI BOI partnering sponsors are: Texas Instruments, PricewaterhouseCoopers, and Capital One.

2019-20 season sponsors are: Texas Instruments, City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs, The Shubert Foundation, TACA, The William Randolph Hearst Foundation, Anonymous Family, The Carlson Foundation, March Family Foundation, and Hoblitzelle Foundation. **General sponsors include:** The Rosewood Corporation, Vibeke Jarnum & Niels Anderskov, Karen & Ken Travis, Anonymous Family, Lisa K Simmons, Elizabeth & Bart Showalter, Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau, The Theodore and Beulah Beasley Foundation, Inc., The Estate of Caroline Rose Hunt, and The Carl B. & Florence E. King Foundation. **Additional support is provided by:** Texas Commission on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, TXU Energy, Capital for Kids, Legacy Texas Bank, Frost Bank, Stephen M. Seay Foundation, Orien Levy Woolf & Dr. Jack Woolf Charitable Trust, The Eugene McDermott Foundation, Karen & Jim Wiley, The Hersh Foundation, Jennifer & Peter Altabef, Mickie & Jeff Bragalone, Holly & Tom Mayer and Maile & Charles Shea, Maintenance Inc., The Perot Foundation, Strake Foundation, Which Wich, and Green Mountain Energy, DCT’s official renewable energy partner. **Sensory-friendly sponsors include:** The Melinda & Jim Johnson Family Charitable Fund, Fichtenbaum Charitable Trust, Chi Omega Christmas Market, The Sapphire Foundation, and DCT’s Fall Family Party Contributors. **DCT’s national touring sponsor:** Neiman Marcus.

About Dallas Children’s Theater

Dallas Children’s Theater features professional actors performing for an annual audience of 250,000 young people and their families through mainstage productions (9 in the 2019-2020 season), a national -

touring company, and an arts-in-education program. As the only major organization in Dallas focusing solely on youth and family theater, DCT builds bridges of understanding between generations and cultures, instilling an early appreciation of literature, art, and the performing arts in tomorrow's artists and patrons.

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