

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Theatre Calgary brings the holiday spirit to families affected by cancer**

**Calgary** – Theatre Calgary and the Kids Cancer Care Foundation of Alberta (KCCFA) are hosting the 21<sup>st</sup> annual Cool Yule, an exclusive performance of *A Christmas Carol*, for children and families affected by cancer, taking place on Sunday, November 24.

Theatre Calgary has co-hosted this event for 20 years and has donated more than 8,000 tickets to Kids Cancer Care children and families. This special evening includes festive activities and treats for the children and families, and gifts from the cast of *A Christmas Carol* including a signed poster and an opportunity to meet the actors following the performance.

Over the years, a special story has emerged. Alanna Schwartz, who was diagnosed at age six with a form of cancer known as rhabdomyosarcoma, saw her first performance of *A Christmas Carol* at the 2002 Cool Yule. Since that first experience, she has been able to attend the show with her family nearly every season. Seventeen years later, Schwartz still finds it important to share in the evening and be there for other young children and families who are going through a similar experience.

*“Cool Yule has meant so much to me and my family over the years. I had never been to a play like A Christmas Carol before, and seeing the huge set and getting to meet all of the actors in their costumes together was truly magical,”* says Schwartz. *“It was nice to get dressed up and see all of my nurses at a fun event in party dresses instead of at the hospital. In the years since my treatment finished, I continued going to the Cool Yule event as a way to catch up with old friends from the hospital and Kids Cancer Care.”*

Stephen Hair, who is in his 31<sup>st</sup> year of performing in *A Christmas Carol* and his 26<sup>th</sup> as Ebenezer Scrooge, holds a special place in his heart for Alanna and her family.

*“Being able to perform this show for families that have been affected by cancer is an emotional and humbling experience. To come out after the show, and meet these brave young people puts life into perspective for all of us,”* says Hair. *“Over the past 16 years, I’ve had many pictures taken and chances to talk with Alanna and her family. I am so very happy that she can continue to share her experience with others. I admire her greatly.”*

Hosting this event has become a beloved holiday tradition of both Theatre Calgary and Kids Cancer Care. For many families affected by cancer, evenings like Cool Yule are the only events they can attend. Children with cancer can have dangerously low immune systems, so being exposed to the common cold or flu can be life-threatening. Forced isolation is one of the biggest challenges for families. Cool Yule gives these families a chance to take a break from their worries in a safe and festive environment. Families are able to spend time with others in their cancer journeys, connect with caregivers and most importantly spend time with their loved ones. The play itself is a reflection of what the evening is all about – kindness, generosity and family.

*“We all have friends, family or loved ones who have been impacted by cancer, so it’s important for all of us at Theatre Calgary to come together and create this magical evening,”* says Jon Jackson,

executive director of Theatre Calgary. *“This night is an example of what the arts can do for our community. It allows families a chance to set aside their worries, and experience a heartfelt and wonderful story with each other.”*

Theatre Calgary and the Kids Cancer Care greatly thank ENMAX and Fluor for their support of this event.

*“We are so grateful to Theatre Calgary and to their corporate partners ENMAX and Fluor,” says Christine McIver, Founder and CEO of Kids Cancer Care. “Cool Yule is a cherished tradition among our families and when I look out at the audience of smiling kids, I can’t help thinking that so many of these kids are the Tiny Tims of our world. This exclusive performance for our families is the very es-sence of Christmas and the spirit of generosity that old Scrooge comes to*

*understand.”*

**Learn more:**

- Visit [theatre Calgary.com](http://theatre Calgary.com) to explore live theatre and purchase tickets.
- Learn how KCCF helps Alberta children and families at [kidscancercare.ab.ca](http://kidscancercare.ab.ca).

Founded on July 1, 1968 Theatre Calgary is Calgary's first and largest professional theatrical company. Our mission is to stimulate, provoke, and delight through ambitious programming created to ignite local, national, and international engagement. We are a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres, and operate within the jurisdiction of the Canadian Theatre Agreement. For more information, visit us at [theatre Calgary.com](http://theatre Calgary.com) and follow us on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

[Kids Cancer Care](#) is a registered Canadian charity that supports Alberta families facing childhood cancer through a range of programs, including 1. [Research](#) and [Hospital](#); 2. [Camp](#) and [Outreach](#); and 3. [Education Support](#) and [Scholarship](#) programs. These programs are designed to meet the needs of children and families at each stage in the cancer journey, from diagnosis through treatment and beyond. With no government funding, Kids Cancer Care relies exclusively on the generosity of donors and community partners such as Theatre Calgary to provide these programs at no cost to families. [kidscancercare.ab.ca](http://kidscancercare.ab.ca)

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