



# *Cue to Cue*

## RESOURCE GUIDE

for Educators and Audience Members



**Welcome** to Cue to Cue, an educational resource guide created to help teachers, parents/guardians, and young audience members enhance the experience of watching *True North: A Magical New Holiday Musical*.

**In this guide, you will find >>**

### **About the Play**

#### **The Creators**

#### **Pre-Show Discussion Questions**

#### **Post-Show Discussion Questions**

#### **Exploration of Themes**

#### **English Language Arts Activities**

#### **Vocabulary and Definitions**

#### **Additional Resources**

#### **Florida State Standards**

## Big Themes

- Family
- Loss
- Christmas
- Military Deployments
- Autism Spectrum
- Resilience
- Magic
- Discovering what is most important

## Short Show Description

*True North, A Magical New Holiday Musical* steps inside the world of a family who finds the holidays joyful—and challenging. Faced with the uncertainty of their father's deployment, young Ben and his big sister's already turbulent lives are shaken again. With a wish, a letter, and some unique seasonal help, the Patterson family discovers what just an ounce of belief can do. *True North* is a magical and insightful story about being authentic, accepting change, and holding an unwavering hope in the magic of Christmas. This is a developmental production with a journey towards Broadway with book and lyrics by Holly Reed and music by Holly Reed and Kelvin Reed.

## Full Synopsis

### Act 1

#### A Few Years Ago

It is December 1st and both the Patterson family, in their hometown, and the elves in the North Pole prepare for Christmas

(THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS). Ben Patterson is on the autism spectrum and prefers routine, so annual Christmas celebrations are comforting despite loud noises. His sister Kami, Dad, and Mom (who is battling cancer), all attend the tree lighting with him. He carries his stuffed elf Charley. When things get overstimulating at the festival, he is shocked when Charley comes to life. Charley freezes the world around them and adjusts the lights and sounds to accommodate Ben.

#### December Again

Time passes and Carol dies. The family tries to keep up traditions, but are unable to do so without her. Harry gets called up for a military deployment. Kami is forced to leave Yale to return home to take care of Ben while their father is gone. As she is packing up her college life and Harry prepares to leave the next day, they wish they did not have to leave (LET'S FLY).

When Harry reveals he does not know where or for how long the deployment will last, Kami is furious and Ben gets worked up. Kami needs to be back at school in four weeks and Ben was counting on their planned trip to High Falls. To calm Ben down, Harry gives him a special compass (TRUE NORTH). With a little help from magnets, Harry shows Ben that the compass will point to wherever Harry is located. Before he leaves, he puts the compass around Charley's neck.

Harry leaves. As Kami looks around her childhood home, she has a flashback. The

family is all together and Ben is lost in the woods. He knows to stay where he is and the family finds him. Kami shows him how to make markers out of pine cones so he will not lose his way again. Kami is thrust back to the present when Ben refuses to leave his special lookout at the window. She vows that things will improve under her watch.

### **Fort McCoy Air Force Base, Greenland**

When Harry arrives at his post at the Fort McCoy Airforce Base in Greenland, he is given his orders. They must restore the power at the base. (REST UP YE MERRY GENTLEMEN). Out in the snow storm, Harry sees a source of power. He heads there alone to see if they can use it for the base.

### **Snap's Barn at the North Pole**

Harry enters the barn and Snap, an elf sees and initiates an alarm. Hiding from sight, he calls for backup. Charley, the live elf, enters wearing the compass and recognizes Harry. Harry calls out, looking for a generator. The elves continue to hide and do not respond. When Skittle, another elf arrives, Snap convinces her and Charley to keep this security breach to themselves (IN THE DARK).

### **Patterson Home, a Week Later**

Kami tries to get Ben to help her with chores. She asks him when he will outgrow Christmas. This creates an outburst. He is convinced Kami knows when their dad will be back and in his frustration destroys the Christmas decorations (TELL ME).

Charley tells Ben that if he wants his dad home for Christmas, Christmas must be there to come home to. They decide he should write to Santa (JOLLY OLD ST. NICHOLAS). With help from Charley, Ben writes a letter to Santa, asking for his dad's return, but he writes High Falls instead of his home address. Charley tries to convince him not to go alone, but Ben is resolute. He does agree to tell Kami, which makes Charley feel better.

Kami writes to Harry and explains that Ben's behavior has regressed (SAY SOMETHING). Ben tries to speak and ask Kami to go, but he is unable to use his words. When he points to High Falls on the map, she says no.

### **North Pole Central Intelligence**

Harry lies unconscious at the North Pole Central Intelligence. Charley brought him there instead of letting him freeze in the storm. When he wakes up, he does not believe where he is (THE BEST KEPT SECRET (THAT EVERYBODY KNOWS)). Harry notices Ben's nametag on Charley and is so confused.

### **Christmas Eve, Patterson Home**

Ben waits for Kami to begin studying in her room before decorating the entire living room with homemade decorations (MAKE IT HAPPEN). Once satisfied, he grabs his coat, Charley, the compass, and his headphones before leaving for High Falls. Meanwhile, back at the North Pole, Harry is reminded just how much his kids need him at home. Kami sees the outside door is open and realizes Ben is gone.

## Act 2

The elves Snap, Charley, and Agent Skittle are looking through letters to Santa at the North Pole Accounting Center (KIDS THESE DAYS). Agent Skittle is not pleased to be supervising the task, but somehow by the end, Snap and Charley trick her into completing the task on her own. Meanwhile, Kami is on the phone with the police reporting Ben missing. She goes into his room looking for clues (IF I WERE BEN). Finally, she climbs up into his favorite spot and finds the letter he wrote to Santa. At the same time, Charley finds Ben's letter and the elves discover he is in High Falls. After some debate of the ethics (they signed a Wish Privacy Disclosure afterall), they decide they need to tell Harry.

The elves go back to where Harry is being held and tell him about Ben. Ben is all alone at High Falls. Harry is frantic to get to him. The elves leave to discuss what they should do and an overwhelmed Harry tears down the Christmas decorations around him. Carol enters and reminds Harry that he does not have to be perfect to be someone's hero, just himself (SAY SOMETHING REPRISE). Snap and Charley return with a plan to use Santa's sleigh (THE BEST KEPT SECRET REPRISE).

### High Falls

As Ben hikes the High Falls trail, he leaves trail markers like Kami taught him. Tossing his headphones, he spins through nature in sensory bliss (SENSATIONAL). He loses control and drops Charley and the compass into a ravine. Frightened, he hides in a small cave.

### Sleigh Barn

Snap, Charley, and Harry all prepare to take Santa's sleigh. Without reindeer, they will use the backup engine. Charley secretly sneaks the compass in Harry's pocket. When Harry gets on the sleigh, the Magic Meter starts to flicker. The compass, originally from the North Pole is the key to the sleigh flying! They decide to go with it (THE DAY WE HIJACKED SANTA'S SLEIGH). The compass navigates them to High Falls, pointing to the thing Harry loves the most (his kids or his True North).

### High Falls

Kami is determined to find Ben and starts out on the trail (YOU CAN'T OUTGROW CHRISTMAS). Carol appears and blows the snow off a trail marker Ben made. Kami follows them and gains momentum. She finds the Charley doll and knows she is headed in the right direction. She hears Ben say, "Come Find Me." She does and they embrace. She gives him Charley, but they are unable to find the compass. Ben convinces Kami that their father will be here and she believes them. They keep hiking to the top of the mountain.

Harry and the elves arrive. Harry follows the compass and reaches the top of the mountain where Ben and Kami watch the northern lights. They embrace and recognize the only important thing is their family. Harry gives Ben the compass (FINALE). The happy family freezes when Charley appears to tell Ben about a little problem at the bottom of the mountain. The sleigh will not fly. Ben gives him the compass. Agent Skittle arrives as backup. They fly!



## The Creators

**HOLLY REED** (Book, Lyrics, Music) is the owner and Creative Director of Reed Creative Group and MusicalWriters.com. An avid encourager of new artists and entrepreneurs, Holly enjoys challenging others to live with authenticity and be bold in the pursuit of their dreams. Holly (along with husband/composer Kelvin Reed) wrote the upcoming TRUE NORTH, A MAGICAL NEW HOLIDAY MUSICAL (2019 York Developmental Reading Series, 2021 CNU New Musicals Lab, 2021 Red Mountain Theatre Human Rights New Works Festival, 2022 IAMT New Musicals Lab). Holly and Kelvin wrote "That's What Friends Do" for GIRLHOOD THE MUSICAL (Larry Little/CPA Theatricals), and the grade school musical CAMP MCAULIFFE. Holly is a member of ASCAP and the Dramatists Guild and holds a BFA in design and music from the University of Texas at Arlington.

**KELVIN REED** (Music) has served as a music and worship pastor for over 25 years. He is an avid pianist, composer, and arranger and has produced and directed several choral recording projects. His choirs have performed in Chicago, New Orleans (with Lenny Kravitz), New York City, St. Louis, and Washington, D.C. He has also been music director for numerous theatre productions. Kelvin was co-composer (along with wife Holly) for "That's What Friends Do" for GIRLHOOD THE MUSICAL by Larry Little, CAMP MCAULIFFE, and TRUE NORTH, A MAGICAL NEW HOLIDAY MUSICAL.

**SUE GILAD/LARRY ROGOWSKY** (Producing Consultants) are Tony Award-winning theatre producers. They are passionate about arts education and are the founders of Broadway Custom. Broadway credits include: ANGELS IN AMERICA (Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play); MOULIN ROUGE! (Tony Award for Best Musical); JAGGED LITTLE PILL, COMPANY (Tony Award for Best Revival of a Musical), NATASHA, PIERRE & THE GREAT COMET OF 1812 (nominated for 12 Tony Awards); M. BUTTERFLY; DISASTER! THE MUSICAL, and SIGNIFICANT OTHER. Off-Broadway: THE OTHER JOSH COHEN. [www.InFineCompany.com](http://www.InFineCompany.com)

Source: <https://truenorthmusical.com/creative-team/>

**RICHARD H. BLAKE** (Music) (Director) is an American musical actor who has made a name for himself on Broadway by starring in various roles over the years. Throughout his career, Blake has performed in major productions including JERSEY BOYS, WICKED (Fiyero), LEGALLY BLOND (original Warner), THE WEDDING SINGER (original Glen Guglia), A BRONX TALE (original Lorenzo), HAIRSPRAY (Link Larkin), AIDA (Radames), SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER (Tony Manero), RENT (Roger), MATILDA (Sergei), THE PRINCE OF CENTRAL PARK (Prince), MACBETH (Boy Macduff), THE SOUND OF MUSIC (Friedrich), TEDDY AND ALICE (Archie). National Tours: WICKED (Fiyero), SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER (Tony Manero), FOOTLOOSE (Chuck Cranston), and THE SOUND OF MUSIC (Rolf). Blake was born in 1975, in Providence, Rhode Island. After gaining years of experience as a child actor, his first Broadway debut took place at the Minskoff Theater in 1987. He played the part of Archie Roosevelt in the production TEDDY AND ALICE. The following year, he appeared on Broadway again but this time as Boy McDuff in MACBETH. After this production, Blake starred as the title character in PRINCE OF CENTRAL PARK. At just 14, he had become the youngest performer on Broadway to have his name written above the title of a show. Blake is now directing, including the world premiere of TRUE NORTH, A MAGICAL NEW HOLIDAY MUSICAL.

## Pre-Show Discussion Questions

The following conversation starters will help you think about the themes in *True North: A Magical New Holiday Musical*, as well as make some predictions about the production itself. Discuss the following before you join us at the theatre.

1. In the musical, the characters are reminded of what is most important in life. What is your “true north” or thing you love the most?
2. The play explores Christmas traditions. What holiday, family traditions, or annual traditions do you love the most and why?
3. What are your wishes for the season and why?

Standards: LAFS.K-8.RL.1.1, LAFS.K-8.RL.1.2, LAFS.K-8.RL.1.3



## Post-Show Discussion Questions

We hope you enjoyed Orlando Repertory Theatre's production of *True North: A Magical New Holiday Musical*. Discuss the following questions after attending the performance.

1. What was *True North: A Magical New Holiday Musical* about? Describe the beginning, middle, and end. What was the climax of the story? Why? If you had to summarize the play in one sentence, what would it be?
2. What did you notice when you first entered the theatre? Describe the stage.
3. *True North: A Magical New Holiday Musical* takes place in present-day, as well as, magical locations like the North Pole. Did the set and scenery help establish the show's location or time? What specific things did you notice about the set and stage lights: color, shape, texture? Did you notice anything about the set or lights that you thought was unique?
4. What did you notice about the actors and their performances? How did they use their voices and bodies to bring the characters to life?
5. Which character do you relate to the most? Why? What words describe that character?

Standards: LAFS.K-8.RL.1.1, LAFS.K-8.RL.1.2, LAFS.K-8.RL.1.3, LAFS.K-8.RL.2.6, LAFS.K-8.RI.1.2, TH.K.C.2.1, TH.K.C.3.2, TH.1.C.2.2, TH.1.S.3.2, TH.2.O.2.1, TH.3.C.1.2, TH.3.C.2.2, TH.3.O.2.1, TH.3.O.1.2, TH.3.S.1.3, TH.3.S.3.3, TH.4.O.1.1, TH.4.C.3.1, TH.4.S.1.1, TH.4.S.1.3, TH.4.S.3.3, TH.5.O.1.1, TH.5.O.1.3, TH.5.O.3.1, TH.5.S.1.3, TH.5.S.3.3, TH.68.O.1.2, TH.68.S.2.3, TH.68.H.1.5







families experiencing a deployment.  
[Resources and ideas can be found here.](#)

## > SENSORY FRIENDLY PERFORMANCES AND AUTISM

In *True North: A Magical New Holiday Musical*, Ben is identified as someone who has autism.

### What is Autism?

According to the CDC, Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability caused by differences in the brain. We still have much to learn about these causes and how they impact people with ASD. People with ASD often have problems with social communication and interaction, and restricted or repetitive behaviors or interests. People with ASD may also have different ways of learning, moving, or paying attention. It is important to note that some people without ASD might also have some of these symptoms.

At the beginning of the musical, Ben becomes overwhelmed at the Annual Tree Lighting Festival. The sounds, lights, and crowd proves to be too much for him. In this moment, his stuffed elf, Charley, comes to life. Charley uses magic to adjust the sounds and lights in order to accommodate Ben and support him and his needs.

Did you know that Orlando Repertory Theatre uses our own creative approach to theatre to make accommodations

## Exploration of Themes in *True North: A Magical New Holiday Musical*

### > MILITARY DEPLOYMENTS

Not only do Kami and Ben experience the loss of their mother in the story of *True North: A Magical New Holiday Musical*, they must say goodbye to their father, as well. Military deployments impact the entire family.

Sesame Street has created a helpful digital resource called [Sesame Street for Military Families](#). The website includes tips for staying connected, sharing emotions, and creating routines.

Have you ever been separated from someone you love? What are some of the creative ways you have stayed connected?

There are a variety of ways to support





## > FINDING TRUE NORTH

What is a compass and how does it work?

Did you know a magnet is what makes a compass point north? All magnets have two poles, a north and a south pole. The north of one magnet is attracted to the south of another magnet. The Earth itself is a magnet and therefore the north end of a compass magnet aligns with the Earth's magnetic field. Because the Earth's magnetic North Pole attracts the "north" ends of other magnets, it is technically the "South Pole" of our planet's magnetic field.

While a compass is a great tool for navigation, it does not always point exactly north. This is because the Earth's magnetic North Pole is not the same as "true north," or the Earth's geographic North Pole. The magnetic North Pole lies about 1,000 miles south of true north, in Canada (source).

The characters in the play find their "true north," or what they love most in the world by the end of the musical. The compass is an important object in the story, pointing the characters in the right direction. What in your life acts as a compass, something to help guide you - this could be a person, place, or thing?

for those that might need it? Orlando REP provides something called Sensory Friendly Performances for select shows in the season. These performances are designed to provide an accommodating and supportive experience for families with individuals with Autism, sensory differences, and other special needs who process sensory information differently. Our amazing production teams work together to make adjustments to the lights, sounds, and effects for these select performances.

One of Orlando REP's core values is inclusion. This program is one way we can ensure young people like Ben can join us and experience the magic of live theatre.

# ELA Activities by Grade

## K-2nd Grade Activity:

Draw a picture of a compass. What are three words to describe this object?

## 3rd-5th Grade Activity: Writing

In the musical, Ben has a special place by a window where he goes to feel safe. Do you have a special place in your house? What makes it special to you? Write a description of your place. What does it look like? What makes it comfortable or safe? What do you do there? Use as many descriptive details as you can.

Advanced Extension: Using the directions, North, East, South, West, describe the different aspects of your space. For example, facing North, you will see my very favorite pillow. When you turn South, you will see the door to get into my tree house. Practice using directions in your description of your special place.

## Middle & High School Activity: Writing

Write a thank you letter to a teacher, mentor, guide, friend. This should be someone who has made a significant impact in your life, a compass if you will. Take your time and use descriptive details and examples about their impact on you. Send the letter in the mail. Who knows what the power of this action might mean for someone?

Standards: WL.K12.AH.5.7



# Vocabulary and Definitions in *True North: A Magical New Holiday Musical*

**cheer**

cheerfulness, optimism, or confidence

**deployed**

move (troops or equipment) into position for military action

**classified**

designated as officially secret and to which only authorized people may have access

**compass**

an instrument containing a magnetized pointer which shows the direction of magnetic north and bearings from it

**disguise**

give (someone or oneself) a different appearance in order to conceal one's identity

**bustle**

move in an energetic or noisy manner

**generator**

machine for converting mechanical energy into electricity

**northern lights**

another name for the aurora borealis or a natural electrical phenomenon characterized by the appearance of streamers of reddish or greenish light in the sky, usually near the northern or southern magnetic pole

**defiance**

open resistance; bold disobedience

**conceal**

keep from sight; hide

**autism**

a developmental disorder of variable severity that is characterized by difficulty in social interaction and communication and by restricted or repetitive patterns of thought and behavior

**surveillance**

close observation, especially of a suspected spy or criminal



## Additional Resources

### Books Inspired by the Season:

- *My First Kwanzaa* by Karen Katz
- *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* by Barbara Robinson
- *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* by Dr. Seuss
- *The Biggest, Best Snowman* by Margery Cuyler
- *Snowballs* by Lois Ehlert
- *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens
- *A Season of Gifts* by Richard Peck
- *The Gift of the Magi* by O'Henry
- *The Magic Menorah: A Modern Chanukah Tale* by Jane Bresbin Zalben
- *The Christmas Wish* by Lori Evert
- *The Little Christmas Elf* by Nikki Shannon Smith
- *The Christmas Tree Ship* by Carol Crane
- *Horrible Harry and the Christmas Surprise* by Suzy Kline
- *Magic Tree House #44: A Ghost Tale for Christmas Time* by Mary Pope Osborn
- *The House Without a Christmas Tree* by Gail Rock
- *The Polar Express* by Chris Van Allsburg
- *Grumpy Badger's Christmas* by Paul Bright
- *Snow in Jerusalem* by Deborah Da Costa
- *Fireside Stories* by Caitlin Matthews
- *Seven Spools of Thread: A Kwanzaa Story* by Angela Medearis
- *Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer* by Robert L. May

### Movies Inspired by the Season:

- *Home Alone*  
(Twentieth Century Fox, 1990)
- *A Charlie Brown Christmas*  
(Lee Mendelson Film Productions, 1965)
- *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*  
(Regency Home Video, 1983)
- *The Christmas Shoes*  
(Gaia - Entertainment, 2006)
- *The Christmas Blessing*  
(Gaia - Entertainment, 2007)
- *Christmas Hope*  
(Gaia - Entertainment, 2010)
- *A Christmas Story*  
(Warner Brothers, 1983)
- *A Christmas Story 2*  
(Warner Premier, 2012)
- *Elf*  
(New Line Cinema, 2003)
- *The Polar Express*  
(Castle Rock Entertainment, 2009)
- *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*  
(The Cat in the Hat Productions, 1966)
- *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*  
(Universal Studios, 2000)
- *The Santa Clause*  
(Walt Disney, 1994)

# Florida State Standards

Detailed list of Florida State Standards satisfied by using this guide and attending Orlando REP's production of *True North: A Magical New Holiday Musical*.

## Language Arts Florida Standards

(Text refers to the play, the script, or the content in this guide.)

### Reading/Text Analysis Standards:

LAFS.K-8.RI.1.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

LAFS.K-8.RI.1.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

LAFS.K-8.RI.1.3 Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text.

LAFS.K-8.RI.3.7 Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

LAFS.K-8.RI.1.2 Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral.

LAFS.K-8.RI.1.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

LAFS.K-8.RI.2.6 Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.

LAFS.K-8.RI.1.2 Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

### Vocabulary Standards:

LAFS.2-8.L.3.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 3 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

LAFS.2-8.L.3.5 Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

### Writing Standards:

LAFS.K-8.W.1.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

WL.K12.AH.5.7 Write creative pieces (poetry, narratives, and plays) using effective imagery and the appropriate literary devices to genre.

### Theatre Arts:

TH.K.C.2.1 Respond to a performance and share personal preferences about parts of the performance.

TH.K.C.3.2 Share reactions to a live theatre performance.

TH.1.C.2.2 Identify elements of an effective performance.

TH.1.S.3.2 Describe characters and plot development discovered during dramatic play.

TH.2.O.2.1 Re-tell what happened in the beginning, middle, and end of a story after viewing a play.

TH.3.C.1.2 Watch a play and describe how the elements of light, costumes, props, and sound influence the mood of the production.

TH.3.C.2.2 Discuss the meaning of an artistic choice to support development of critical thinking and decision-making skills.

TH.3.O.2.1 Describe what happened in a play, using age-appropriate theatre terminology.

TH.3.O.1.2 Discuss why costumes and makeup are used in a play.

TH.3.S.1.3 Evaluate a performance, using correct theatre terms, and give specific examples to support personal opinions.

TH.3.S.3.3 Describe elements of dramatic performance that produce an emotional response in oneself or an audience.

TH.4.O.1.1 Describe what a designer and director do to support the actor in creating a performance.

TH.4.C.3.1 Identify the characteristics of an effective acting performance.

TH.4.S.1.1 Exhibit proper audience etiquette, give constructive criticism, and defend personal responses.

TH.4.S.1.3 Use theatre terms to evaluate a live performance and discuss the qualities that directly impacted the audience's response to the production.

TH.4.S.3.3 Describe elements of dramatic and technical performance that produce an emotional response in oneself or an audience.

TH.5.O.1.1 Explain an actor's choices in the creation of a character for a scene or play.

TH.5.O.1.3 Evaluate how an actor or designer's choices about a character affect the audience's understanding of a play.

TH.5.O.3.1 Describe a variety of theatrical methods and/or conventions that a group of individuals can use to communicate with audiences.

TH.5.S.1.3 Evaluate a performance, using theatre terminology, and articulate emotional responses to the whole and parts of dramatic performances.

TH.5.S.3.3 Use elements of dramatic and technical performance designed to produce an emotional response in an audience.

TH.68.O.1.2 Discuss how color, line, shape, and texture are used to show emotion in technical theatre elements.

TH.68.S.2.3 Analyze the relationships of plot, conflict, and theme in a play and transfer the knowledge to a play that contrasts in style, genre, and/or mood.

TH.68.H.1.5 Describe one's own personal responses to a theatrical work and show respect for the responses of others.