



Thursday, September 2, 2004

## Techies 'N Actors present 'The Yellow Boat'

Techies 'N Actors, a student organization comprised of students majoring in some form of theatre performance or theatre production at Oakland University, is presenting the play "The Yellow Boat" at Varner Studio Theatre from Thursday, Sept. 9, through Saturday, Sept. 11, at 8 p.m., and on Sunday, Sept. 12, at 2 p.m. Tickets, which are only available at the door, are \$10 for the general public and \$5 for students. Proceeds from the play benefit Techies 'N Actors and the Children's Division of the Hemophilia Foundation of Michigan.

Robert Arbaugh, president of Techies 'N Actors, is the first to admit that his own organization is the major recipient of benefit performances of "The Yellow Boat." "But we are a nonprofit and we really need the money," he admits. That being said, Arbaugh explains that the real motivation behind this project comes from one of the characters in the play: 8-year-old Benjamin Saar.

"The Yellow Boat" is based on the real-life story of playwright David Saar's son, Benjamin, who was born with congenital hemophilia and died in 1987 at the age of 8 due to AIDS-related complications.

In the time leading up to his early death, Benjamin began drawing and painting, creating amazingly bright and hopeful works of art born out of his journey of pain. The title of the play is from a favorite song that was a part of Benjamin's daily bedtime ritual. It is from a Scandinavian folk song about three little boats: "One was blue, one was red, and one was yellow as the sun. They sailed far out to sea. The blue one returned to the harbor. The red one sailed home, too. But the yellow boat sailed up to the sun." Benjamin would always tell his mother that he was the yellow boat.

The entire production, including the direction, is the responsibility of Techies 'N Actors. Arbaugh, a senior and theatre performance major, is making his directorial debut with this play.

"It's such a moving story. I really felt drawn to it and just wanted to do it," he said.

Out of their emotional involvement with this particular aspect of AIDS as it relates to hemophilia, the group decided to donate 10 percent of the proceeds to the Children's Division of the Hemophilia Foundation of Michigan. Arbaugh also plans to display images of Benjamin's artwork outside the theatre. He said that as part of the whole experience it is important that the people seeing the play are not only touched by Benjamin's story but also by his life's work.

For more information on tickets, contact the Varner Box Office at (248) 370-3013 or [mtd@oakland.edu](mailto:mtd@oakland.edu).

### SUMMARY

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Created by CareTech Administrator ([webservices@caretechsolutions.com](mailto:webservices@caretechsolutions.com)) on Thursday, September 2, 2004  
Modified by CareTech Administrator ([webservices@caretechsolutions.com](mailto:webservices@caretechsolutions.com)) on Thursday, September 2, 2004  
Article Start Date: Thursday, September 2, 2004