

THE GIRL WHO SWALLOWED A CACTUS

BY ERIC COBLE



STUDY GUIDE

PROVIDED BY



PERFORMANCE DETAILS & HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

“The Girl Who Swallowed a Cactus” by Eric Coble
Directed by Alex Ungerman
Featuring Rebecca Yeager

- Virtual Field Trips and Outdoor Performances available October 5th - November 20th.
- Visit www.bct123.org for more information or to book a field trip today!

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This classroom guide for *The Girl Who Swallowed a Cactus* is designed for Alabama students ranging from grades Pre-K to 6th. It offers activities to help you integrate classroom activities into English Language Arts (ELA), Science, Social Studies, and Theatre curricula.

All activities in this guide are linked to the Alabama State Department of Education content standards.

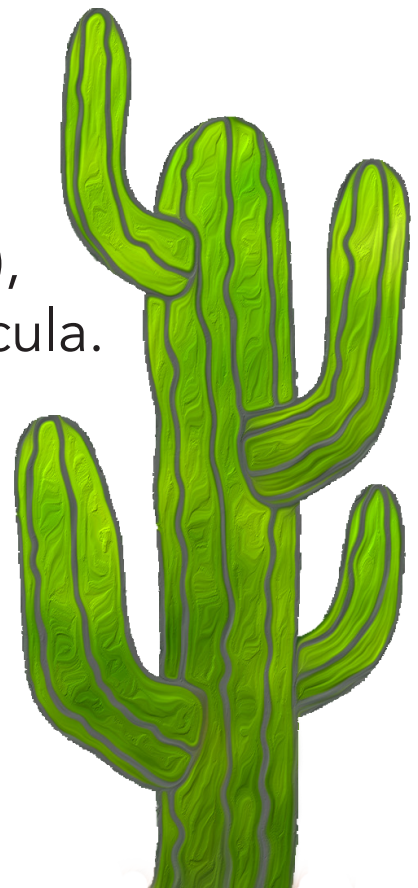


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YOUR ROLE AS THE AUDIENCE

Dear Audience Members,

Birmingham Children's Theatre is excited to welcome you as a member of our audience!

Our theatre may look a little different this year, but as always, stories create a world of imagination and fun, where the impossible comes to life. In theatre, the audience is an extremely important part of our storytelling, and we need your help to make this the best show possible for you and your fellow audience members!

While the show is happening, **DO**

- Give your full attention to the actor(s) and the story
- Feel free to laugh, gasp, and applaud!
- We might need your help, so participate when asked

And to make sure everyone can enjoy the show, we ask that you **DON'T**

- Talk to your friends and neighbors
- Wave, shout, or disrupt the performance

There will be time after the performance to talk to the actor(s) and ask questions.

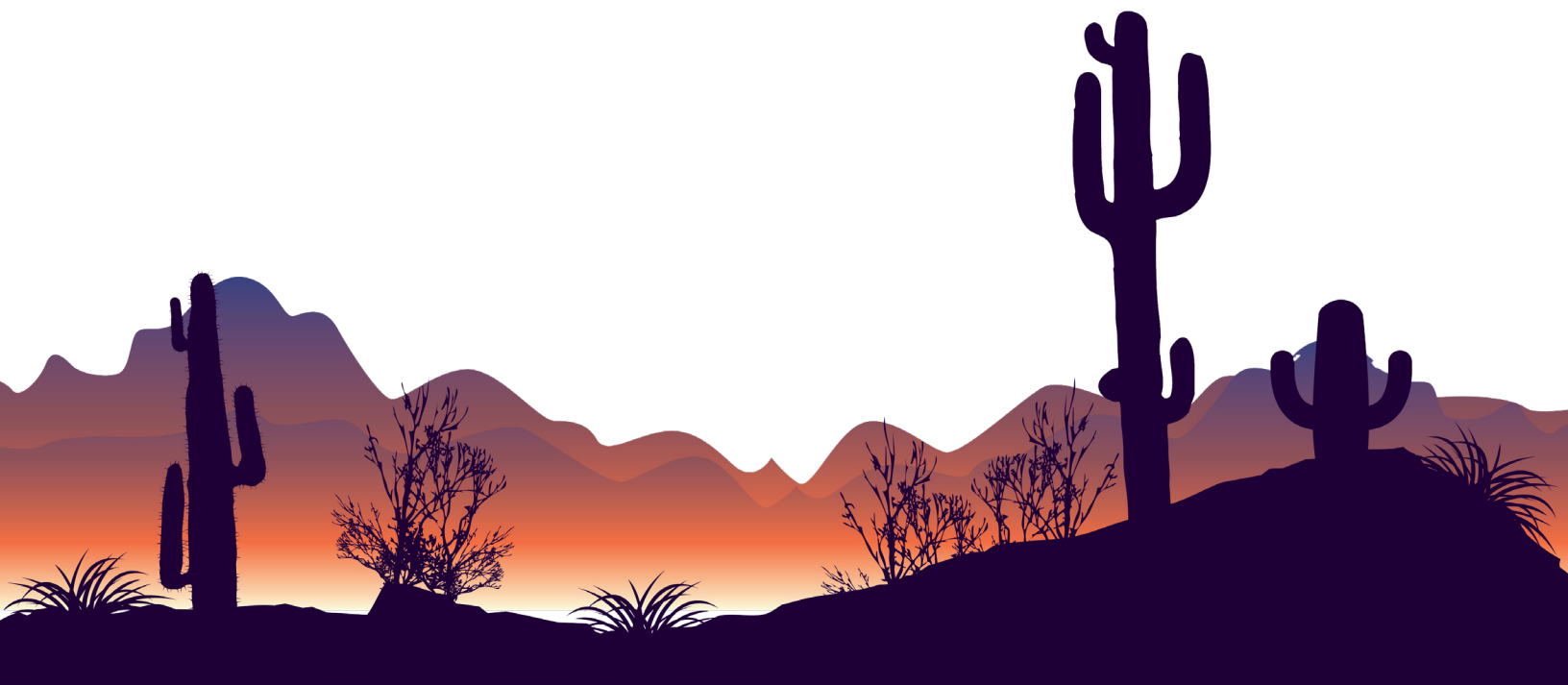
We are excited to share our production with you!

Thank you,

Birmingham Children's Theatre

PLOT SUMMARY

When school is out, there's nothing to do and the desert sun beats down hot. Sheila and her friends find themselves in search of something – anything – interesting to explore. So when a walking, talking, and surprisingly well-dressed coyote shows up, the kids find themselves on the adventure of a lifetime! Filled with magical realism and surprises at every turn, this funny story of friendship and imagination will bring the desert landscape to life.



ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

“THE GIRL WHO SWALLOWED A CACTUS” BY ERIC COBLE



Eric Coble was born in Edinburgh, Scotland. He was raised on the Navajo and Ute reservations in New Mexico and Colorado. His scripts for adults have been produced on Broadway (Tony-nominated “The Velocity of Autumn”), Off-Broadway (“Bright Ideas”), in all fifty states of the U.S., and on several continents. His plays for Young Audiences include his award-

winning adaptations of Lois Lowry’s “The Giver” and “Gathering Blue,” as well as “The Storm In The Barn,” “The Baker Street Irregulars” and a dozen other published TYA scripts which have been produced at Dallas Children’s Theatre, Childsplay, Metro Theater Company, Oregon Children’s Theatre, First Stage, Denver Center Theatre Company, Cleveland Play House, Adventure Stage, Alliance Theatre, and many others. His awards include two AATE Distinguished Play Awards for Best Adaptation, an Emmy nomination, the Chorpenning Playwriting Award for Body of Work, the AT&T Onstage Award, National Theatre Conference Playwriting Award, an NEA Playwright in Residence Grant, a TCG Extended Collaboration Grant, the Cleveland Arts Prize, two Cuyahoga Arts and Culture Fellowships, and four Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Grants.

THEATRE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which character in Sheila's group do you identify most with, and why?

2. Each one of Sheila's friends has a strength they bring to their friend group. What are some strengths you share with your friends?

3. Why do Sheila's friends follow her onto the truck, even though they feel scared?

4. Dennis made up the game of "hide-and-seeK tag" with the car headlights. Have you ever made up a game with your friends?

5. Why did the coyote and other animals want to fight with the humans?

THEATRE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONT.

6. Sheila and friends try many different tactics to stop the coyote. Which tactics work, and why?

7. Where do you think Sheila went at the end of the story?

8. What do you like to do with your friends when you play outside?

9. How do you resolve disagreements with your friends?

10. What are some ways that humans can take better care of the land that animals live on?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

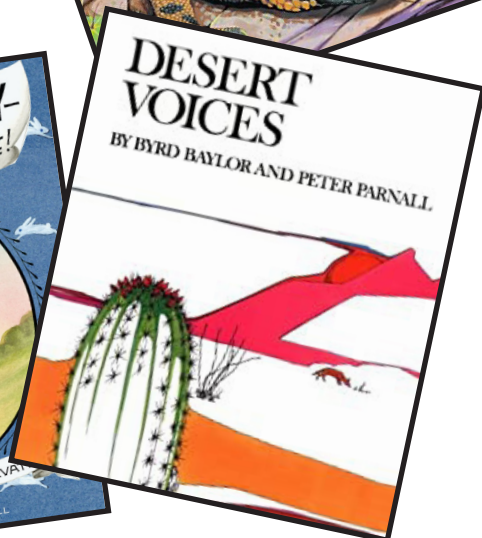
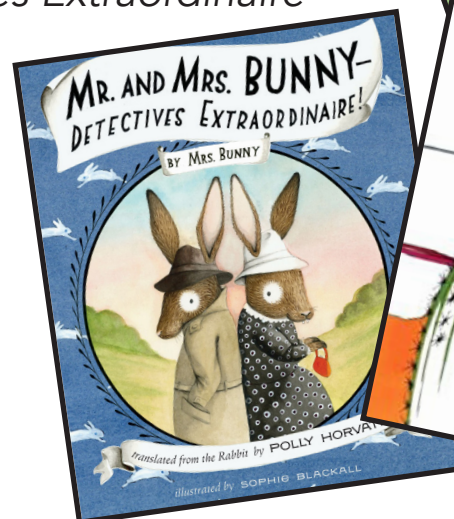
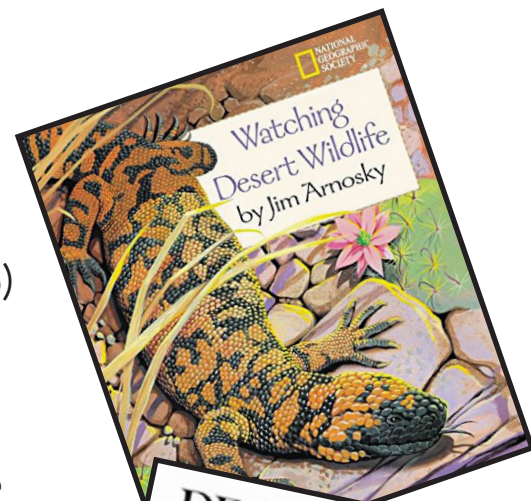
BCT MUST READS

FURTHER READING FOR EARLY READERS (K-3)

- *Borreguita and the Coyote: A Tale from Ayulta, Mexico*
by Verna Aardema
- *Watching Desert Wildlife*
by Jim Arnosky
- *The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest*
by Lynne Cherry
- *Secret Tree Fort*
by Brianne Farley
- *Coyote: A Trickster Tale from the American Southwest*
by Gerald McDermott
- *What to Do with a Box*
by Jane Yolen

FURTHER READING FOR UPPER ELEMENTARY (3-6)

- *Desert Voices*
by Byrd Baylor
- *Mr. and Mrs. Bunny – Detectives Extraordinaire*
by Polly Horvath
- *Dappled Annie and the Tigrish*
by Mary McCallum



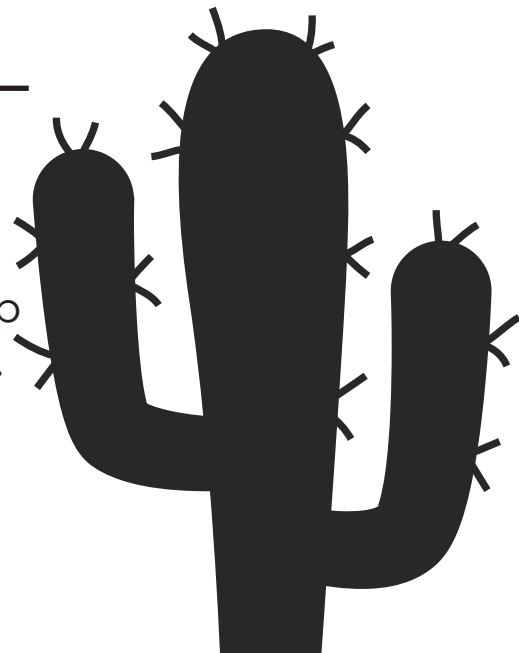
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

In *The Girl Who Swallowed the Cactus*, Coyote and the other animals try to rise up and stop humans from taking over more land. As the human population has grown, we have built more cities and towns, and in the process we have destroyed many animal habitats. Environmentalism is a movement that encourages people to think about the way our actions impact the world around us. Across the world young people have found ways to stand up for the environment and make their community eco-friendly.

What changes could you start making in your home or school to be more environmentally friendly?

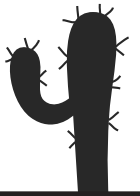
What are ways the community can work together to be more environmentally friendly? Create a map of a sustainable town using the space on page 11.



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT CONT.

Brainstorm different things a town might include to be environmentally friendly: a recycling plant, a bike, a community garden, etc. Then, start designing your map in the space below!



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

THIS IS A...

Sheila, Dennis, Leon and the twins take the “junk” they find and use it to build their very own city. Where grown-ups saw leftover metal that was ready for the trash, our adventurers saw an opportunity. They made the ordinary extraordinary as they reclaimed junk on the side of the road and turned it into something new.

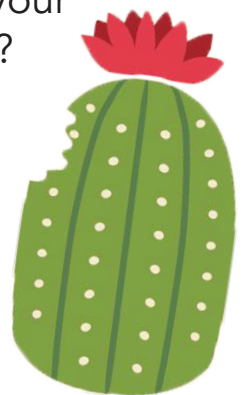
Practice making your own transformations!

- Take an everyday object that you have in your classroom. This object could be a roll of tape, a book, a pen, or any object you would like to see transformed!
- Gather students in a standing up circle. Take turns transforming your chosen object into something new by pantomiming how you might use it. The object can be used for anything other than its intended purpose. (For example, a pencil may become a baseball bat or a magic wand.)
- As one student pantomimes using the object, have the rest of the class make guesses about what the object has been transformed into.
- If time allows, go around the circle again with a different object!

OR

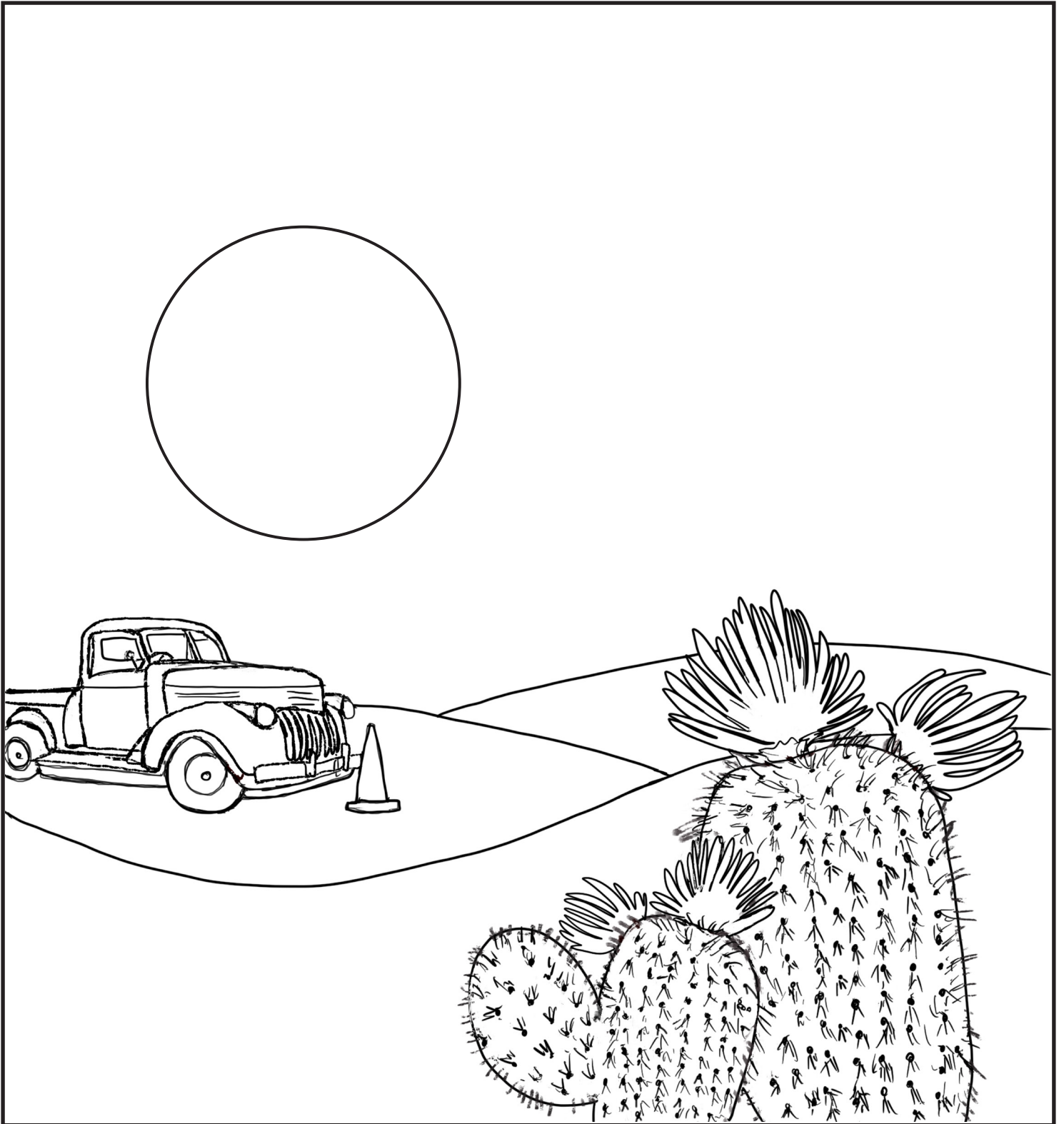
The storyteller in the show used found objects to portray her friends.

- Find an everyday object and write a story about its day. What is your object’s name? Where do they live? Do they belong to someone? Does your object have friends? What kind of adventure did your object go on today?
- Write your story or, even better, be ready to dramatically tell the tale to your classmates!



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

COLORING SHEET



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

THANK YOU LETTER

This show would not be possible without Medical Properties Trust and the Alabama State Council on the Arts. Their support provides opportunities for students across Alabama - just like YOU - to see this show, and we are extremely grateful. Help us thank them by writing your own letter! Did you enjoy the show? How did it make you feel? Did you laugh? Would you like to see another show in the future? Our sponsors would love to hear from you.

Letters may be sent to Birmingham Children's Theatre and will be forwarded to our sponsors.

Birmingham Children's Theatre
P.O. Box 1362.
Birmingham, AL 35201



Medical Properties Trust



Alabama
State
Council
on the
Arts

POST SHOW RESPONSE

Here at BCT we strive to Educate, Enrich and Entertain the lives of children through the magic of professional theatre. Please use this guide as a reflection on the performance you have seen and send it back to BCT so we can make your next experience magical!

Dear (who was your favorite character?) _____,

I am (how old are you?)_____ and I am in the _____ grade at (what school do you attend?)_____. I saw your performance of _____ on _____(day) _____ (month) _____(year)! I thought the play was (how did the play make you feel and why?) _____

_____. My favorite part of the play was (what was something that was real to you?) _____

I really liked the character because (what made you like them?) _____
_____. The set looked like (what did you see?) _____

The music sounded like (what did you hear?) _____

Something else I loved about the play was _____
_____. I would really love to see (what is a play that you think is fun?)_____

_____ performed next at Birmingham Children's Theatre.

Love,

(what is your name?)_____



BIRMINGHAM
CHILDREN'S
T H E A T R E

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

QUESTIONS? CONTACT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, JESSIE KISOR

jessie@bct123.org

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