

## **Citadel Theatre's Statement on Representation, in recognition of International Day of Persons with Disabilities**

Today, on December 3, The Citadel Theatre would like to acknowledge the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

The Citadel Theatre recognizes the importance of authentic representation of different bodies and abilities on stage and in the stories we tell. As we look to the future of *A Christmas Carol*, it is our priority that an actor with lived experience of disability and/or chronic illness be sought to play "Tim" in subsequent productions of Dickens' classic story.

To be truly inclusive for disabled artists takes time, energy, and investment in reimagining building structures and creative processes; it must be done well to ensure barriers are removed to provide a welcoming and effective working space for all. We have spent the last six months putting plans in place to host a disabled actor in the role in our Maclab Theatre, including community consultations, space audits, staff training in disability awareness, and fundraising for renovations. We recognize that this will be ongoing work with constant reflection and investment in resources.

The Citadel would like to extend our sincere gratitude to those that provided paid consult on this project over the last six months and have worked to hold us accountable in our commitments: Kelsie Acton, Kristi Hansen, Carly Neis with Cynthia Jimenez-Hicks, Alison Neuman, Trish Cooper and Isaac Vint. We would like to thank the Edmonton Community Foundation for making a commitment of \$100 000 in matching funding towards the much-needed accessibility renovations within our building.

Older buildings like The Citadel Theatre are filled with significant barriers to participation for disabled artists and audience members alike, from a lack of accessible seating options to stairwells without lift access, insufficient washroom options, and aging elevators. We are working diligently to secure additional funding to update our building so all can feel welcome, safe, and independent. If you or your business would like to join us in this endeavour, please contact Sydney Stuart, Fund Development Director, at [sstuart@citadeltheatre.com](mailto:ssstuart@citadeltheatre.com).

After the last six months of work, including an incredible region-wide audition process, we are so excited to introduce you to our "Tim" for the 2022 production of *A Christmas Carol*: 9-year-old Elias Martin! Elias loves LEGO and playing frisbee! Elias and his family will be joining us in 2021 to see behind the scenes, watch the show, and to start working with the Citadel team in preparation for next year's production.

Welcome, Elias! We can't wait for your debut next December!



[Image Description:

Photo 1: Elias, a young 9 year old boy with fair skin is climbing on a dark grey and red playground. An unseen adult's hand is holding Elias' hand. Elias is wearing a blue shirt, blue jeans, and a grey hat with a yellow and black dinosaur skull on it. He is smiling with a toothy grin and has a look of excitement in his eyes.

Photo 2: Elias, a young 9 year old boy, and his mother, Cecile, are standing centre stage in the Maclab Theatre. They both have huge grins on their faces. They are tiny compared to the giant scale of the empty theatre.]