

***Ordinary People* at Clayton Community Theatre, March 23 – April 2, 2023**

Clayton Community Theatre (CCT - www.placeseveryone.org) continues its 24th season with *Ordinary People* by Nancy Gilsenan, adapted from the novel by Judith Guest and directed by Jessica Johns Kelly.

Performances of *Ordinary People* are Thurs-Sun, March 23 – April 2, 2023 (8:00 pm Thurs-Sat; 2:00 pm Sun) at Washington University South Campus Theatre, 6501 Clayton Rd, Clayton MO 63117. Tickets: \$15-\$25 (discounts for season tickets, group sales, seniors and students) - available via [SimpleTix](https://www.SimpleTix.com), or from CCT online at www.placeseveryone.org or by phone at 314-721-9228. Financial assistance for this project has been provided by the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency.

Beautifully written, poignant and honest in its presentation, *Ordinary People* looks unblinkingly at profound depths of denial and guilt, the pain of acceptance and the path toward redemption and healing. There are powerful themes of alienation, psychological self-discovery, and coming of age.

A boating accident has claimed the life of Bucky - the eldest son in the Jarrett family - and the simple roadmap of “ordinary” family life has been effectively obliterated. The struggle to cross the gulf created by this tragedy is the central challenge for Bucky’s younger brother, Conrad, and his parents, Beth and Calvin - a challenge that threatens to destroy what’s left of the crumbling family. Conrad is riddled with grief and misplaced guilt. The mother is remote, the father is confused and emotional.

Looming over virtually every scene of the play is the absent son, a reminder that extraordinary demands are the essence of “ordinary” life and indeed are the litmus test that defines us all.

Audiences may be familiar with the 1980 movie of *Ordinary People*, a four-time Oscar-winner by actor-director Robert Redford. The novel and screenplay were adapted to a stage production by playwright Nancy Gilsenan.

Making her CCT debut, *Ordinary People* director Jessica Johns Kelly has performed and directed in the local community theater for some 20 years, with many productions to her credit. “It’s a privilege to be able to help tell this intimate story about a family struggling just to survive after great tragedy, and the fragile relationships between these people,” says Kelly. “I saw the film as a child, and it had a great impact on me, because it is such an honest portrayal of a family in crisis. I think that how the characters handle their grief in different ways can resonate with many. I think the portrayal of a mother with emotional limitations is an interesting part of the story. Beth cannot give what her son needs from her because she is just not capable.”

Kelly continues, “The story shows us that people have flaws and that not everyone comes out of such a great loss intact. It’s not all, ‘Everything will work out’ - at least, not in the way of a fairytale ending – but that’s OK, because it’s authentic and human. I love how the play portrays Conrad’s journey and his work to get to the other side of his guilt and despair.”

The story of *Ordinary People* is set in 1980, and the production will have a period vibe, down to the music, costumes and hairstyles. “It’s a story I’ve wanted to do for years and years,” says Kelly. “I’m really excited and grateful to bring *Ordinary People* to life.”

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Cast

Conrad Jarrett – Jeremy Schnelt
Cal Jarrett – Alex Alderson
Beth Jarrett – Tracy Murphy
Dr. Berger – Brad Kinzel
Kevin Stillman – Tyler Webster
Joe Lazenby – Tyler Crandall
Jeannine Pratt – Nadja Kapetanovich
Karen Aldrich – Sarah Vallo
Coach Salan – Tim Naegelin

About CCT

Clayton Community Theatre was founded in 1998 and the 2022-2023 season is its 24th season. The second show of the season is *Ordinary People*, by Nancy Gilsean adapted from a novel by Judith Guest, directed by Jessica Johns Kelly, March 23 – April 2, 2023. The final show of the season will be *Murder on the Nile*, by Agatha Christie, directed by Nada Vaughn May 25 – June 4, 2023.

Covid policy

All auditioners, cast, and crew will be required to use masks when off stage. For everyone’s protection, Clayton Community Theatre asks audience members to continue to be masked while in the theatre.

Members of the press: Promotional photos and more information are on the [CCT Media Resources Page](#). Media contact: Nathan Schroeder, media@placeseveryone.org; tel. 314-721-9228.