



STUDENT
MATINEE
PROGRAM

Discovery Guide

THE REMARKABLE TRUE STORY

COME FROM AWAY

Come From Away is the remarkable true story of 7,000 stranded passengers and the small town in Newfoundland that welcomed them.

**“THE MUSICAL...
IS ABOUT TERRORISM’S
MORTAL ENEMY: LOVE.”**

—Washington Post *Drama Critic Peter Marks*

On the morning of September 11, 2001, four American commercial jets, flying non-stop from the East Coast of the United States to the West Coast, were hijacked by terrorists.

As a result, the United States closed all of its airspace. This meant 4,500 planes had to change flight plans and find new places to land. Thirty-eight of those planes were forced to land in Gander, Newfoundland, on Canada’s northeastern border—nearly doubling the town’s population in an instant.

In the week that followed the terrorist attacks, the people of Gander opened their homes and hearts to strangers from around the world. Cultures clashed and tensions grew, but fear turned into trust, music played into the night, and gratitude grew into life-long friendships.



THE CREATION OF *COME FROM AWAY*

Many of the people who had been forced to land in Gander on 9/11 chose to return for a 10th anniversary reunion. *Come From Away's* creators, Irene Sankoff and David Hein, also attended this event. They conducted interviews and heard thousands of stories, and from these true stories created an award-winning musical that celebrates the hope that came out of the dark days of September 2001.

Director Christopher Ashley and the creative team wanted to explore how simply the story could be told. He said they began with "12 chairs and two tables and 12 actors." Every actor plays several roles, including a stranded traveler AND a citizen from Gander. They discovered that with simpler staging, the story became even more powerful.

Theatre, said Ashley, "can bring people together and create community...there's nothing I would want to be doing now other than making theatre. I think it's an extraordinary answer to some of the complicated fractures in our world right now."



The original Broadway cast of *Come From Away*. Photos by Matthew Murphy.

WELCOME TO THE ROCK!

Gander is located on "The Rock," otherwise known as Newfoundland, the 16th largest island in the world. It is located in Canada's Newfoundland and Labrador province.

Because of its remote location, Newfoundland has spent many years isolated from the rest of the world. "The Rock" contains a unique culture influenced by its English, Irish, French, and Indigenous heritage. During the show, you will hear Celtic sounds woven into the music and distinctive dialects spoken by the characters from Gander. In addition, Newfoundlanders use many terms that are specific to the region. The title of the musical is a reference to one of these. It is actually a noun meaning "a person not from Newfoundland," or a "come from away."



"ON THE NORTHEAST TIP OF NORTH AMERICA, ON AN ISLAND CALLED NEWFOUNDLAND, THERE'S AN AIRPORT—IT USED TO BE ONE OF THE BIGGEST AIRPORTS IN THE WORLD. AND NEXT TO IT, IS A TOWN CALLED GANDER. THERE'S A TWO-PERSON POLICE DEPARTMENT. AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. AN SPCA. A LOCAL TV STATION. AND A HOCKEY RINK. IT'S A SMALL PLACE—ON A GIANT ROCK IN THE OCEAN. EVERYBODY KNOWS EVERYBODY ELSE."

—*Come From Away*

UNITED STATES



We all "come from away." Where do you "come from?" It could be where you were born or your heritage, or maybe even your passions.

LOS ANGELES



"ON THE DAY OF THE WORST ACT OF MANKIND, THE PEOPLE WHO LANDED HERE SAW THE BEST OF MANKIND."

—*Gander Mayor Claude Elliott*

"THROUGH THIS JOURNEY, WE'VE LEARNED IT'S IMPORTANT TO TELL STORIES ABOUT WELCOMING STRANGERS & STORIES OF KINDNESS."

—*Playwrights Irene Sankoff and David Hein*



How do you think theatre, and other art forms, can be an answer to the complicated problems in our world today?

What else can we do to come together and create community?

I AM MUSLIM. I WAS BORN IN CONNECTICUT. I AM AMERICAN.

Because the events of 9/11 were committed by an Islamic extremist terrorist organization, many people mistakenly feared all Muslims were terrorists. Immediately after 9/11, hate crimes in the U.S. against Muslims increased by 500%. Since that time, they have never dropped below pre-9/11 levels. There has also been an increase in racial profiling, where law enforcement unfairly uses race or ethnicity as grounds for suspecting someone of having committed a crime. Today, Muslims continue to experience discrimination in many areas, from the school and the workplace to travel. Ali, and other Muslim characters in the show, are told that they don't "look American" and to "go back where you came from."



Have you ever been judged unfairly by others based on race, ethnicity, religion, or national origin?

Have you ever judged someone before getting to know them based on race, ethnicity, religion, or national origin?

A CANDLE'S IN THE WINDOW AND THE KETTLE'S ALWAYS ON.

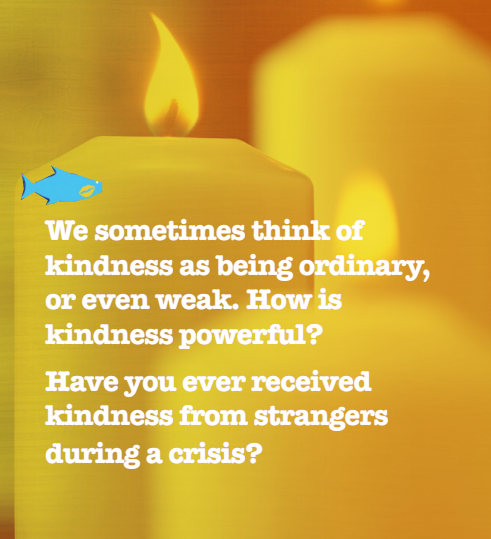
The citizens of Gander had to figure out what to do to prepare for the arrival of 7,000 people into their town of 10,000. How would they feed them? Where would they all sleep? How could they comfort people during this tragedy?

The airline passengers weren't even sure where they were when they landed in Gander. Cell phones were just becoming a part of daily life, and not everyone had them. Since the travelers had no communication with the outside world, they did not know that the terror attacks had taken place. Rumors began to fly about what had really happened. Some thought that the White House had been bombed. Others feared it was the beginning of World War III. By the time the frightened and weary travelers were allowed to exit their planes, the people of Gander were ready to provide comfort and help. The townspeople didn't think they had done anything extraordinary in opening up their town and their homes, telling the travelers "you would've done the same."



We sometimes think of kindness as being ordinary, or even weak. How is kindness powerful?

Have you ever received kindness from strangers during a crisis?



COME FROM AWAY

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

“**SEPTEMBER 11** will always be, first and foremost, a day when we remember those lost and injured in the 2001 terrorist attacks and pay tribute to the many who rose in service in response to the attacks—our firefighters and emergency medical technicians (EMTs), public safety officers, rescue and recovery workers, volunteers, and also our men and women in the armed forces.

People often ask why 9/11 Day is also about promoting unity and putting aside differences. Anyone who was alive when 9/11 happened knows the answer: The 9/11 attacks brought America together in a way not seen since World War II. In a moment, whatever differences may have existed between people throughout the country were instantly dissolved and rendered trivial compared to what we all had in common—our fundamental compassion and concern for the well-being of others.”

—911day.org

On the morning of September 11, 2001, four American commercial jets, flying non-stop from the East Coast of the United States to the West Coast, were hijacked by Al-Qaeda, an international Islamic extremist terrorist network.

The planes were intentionally crashed, killing almost 3,000 people, and injuring over 6,000 others.

- American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175 were flown into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan. This caused the collapse of the towers later that morning. At 110 stories each, the towers were the tallest buildings in New York City.
- American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon building, where the U.S. Department of Defense is headquartered, near Washington, D.C.
- United Airlines Flight 93 crashed into a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, while passengers and crew attempted to regain control of the plane from the hijackers. It is believed that this plane was headed for the Capitol building in Washington, D.C.



How much did you know about 9/11 before today?

What stories have you heard about 9/11 from older friends and relatives?

How do you imagine 9/11 continues to shape your life and the lives of others 17 years later?



9/11 Memorials in a) Pennsylvania, b) Manhattan, and c) the Pentagon.

AL-QAEDA is an extremist group that believes in a political /social order based on the Muslim religion. It uses terror to achieve this goal. The vast majority of people who practice the Muslim religion are NOT members of Al-Qaeda and do not use violence to advocate for their religion.

The victims of the 9/11 attacks came from 93 nations. They included airline passengers and crew, the hijackers, law enforcement officers, firefighters, paramedics, and civilians.

The events of this day shook the United States to its core. This was the most catastrophic attack on the continental U.S. in modern history. Today, we still live with the consequences of 9/11. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security was created in response to the terrorist attacks. Airline security has tightened. Our borders are more closely monitored. Islamophobia (prejudice against Muslims) has risen dramatically.



TIMELINE

7:59am American Airlines Flight 11, with 92 people aboard, takes off from Boston's Logan International Airport, headed to Los Angeles.

8:14am United Airlines Flight 175, with 65 people aboard, takes off from Boston, headed to Los Angeles.

8:19am Flight attendants aboard Flight 11 alert ground personnel that the plane has been hijacked; American Airlines notifies the FBI.

8:20am American Airlines Flight 77 takes off from Dulles International Airport (outside of Washington, D.C.), headed to Los Angeles with 64 people aboard.

8:42am United Airlines Flight 93, with 44 people aboard, takes off from Newark International Airport, headed to San Francisco.

8:46am Flight 11 crashes into floors 93–99 of the North Tower of the World Trade Center, killing everyone on board and hundreds inside the building.

8:47am New York Police Department and Fire Department of New York forces dispatch units to the World Trade Center, while Port Authority Police Department officers on site begin immediate evacuation of the North Tower.

8:50am White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card alerts President George W. Bush that a plane has hit the World Trade Center; the president is visiting an elementary school in Sarasota, FL at the time.

9:02am Port Authority officials broadcast orders to evacuate the South Tower of the World Trade Center.

9:03am Hijackers crash United Airlines Flight 175 into floors 75–85 of the World Trade Center's South Tower, killing everyone on board and hundreds inside the building.

9:26am The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) closes down air traffic to the U.S. All flights from Europe are diverted.

9:37am Hijackers aboard Flight 77 crash the plane into the western facade of the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., killing 59 aboard the plane and 125 military and civilian personnel inside the building.

9:59am The South Tower of the World Trade Center collapses.

10:03am Hijackers crash Flight 93 in a field near the town of Shanksville, PA, killing all aboard.

10:28am The World Trade Center's North Tower collapses, 102 minutes after being struck by Flight 11.

12:28pm Gander, Newfoundland begins to receive 38 jetliners that have been shut out of American airspace. The passengers remain in Gander until Sunday, September 16.

8:30pm President Bush declares that America, along with its friends and allies, would "stand together" to win the war against terrorism.

"I ask the American people to join me in saying a thanks for all the folks who have been fighting hard to rescue our fellow citizens and to join me in saying a prayer for the victims and their families. The resolve of our great nation is being tested. But make no mistake: we will show the world that we will pass this test."

—President George W. Bush on 9/11

BECAUSE WE COME FROM
EVERYWHERE,
WE ALL COME FROM AWAY.

—Come From Away



The original Broadway cast of Come From Away. Photo by Matthew Murphy.

Written by Lynn Clark

Special Thanks



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