

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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Clear Space partners with AIDS Delaware to present THE NORMAL HEART

On Saturday, March 3, and Sunday, March 4, Clear Space Theatre Company, in collaboration with AIDS Delaware, will present THE NORMAL HEART. Larry Kramer's searing play, set in New York City in the early-80's, follows Ned Weeks' passionate efforts to awaken an indifferent public to the plague of AIDS. THE NORMAL HEART opened Off-Broadway in 1985, and won the 2011 Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play.

Weeks' one-man campaign came before AIDS even had a name. His strident approach – at odds with the calmer, private strategies favored by many in the gay community – leads to heated conflicts which threaten the success of the goal all are pursuing. But THE NORMAL HEART is not all fiery political rhetoric or rousing public passion. It also is a story about family relationships and priorities, as Ned seeks funding for his cause from his brother, Ben, an attorney more interested in purchasing a luxury home. And finally, it is a romance, as Ned – for the first time – finds himself deeply in love.

Iris A. McKenney, Fundraising and Communications Manager for AIDS Delaware, spoke to her organization's enthusiasm for this collaboration: "We're so happy that David Button approached AIDS Delaware with this opportunity! Reminding people – and, in some cases, *introducing* people – to the history of HIV and AIDS helps everyone remember – or for the first time understand - just how devastating the plague was. Art plays such an important role in reaching audiences and groups of people who otherwise might be completely unaware of our cause."

McKenney adds, "While I've certainly been aware of the play – it's an icon! - I've never actually seen it performed. I'm so looking forward to doing so! It was a critically important play in the 1980's, and still is a deeply relevant piece of theater. HIV continues to infect people – yes, even people in Delaware! – with intravenous drug users, especially those who abuse opioids, at particular risk. Today, we struggle to maintain public and private support in an indifferent political climate and amidst waning awareness. That's not so very different from the struggle in the 1980's to get public and private entities to acknowledge and address the AIDS epidemic to begin with."

THE NORMAL HEART is the fourth in a series of collaborations between Clear Space and local non-profit organizations; partners in prior years have included Immanuel Shelter, CAMP Rehoboth and Beebe Healthcare's Women's Health Services program. Says Wesley Paulson, Clear Space's Executive Director, "David Button, Clear Space Artistic Director, and I are excited to continue Clear Space's commitment to collaboration in 2018. HIV and AIDS are issues in our community – but can be almost invisible to the general public. Partnering with AIDS Delaware to present THE NORMAL HEART provides all of us with an ideal opportunity to raise awareness and promote support."

Sponsored by Bell Rock Capital, THE NORMAL HEART runs for only two performances: Saturday, March 3, at 6:00 pm and Sunday, March 4, at 2:00 pm. Tickets for each show are \$50, and include a pre-show reception with hors d'oeuvres, beer and wine. Proceeds benefit both AIDS Delaware and Clear Space. Tickets may be purchased online at www.clearspacetheatre.org, or by calling the box office at 302-227-2270.