

AMOS COMENIUS MEMORIAL SCHOOL, HOPEDALE

presents

"Home Away From Home"

CAST

Tracy.....	Teri Winters
Cathy.....	Connie Pijogge
Jimmy.....	George Abel
Nelle.....	Beverley Winters
Johnny.....	George Winters
Social Worker.....	Barbara Flowers
Rhonda.....	Rachel Tuglavina
Katie.....	Katherine Mitsuk
Donna.....	Darlene Boase
Willy.....	Wayne Piercy

LIGHTS AND SOUND

Trent Burgess

TEACHER/ADVISOR

Norma Denney



Jodie Strangemore  
J.C. Erhardt Memorial School  
Makkovik

HOME AWAY FROM HOME

SCENE 1

Cathy and Tracy are in a bedroom playing. On the stereo the girls play "New Kids On The BLock". The girls are dancing around the room and looking in the mirror putting on make-up.

TRACY - I think Joe is the cutest.

CATHY - No way, it definitely has to be Jordan. He looks the best and sings the best!

TRACY - That's true but Joe does have the cutest smile.

Tracy looks in the mirror to put on some lipstick.

TRACY - Oh I can't wait until I'm grown up. I can go out on dates, stay up late and best of all, I'll be able to wear make-up just like Mom. Hey Cahty, you want to put some of this on so you can be like Mom?

CATHY - No! I don't want it! I don't want to be anything like Mom! You can really be stupid sometimes Tracy! Do you really want to be like Mom? She's mean and she drinks all the time. Just listen. You know what's going on out there? They're out there drinking and you know what happens after that don't you? Maybe Mom or Dad will come in here and bawl at us to go to the store to get more Pepsi or Coke! Maybe Dad will come in and drag us into the living room where they all are and get us to dance with him and his friends for fun.

TRACY - But that's only for fun. They don't mean anything by it. It's just fun for them. Besides they're so drunk they probably won't remember a thing tomorrow morning.

CATHY - But I'll remember what they did tomorrow and I'll remember it forever and that's what hurts the most! I hate them all!

She turns to her bed and begins to sob. Tracy moves to the bed to comfort her. All of a sudden the sound of voices is heard louder and the room door opens. In walks Jimmy, the girls' older brother.

TRACY - Jimmy! what happened to you? You're bleeding! Did some one hit you?

JIMMY - Yes someone hit me. It was Dad. He hit me when I wouldn't go to the store for him to buy him a pack of smokes. I told him that him and Mom should stop drinking because they scared us. Then he said that I should shut my mouth because I was a stupid kid and I didn't know what I was talking about. That's when I ran in here because he was coming after me with his belt.

CATHY - Oh what are we going to do? I'm really scared. Why do they have to drink? I hate it when they drink. Why can't we have normal parents like everyone else?

TRACY - Hey I know what we can do! We can run away to Nanny's house. She loves us and I know she'll take care of us!

JIMMY - Are you stupid Tracy? Nanny lives in Toronto! How are we going to get there? Hijack Canadian Airlines?

TRACY - Well I don't know, it was just a thought.

JIMMY - Maybe we can sneak out and stay down at Zeke's house tonight. Remember? He took us in when Dad beat up Mom last month. He told Mom that if we needed anything he would help us.

CATHY - We could do that tonight but what about tomorrow and all the other days after that? Oh we're never going to get out of here. No one will help us. I wish I was never born!

**The lights go out completely. On the other side of the stage the lights come on again. They shine dimly on two young people sitting behind a table. They look worried and nervous.**

NELLE - What do you think they'll do to us? Do you think they'll put us in jail? Oh man, if we go to jail I'm gonna tell them that it was all your idea and that you forced me to rob that store!

JOHNNY - Would you just shut your mouth! They're not gonna put us in jail. Besides we're too young. They don't put 16 year olds in jail. Don't sweat it! They'll just put us on probation for a couple of months and get us to do some community service time. That's it!

NELLE - How can you be so sure? What makes you an expert on crime and punishment?

JOHNNY - Hey, I've gotten into so much trouble I could do this with my hands tied behind my back. Hey, I could even be the judge! Better yet I could be like one of those guest speakers you know and go around and give lectures on young offenders. A perfect case study for those law school dorks! I could get paid for the whole thing. And they say crime doesn't pay! Gees!

NELLE - I'm glad that you find this so funny cause I certainly don't. It's all your fault that I'm here. If I hadn't ran out of the house I never would have run into you and I certainly wouldn't have ended up here! How could I have been so stupid to hook up with a creep like you?

JOHNNY - Look here Missy, I didn't force you to come with me. You came with me because you wanted it. The same reason why you left your old man's place.

NELLE - Shut up! Just shut up O.K.? What do you know anyway? You don't live there!

JOHNNY - What do you take me for Nelle? Some kind of fool? I know, I hear the rumors that are going around town. I know what your father's been doing to you! You know what I think? I think you did the right thing by running away. If it was me man, I would have been gone long ago.

NELLE - You think you know it all don't you? Well let me tell you something mister, you know nothing, you hear me, nothing! You don't know what it's like to live with someone who thinks that just because he's your old man he can do to you what he darn well pleases. You don't know what it's like to have you old man touch you and grab you and make you feel like dirt. And you know what makes it even worse? Sometimes he's not even drunk and he does it on purpose. I used to think that when he was drunk he didn't know what he was doing. But then when he used to come into my room sober, I knew that what he was doing was wrong. The funny thing was that I thought it was my fault. I really thought that I was the reason he was hurting me. But no matter how bad I thought I was, I knew that what he was doing was just not right. The more he did it the more I hated him, and everytime I look at him now I want to puke! He makes me so sick that animal!

JOHNNY - Look on the bright side, you're here. You're not back at your old man's place where he can get after you again. At least here you're protected; behind bars. When you look at it that way maybe jail isn't such a bad place after all.

NELLE - It's funny you know, here I am in the place where I always thought he would end up. Now tell me mister know-it-all, where's the justice in that? The innocent take the fall and the criminals run free. What a system!

JOHNNY - It's a darn cruel world out there. You learn that real quick when you live on the streets. It's like the law of the jungle. Survival of the fittest. No one gives a damn, no one cares about people like us! It's like they pretend we don't exist. Well we do exist and we hurt and we feel pain and yeah we do cry. Ah, who gives a darn, God only knows where we'll end up after this!

**Lights fade completely. Lights come back on again and show a group of actors on the other side of the stage. Three young girls sit on a couch talking, as a woman enters.**

SOCIAL WORKER - Good morning you ladies. Did you all sleep well last night? I know those beds can be hard sometimes, but at least you had a nice warm place to spend the night!

RHONDA - I'm afraid here. I want to go home. I want my mommy and daddy. Please let me go home.

KATIE - Yeah, why are we here anyway? I don't want to be here either. It's cold and lonely here and there are all these strange people asking us questions all the time.

SOCIAL WORKER - What about you Donna? You haven't said much. Do you know what's happening? Are you afraid to be here too, sweetie?

DONNA - Are you a social worker?

SOCIAL WORKER -Yes I am Dear. Do you know what I do?

DONNA - You take little kids away from their Mommies and Daddies and never bring them back. You take them away to a big jail and whip them when they're bad.

SOCIAL WORKER -Oh no Honey, I don't do that. Who told you such awful things?

KATIE - Our daddy told us. He said that if we talked to people like you, you would lock us up somewhere and we would never see our mommy and daddy again. That's what you're gonna do now isn't it? Your're gonnna put us in a big jail and feed us bread and water!

SOCIAL WORKER -No Katie I won't do that to you or anyone else. Listen girls, what you're daddy told you was all lies. Social workers are not bad people like your daddy said. We aren't like that at all! We help people, all kinds of people. We help little kids, big kids and adults.

RHONDA - You mean you won't put us in a big jail and force us to make license plates like they do on T.V.?

SOCIAL WORKER -I promise you Sweetieie, there won't be anything like that."

RHONDA - So why are we here? Why can't we see our mommy and daddy? Where are they?

SOCIAL WORKER -Do you girls remember what happened last night? Do you know how you got here?

DONNA - I remember Mommy and Daddy were drinking before we went to bed. Then I woke up and it was dark. I heard loud music and people talking.

KATIE - I heard Mommy crying and a bottle smashing on the floor. Then I heard Daddy say and "F" word and a "B" word at Mommy. He always says those words at her but she never cried before.

SOCIAL WORKER -Do you girls remember anything else?

KATIE - After Daddy said the "B" word I heard a big, loud bang.

RHONDA - It frightened me and I jumped into bed with Katie and Donna.

SOCIAL WORKER -Do you know what that sound was girls?

DONNA - It sounded like Daddy's shotgun to me.

SOCIAL WORKER -What did you do when you heard the gun?

DONNA - Katie and me got up out of the bed and opened the door. When we looked outside Daddy bawled at us to shut the door.

SOCIAL WORKER -What did you do then?

KATIE - When Daddy bawled at us we shut the door real quick and ran back to bed.

SOCIAL WORKER -Did you see anything when you opened the door?

DONNA - No, we just saw Daddy. We didn't see Mommy.

KATIE - We saw some red stuff on the floor too.

SOCIAL WORKER -Do you know what the red stuff was?

KATIE - Yeah, it was catsup, because we saw Daddy eatng chips before we went to bed.

SOCIAL WORKER -Where were you Rhonda?

RHONDA - I was in bed with Mr. Buttons. We were crying because we were afraid.

DONNA - Why are you asking us all these questions? Do you know where our mommy is?

SOCIAL WORKER -Yes girls I do.

RHONDA - Where is she? Is she coming to get us? She has to take me to Brownies today.

SOCIAL WORKER -I'm afraid your mommy isn't coming today.

RHONDA - Will she come tomorrow?

SOCIAL WORKER -She won't be coming at all girls. Last night your mommy went to heaven.

DONNA - Does that mean God came to get her?

Rhonda - Why did she go?

SOCIAL WORKER -Yes girls that means your mommy is living with God now. You see, when you were all in bed last night your mommy and daddy were angry. Your mommy was upset that your daddy had too much to drink. When your mommy asked your daddy to stop he got angry and hit her. He didn't stop hitting her and when she tried to run away he took his gun and did a very bad thing.

KATIE - Where is our daddy now? Is he coming to get us?

SOCIAL WORKER -No, your daddy is in jail. That means he has to stay there for a very long time because he hurt your mommy.

RHONDA - Now we don't have a mommy or a daddy. No one will love us and take care of us!

KATIE - I'm the oldest and I can take care of us. I can get a job like mommy had.

SOCIAL WORKER -Katie, you're such a big girl to do that, but you don't have to. Today I'm going to take you to a nice place where there are other boys and girls like you. You're going to stay there for a while until we can find all of you new homes.



DONNA - I'm scared I want Katie and Rhonda with me. I don't want to go by myself.

SOCIAL WORKER -I promise you everything will be O.K., I'll see that you all stay together.

**Lights Fade. When they come back on all the children are gathered in a large recreation room. They are talking as a man enters.**

WILLY - Hi Kids. It's good to see you all. My name is Willy. I work here at the shelter. Anytime that you have any questions just let me know and I'll be happy to answer them for you. I know a lot of you may be feeling scared and lonely, but don't worry, it's O.K. to feel that way. I know what you're going through.

JOHNNY - So how would you know mister mouth. What would you know about our families and our lives, huh?

WILLY - Well Johnny I know a lot more than you think. You see I came from a family which is very similar to many of your's. I had an alcoholic father and a mother who was so scared of him that shewould jump everytime he opened his mouth. I saw my father get so drunk that he would vomit all over himself and fall asleep in it. I saw my father beat my mother so much that she couldn't walk. When he was finished with her, he would turn on me. Before I was 12 years old I had 6 operations to fix the broken bones in my face. Once he beat me so bad that my head swelled to the size of a watermelon and I couldn't see for 3 weeks. The worst time was when he went after my sister. He hurt her worse than he hurt me and my mom. He started abusing her when she was five years old and it didn't stop until the day she killed him.

NELLE - How did she kill him? Did she go to jail?

WILLY - One day she was so upset that she took my father's gun and when he was asleep she stopped the pain. And no Nelle she didn't go to jail. Four days after she killed our father the police found her hanging from a beam in our fishing shack. I guess that was her way to deal with the pain.

KATIE - What happened to your mommy?



**WILLIE** - Well she moved away after my father died. She spent a lot of time in and out of mental hospitals but now she has a job as a secretary and she also works with kids like you to help them find new homes. So you see, I really do know what you're going through. If you want to cry or scream go ahead, it's O.K. Sometimes crying helps a lot. Some of you may be here for a long time and some others won't, but whatever you do remember this; you're not alone. There are people who care and who really want to help you. There are hundreds of kids all over the world just like you; but you're the lucky ones. You really are because the people here are here for you. They won't turn away or ignore you. They really care and understand. I have to go to a meeting now so I want you all to feel at home and don't be afraid to ask questions. See you all supertime.

**JOHNNY** - Yeah right! Get to know each other, make friends. Forget it man! The first chance I get I'm splittin. I ain't gonna stay here on Sesame Street and play Big Bird for the twits.

**NELLE** - Well you can go if you want but I'm staying. Willy seems to be pretty O.K. and he makes sense.

**JIMMY** - Don't worry Sis we'll be fine. Nanny knows we're here and she's coming to get us today. Willy told me. We can go and live with her forever!

**Enter the social worker. She moves over across the stage to speak to Katie, Rhonda and Donna.**

**SOCIAL WORKER** - Girls I have some good news for you. I've found a family for you all. You won't be separated.

**DONNA** - What are they like?

**RHONDA** - Do they like teddy bears?

**KATIE** - Are they nice?

**SOCIAL WORKER** - They are a young couple who live here in town. They don't have any children and when I told them about you they were really excited and they want to meet you today. And guess what? They have a puppy!

**The lights go out completely on stage. Next, the spotlight comes on as Katie moves to the front of the stage.**

KATIE - Now there's a real happy ending to a real sad story, I really wish they could all be that happy but they can't. Do you ever wonder what happens to those kids who don't make it? Where do they go? How do they live? If you haven't seen them you've probably heard of them. You know, when you turn on the news and hear; "Two Youths were arrested today for robbing a convenience store;" a 13 year old boy was caught spray painting the walls of a southside building, "or better yet" a 15 year old girl was found face down in a dumpster today. The cause of death is suspected to be a drug overdose. "Yuck! Scary isn't it? But it's real and these things happen. And then you ask, "can't somebody do somethin?" Well yeah, somebody is doing something and that's where these guys back here come in. They're real good people and they understand and want to listen. I think what makes Willy and the rest of the guys in these shelters so great is the fact that they know for many kids this place is their home away from home. I hope you enjoyed the play. Thanks for coming. Oh! By the way, you ever wonder what happened to Johnny? Take a Look:

Lights shine dimly on Johnny who stumbles around the stage drunk, with a bottle in his mouth.