

TAPROOT THEATRE

C O M P A N Y

Scott L. Nolte
Producing Artistic Director

Mailing Address
P.O. Box 30946
Seattle, Washington 98113

Administrative Office
312 North 85th St., Suite 103
Seattle, Washington 98103
206.781.9705
(Fax) 206.297.6882

Box Office
204 North 85th St.
Seattle, Washington 98103
206.781.9707
(Fax) 206.706.1502

E-mail
info@taproottheatre.org

www.taproottheatre.org

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MEDIA CONTACT:
Heidi Staub
Communications Manager
206-529-3676
heidis@taproottheatre.org

TAPROOT THEATRE'S NEWEST TOURING PLAY TACKLES BULLYING PREVENTION AND DIVERSITY

SEATTLE – August 29, 2011 – Taproot Theatre's (TTC) Road Company hits the road touring educational plays to schools throughout the Pacific Northwest. The innovative shows confront relevant issues such as diversity and bullying prevention, and provide resources which encourage conversation amongst students and adults alike. The government organization Stop Bullying Now! reports that as many as 1 in 4 students have been the target of bullying and 9 out of 10 students report that bullying occurs in their schools. Taproot Theatre Company has seen a higher demand for dynamic bullying prevention education as reports of bullying rise.

Allies from Outer Space, TTC Road Company's newest play for elementary school audiences, addresses diversity and prejudice. These educational themes were introduced in response to feedback Taproot received from Northwest educators. The script was informed by cyber-bullying prevention curriculum released by the Seattle-based organization, the Committee for Children. Studies show schools that have implemented bullying prevention programs have reduced bullying by as much as 50%, making the availability of these resources vital. The Road Company's five actors also participated in a John Perkins Center workshop equipping them to more effectively lead discussions about diversity and prejudice.

Two popular plays return to TTC's Road Company repertoire for the 2011/12 school year. *Treasure Allies*, a pirate-themed bullying prevention play for elementary students, and *Don't Tell Jessica...*, a play exploring the impact of cyber-bullying, rumors, and gossip for secondary schools. Taproot's Road Company performed a record breaking 257 shows to elementary and secondary schools last year, equipping students and educators with the tools to respond to and prevent bullying incidents.

The Shoreline School District has contracted the TTC Road Company to perform in all fourteen of their elementary and secondary schools in fall 2011. *Allies from Outer Space* will premiere Wednesday, September 7 at Morton Elementary School in Morton, WA.

TTC's Road Company has performed for over 1 million students since it began touring social-issue plays to schools in the Northwest 26 years ago.

About Taproot Theatre's Road Company

Taproot Theatre's Road Company has been touring dynamic social-issue plays to students throughout the Pacific Northwest since 1985. The Road Company reaches tens of thousands of students each year with productions that address relevant social issues and provide youth with safe steps to approach them. In addition to the touring productions, Taproot Theatre provides teachers' guides and resources to facilitate classroom discussion and increase the

effectiveness of the message. The actors are also available for individual classroom visits. To book a show, contact Taproot's Director of Outreach at 206.529.3669 or touring@taproottheatre.org. The Road Company is supported by The Charles Simonyi Fund for Arts and Sciences, The Seattle Foundation, 4Culture, ArtsFund and PONCHO.

About Taproot Theatre

Taproot Theatre Company is a professional, non-profit theatre company with a multi-faceted production program. Founded in 1976, TTC serves the Pacific Northwest with Mainstage Productions, Touring Productions and Acting Studio. Taproot exists to create theatre that explores the beauty and questions of life while bringing hope to our search for meaning. TTC is a member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), Theatre Puget Sound (TPS), and the Greenwood-Phinney Chamber of Commerce.

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SCHOOL TOURING PLAYS

Allies from Outer Space

By Bethany Wallace

Directed by Nathan Jeffrey

For Grades K-6 *New this school year!*

Jeepers creepers, the aliens are coming to school, and they never shower! So goes the rumor mill when a Reptai spaceship makes an emergency landing on earth. While waiting for repairs, the Reptai queen on board sends her daughter to the local school to scope out whether the rumors *she's* heard are true: that humans are intolerant of differences and use their technology to bully others. Will the students at Galaxia Elementary treat Princess Komodo with respect despite her tail and webbed fingers? Or will their bullying behavior lead the queen to take drastic measures against bullying and wipe out earth's technology... for good?

Education Goals

Overarching theme: Bullying Prevention and Diversity

- Accepting Differences and Diversity
- Recognizing, Refusing and Reporting Bullying
- Confronting Prejudice

Treasure Ally

By Bethany Wallace

Directed by Nathan Jeffrey

For Grades K-6 *Back by popular demand!*

Swashbuckling scallywag! The good ship Buccaneer has a bad case of the bullies, and it's much worse than our hero Louis ever experienced on the playground. The pirate captain calls him names and won't even let him off the ship in time to get to class! And that's not all; it turns out the captain is being bullied himself. Can Louis and his fellow crew members teach their captain a few things about standing up to bullies before the next full moon? Or will Captain No-Beard come to pick on them and steal their map to the treasure?

Education Goals

Overarching theme: Bullying Prevention and Friendship

- Recognize, Refuse and Report
- How to be an Ally
- Initiating a friendship

Don't Tell Jessica...

By Josh Hornbeck

Directed by Nathan Jeffrey

For Grades 6-12 *Back by popular demand!*

A play about gossip, rumors and cyber-bullying.

It all started with a rumor—or was it the truth? In an age when gossip spreads like wildfire, a seemingly harmless message can destroy friendships, reputations and lives. At Clements High, homecoming is just around the corner and the stakes are high as a group of friends discovers the danger of jealousy when it is wielded like a weapon in e-mails and social networks. The drama will resonate deeply with students, who will see their classmates—and themselves – in the characters played out on stage.

Education Goals

- Cyber-bullying prevention
- Understand the consequences of gossip and rumors