

# TAPROOT THEATRE



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## **STUDENTS LEARN SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES OF CYBER BULLYING THROUGH TAPROOT THEATRE'S ROAD COMPANY THIS FALL**

### **New play teaches students the devastating impact their actions can have**

SEATTLE – September 29, 2008 – Taproot Theatre's Road Company is teaching students the serious consequences of cyber bullying this fall with its new educational touring play *New Girl*. The play by Josh Hornbeck is one of three bullying and harassment prevention plays the group will perform at schools throughout the Pacific Northwest this academic year. With the widespread use of cell phones and social networking sites among children and teenagers, *New Girl* is aimed at preventing cyber bullying by educating youth and showing them the tragic results that sending or posting an insulting or threatening message can have.

Cyber bullying poses a real threat to people's welfare, as seen in the case of 13-year-old Megan Meier. The Missouri girl committed suicide in 2006, allegedly after being sent a cruel message by someone masquerading as a teenage boy.

The results of various studies show that cyber bullying has affected a significant number of youth—the "Stop Bullying Now!" website of the Health Resources and Services Administration website lists results of several studies, which show that anywhere from 7 to 36 percent of youth have been impacted.

In *New Girl*, the impact of cyber bullying is explored through the lives of five high schoolers at Clements High—especially the new girl, Rachel, and an outcast, Edward, who becomes one of her first friends at school. *New Girl* traces the progression of insults and threats made to Edward as the school year gets off to a start, and the resulting downturn in his life. Edward gets the biggest blow of all when two bullies take Rachel under their wings and coerce her into joining their game.

The Road Company's current educational touring plays teach students about bullying and harassment prevention by utilizing principles from the leading curriculum

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on the topics: Committee for Children’s “Steps to Respect” and “Second Step” programs. *New Girl* is recommended for students in sixth through 12<sup>th</sup> grades. The Road Company also has touring plays for grades K through six: the new *Alexander and the Dragon*, which teaches younger students how to recognize bullying and what their responsibilities are as a bystander, and the returning *Camp Super Friend*, which teaches students how to make friends, work as a team and appreciate differences.

### **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 over 90,000 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 Josiah Wallace at 206.529.3669 or [touring@taproottheatre.org](mailto:touring@taproottheatre.org).

The Road Company is supported by ArtsFund, 4Culture, The Seattle Foundation, Washington State Arts Commission, The Charles Simonyi Fund for Arts & Sciences and PONCHO.

### **About Taproot Theatre**

Taproot Theatre Company is a professional, non-profit theatre company with a multi-faceted production program. Founded in 1976, Taproot Theatre 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. Taproot Theatre Company 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

### ***New Girl***

by Josh Hornbeck

For Grades 6-12

A play about the faces of harassment and the function of community.

Rachel is the new girl at Clements High. She wants to fit in and get along with everyone. But when two of the school's popular kids attempt to sabotage her friendships with two of the school's outcasts, Rachel learns that the way she treats others can have serious consequences.

From cyber-abuse through instant messages and online social networking sites to verbal abuse in the halls, *New Girl* looks at the consequences of our actions and the need to treat everyone with kindness and respect.

#### **Education Goals:**

- Examine various forms of bullying and harassment, both subtle and overt
- Learn importance of respect
- Explore the dangers of cliques
- Understand personal and social responsibility

### ***Alexander and the Dragon***

by Bethany Wallace

For Grades K-6

A play about bullying prevention.

Being a 5th grader is even harder than being a knight. When "Sir" Alexander returns to school after a summer of battling make-believe foes, he fails to stand up for the new girl getting bullied on the school bus. He unknowingly allows Maddy (Princess Madeline) to be captured by a "dragon," and is stripped of his knighthood. Will Alexander conquer the fire-breathing dragon and rescue the princess? Will his heroic quest restore his honor?

#### **Education Goals:**

##### **Bullying Prevention and Social Skills**

- Recognize, Refuse and Report
- Responsibility of a bystander
- Initiating a friendship
- Engaging others in conversation
- Forgiving others

### ***Camp Super Friend***

by Bethany Wallace

For Grades K-6

A play about forming friendships and appreciating differences.

Marvel may be a super hero, but that doesn't mean he knows how to be a super friend ... yet. At Super Camp, the summer camp for super heroes, Marvel discovers it's a lot harder to make friends than he thought. With some helpful advice from his dad, and the assistance of his camp counselor, Marvel learns what it takes to make and be a good friend.

Meanwhile, the evil Professor Nemesis has come up with a sinister plan to strip all the super-heroes of their powers. It's up to Marvel and his new friends to use their special gifts and work together to save the day.

**Education Goals:**

**Friendship and Social Skills**

- Starting a conversation
- Joining a group
- Showing respect for others
- Bullying prevention
- Appreciating differences
- Teamwork