

TAPROOT THEATRE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Kill Date: April 26, 2008

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PREVENTING BULLYING THROUGH THEATRE
Portland-area children learn to respect & accept others
from Seattle's Taproot Theatre Road Company

SEATTLE – April 3, 2008 – Taproot Theatre's Road Company is taking its social-issues plays to elementary and secondary schools in the Portland area April 22 through 25 to teach students how to recognize bullying, inform them how to react and give them the tools they need to speak up and stop suffering in silence.

Fifteen to 25 percent of students in the United States are believed to frequently experience the turmoil of bullying, according U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, but as alarming as that may be, 15 to 20 percent say they bully others.

"We want students to recognize that we all have a part in making the world a place where violence, harassment, and gossip can be fought," says Josiah Wallace, director of outreach for Taproot Theatre Company.

The touring company incorporates into its plays bullying-prevention principles from the Committee for Children's "Steps to Respect®" program. "Steps to Respect" teaches students social skills and the three R's of preventing this type of abusive behavior: Recognize, Refuse, and Report bullying.

The Road Company's plays target students in various age groups by capturing their attentions and imaginations through characters they like and can identify with. In *Camp Super Friend*, the protagonist is a superhero who, despite his super powers, struggles to make friends. The popularity of televised talent shows will draw students to *Star Power*, a play about two fifth graders who encounter a bully while competing for the title of "The Most Talented Kid in Washington." Each play has specific education goals, such as forming friendships, appreciating differences and showing respect for others.

The Road Company expects to perform 150 times in 100 schools this winter and spring. In 2007, the Road Company gave 242 performances of these bullying-prevention plays at 180 schools for more than 93,000 students.

About the Road Company's Educational Touring

Taproot Theatre's Road Company has been touring dynamic educational plays to students throughout the Pacific Northwest since the 1980s. 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 Josiah Wallace at 206.529.3669 or josiah@taproottheatre.org.

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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Included:

- **Portland-area school touring schedule**
- **School touring plays**

PORTLAND-AREA SCHOOL TOURING SCHEDULE

Tuesday, April 22

9:15 a.m. – *Star Power* at Kelso Elementary, Boring

1:30 p.m. – *Camp Super Friend* at Grant Watts Elementary, Scappoose

Wednesday, April 23

9:40 a.m. – *Star Power* at Mabel Rush Elementary, Newberg

Time TBD – *Star Power* at Joan Austin Elementary, Newberg

Thursday, April 24

2 p.m. – *Witness* at Patton Middle School, McMinnville

Friday, April 25

10:15 a.m. – *Camp Super Friend* at Ventura Elementary, Portland

1:30 p.m. – *Star Power* at Ventura Elementary, Portland

SCHOOL TOURING PLAYS

Camp Super Friend

For Grades K-6

by Bethany Wallace

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

Star Power

For Grades K-6

by Bethany Wallace

A play about bullying prevention.

Fifth-graders Austin and Kamea are headed for big-time fame when they're recruited for a statewide, televised talent competition. But things get complicated when Trick, another contestant, attempts to sabotage their friendship and win the coveted title of "The Most Talented Kid in Washington."

Will Kamea have the courage and support to stand up to Trick and save her friendship with Austin? Who will win the title "The Most Talented Kid in Washington?" Join Kamea, Austin and Trick as they learn ways to stand up against bullying.

Education Goals:

Bullying Prevention

- Recognize, Refuse, Report
- How to be an ally
- Forming friendships
- Accepting diversity

Witness

For Grades 6-12

by Nicholas Hubbard

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

Being a teenager is hard enough without having to deal with rumors, harassment and bullying.

Bullying affects more than just the victim. Everyone sees and struggles with the consequences. Do you choose to ignore it? Do you rationalize the problem? Do you fight back? How? Take matters into your own hands? Tell someone? Who?

What happens when the voices of teachers, students and parents intersect? All will be heard as characters recount their feelings, choices and observations. To foster a safe community everyone must play a part.

Education Goals:

- Identify the various forms of bullying
- Explore issues of power
- Address attitudes toward bullying
- Personal and social responsibility