

TAPROOT THEATRE



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Over One Million Students Served Through Taproot Theatre Company's Educational Touring

SEATTLE – June 9, 2008 – Taproot Theatre's Road Company has reached a new milestone: This academic year, the touring company performed for its one-millionth student through its educational plays, estimated Josiah Wallace, Director of Outreach.

"We broke the one-million mark this year, and I estimate that we are at 1,036,750 students served!" he said.

Taproot Theatre's Road Company has been taking social-issues plays—dealing with topics such as substance abuse, AIDS education, health and fitness, conflict resolution and more—to elementary and secondary schools since 1986, traveling as far as Alaska, the Midwest and Japan.

Bullying and harassment prevention has been the focus of the last few years, with the actors using dynamic plays 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.

The plays incorporate bullying- and violence-prevention principles from the Committee for Children's "Steps to Respect®" and "Second Step®" programs. "Steps to Respect®" teaches students social skills and the three R's of preventing this type of abusive behavior: Recognize, Refuse, and Report bullying.

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.

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“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,” Wallace said.

The Road Company plays target students in various age groups by capturing their attentions and imaginations through characters they like and can identify with. For the 2008/2009 school year, the Road Company features two brand-new plays commissioned for the group. For elementary school assemblies, *Alexander and the Dragon*, by Bethany Wallace, is a story about a 5th grader named Alexander who imagines he’s a medieval knight who must rescue a princess who’s been captured by a dragon. In the process he learns lessons about bullying, friendship and forgiveness that translate to his real-life school.

New Girl is the brand-new play for secondary school assemblies by Josh Hornbeck. Through the story of a new girl at Clements High who just wants to fit in, students will learn the importance of respect, explore the dangers of cliques and discover that cyber-abuse can be just as devastating as words spoken face-to-face. Each play has specific education goals, such as forming friendships, appreciating differences and showing respect for others.

In addition, the popular *Camp Super Friend*, about a superhero who, despite his super powers, struggles to make friends, is back for a second year.

The Road Company expects to give 260 performances of its bullying- and harassment-prevention plays at in 200 schools during the 2008/2009 school year. In the 2007/2008 academic year, the Road Company gave 254 performances at 196 schools for 101,477 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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