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## **CYBER BULLYING GETS THE BOOT AT GASTON SCHOOLS**

### **Seattle theatre's touring group sets the stage for prevention this spring**

SEATTLE – April 9, 2009 – Gaston students will learn the importance of treating each other with respect online when Taproot Theatre's Road Company visits from Seattle with its new educational touring play *New Girl*. 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. The play by Josh Hornbeck is one of three bullying and harassment prevention plays the group is performing at schools in Gaston on April 14.

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!" part 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.

### **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 4Culture, ArtsFund, The Charles Simonyi Fund for Arts and Science, the Washington State Arts Commission, PONCHO and the Fred Meyer Fund. The media sponsor is ParentMap.

### **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:**

- School touring schedule
- School touring plays

## SCHOOL TOURING SCHEDULE

***Bookings are subject to change.***

### **Tuesday, April 14**

9 a.m. – *Camp Super Friend* at Gaston Elementary, Gaston

10:30 a.m. – *New Girl* at Gaston High, Gaston

## 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

### ***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