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## **ELLENSBURG STUDENTS LEARN DANGERS OF CYBERBULLYING FROM TAPROOT THEATRE'S ROAD COMPANY**

### **Seattle touring group celebrates 25<sup>th</sup> year of touring social-issues plays to schools**

SEATTLE – September 22, 2009 – Students at Morgan Middle School in Ellensburg will be learning about the dangers of cyberbullying and the importance of treating one another with respect when Taproot Theatre's Road Company performs the educational touring play *New Girl* at their school on October 30.

*New Girl*, by Josh Hornbeck, examines the use of text messaging, social networking sites and other forms of communication, and shows youth the serious consequences that can result when these tools are abused. By following five high schoolers at the fictional Clements High, *New Girl* traces the progression of insults and threats made to one of the unpopular students, and the resulting downturn in his life. He gets the biggest blow of all when two bullies take one of his friends under their wings and coerce her into joining their game.

Now in its 25<sup>th</sup> year of touring social-issues plays to schools throughout the Pacific Northwest, the Road Company is spending this year focused on bullying and violence prevention. The plays are guided by some of the leading curricula on the topics, Committee for Children's "Steps to Respect" and "Second Step" programs. In addition to teaching students how to respond to bullying, the plays also teach students important lessons aimed at preventing harassment before it even starts.

The Road Company's 2009/2010 touring repertoire features *New Girl*, plus the brand new play *Super School*, which teaches kids about preventing violence and managing their emotions, and *Alexander and the Dragon*, which teaches elementary school students how to identify and respond to bullying and their responsibility as a bystander.

The Road Company has performed for over one million students since it began touring social-issues plays in 1985. The team performed at the New York International Fringe Festival (FringeNYC) this past August.

**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](mailto:touring@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.

The Road Company is supported by The Charles Simonyi Fund for Arts and Sciences, ArtsFund, 4Culture, Washington State Arts Commission, PONCHO, the Fred Meyer Fund and the BWF Foundation.

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**Included:**

- School touring fact sheet

## SCHOOL TOURING PLAYS

### ***Super School* by Bethany Wallace**

#### **For Grades K-6**

It's back to school at Asteroid Academy, and the first rule is, no superpowers on the playground. But when Danrelle uses her invisibility powers to steal Tilly's toy and tries to get her to explode in anger, the students risk detention or even being suspended. Your students' favorite superheroes from *Camp Super Friend* are back with all-new challenges and experiences. Will they use their superpowers for good or for evil? Only a visit to Asteroid Academy will tell!

#### **Education Goals:**

##### **Friendship and Social Skills**

- Problem Solving
- Empathy Training
- Emotional Management
- Bullying Prevention

### ***Alexander and the Dragon* by Bethany Wallace**

#### **For Grades K-6**

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

### ***New Girl* by Josh Hornbeck**

#### **For Grades 6-12**

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