

TAPROOT THEATRE



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2009 Arson Spree: One Year Later

One year after arsons, Taproot Theatre renews commitment to Greenwood neighborhood, commemorates victims

SEATTLE – October 14, 2010 – With the one-year mark since the October 23 arson approaching, Taproot Theatre Company’s leadership, board and staff renew their commitment to the neighborhood and commemorate those affected and devastated by the fires.

“We planted our roots solidly in Greenwood when we bought the early-1900s theatre 22 years ago, and we love the vibrancy and creativity that surround us everywhere,” said producing artistic director Scott Nolte. “We want the neighborhood to know that we’re here to stay, that this is where we want to be.”

Production manager Mark Lund echoes Nolte’s sentiment.

“Taproot seems as much a part of Greenwood as Greenwood seems a part of Taproot,” he said. “I’ve spent the past 19 years of my career working at Taproot, and can say with confidence that the positive changes I’ve witnessed here in Greenwood over the years are at least partly due to Taproot’s presence in the neighborhood.”

The string of arsons began in summer 2009 and continued into November of that year, until the arsonist was caught. Many people who lived and worked in the area went about their days in fear, not knowing if and when the arsonist would strike again, and if they could be next. This fall, on any given day, Greenwood teems with commuters, shoppers, artists and business owners going about their daily routines with a sense of normalcy.

The Green Bean Coffeehouse—one of the four businesses housed in the Eleanor Roosevelt Building (E.R.B.) until the October 23 fire—has relocated to its new permanent home in the former McDonald’s building within a block of its old site, and other businesses, including Rosewood Guitar, have reopened as well. Some scars remain, reminding people of the attacks. Some businesses were devastated and never returned, including C.C. Teriyaki, Szechuan Bistro and Pho Tic Tac, the other three

businesses housed in the E.R.B. A mural still stands at the former building's site, serving as a constant reminder of what happened, but offering a bright image of hope for the neighborhood's continued recovery and rebuilding. Taproot Theatre is working on a plan for the site.

Taproot Theatre is thankful for the support of countless other artists, arts organizations, businesses, foundations, firefighters and friends that made it possible to persevere and finally reopen in early 2010.

The theatre celebrates a heroic year on October 22 with Taproot Uncorked, a special fundraising event featuring a presentation on heroic wines by Patrick Anderson, owner of Greenwood's Vineyard Wine Shop. Anderson defines heroic wines as "wines which are victorious in their endeavor to survive all odds," a fitting metaphor for Taproot's experience over the past year. Taproot Uncorked takes place from 6 to 8 p.m. at The Upper Crust's Greenwood Square. Tickets are \$45 and are available online at www.taprootuncorked.com. Advanced registration is required. Taproot Uncorked is made possible through generous partnerships with The Vineyard Wine Shop and The Upper Crust Catering.

ABOUT TAPROOT THEATRE COMPANY

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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