

GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE RAISES THE CURTAIN ON NEW STOREFRONT IN WESTWOOD

Geffen Playhouse Kinross Annex to be Home of Story Pirates Education Programs

LOS ANGELES, Nov 5, 2010 – As the Geffen Playhouse's outreach initiatives continue to grow, the theater is unveiling a new space - Geffen Playhouse Kinross Annex – for its resident education partner the Story Pirates. In the heart of Westwood Village on Kinross Avenue just south of Broxton, the new space will act as headquarters for the Story Pirates, a nationally recognized arts and literacy organization, to work and rehearse for their in-school creative writing and drama programs, as well as hold weekly performances, workshops and classes that are open to the community. The first performance in the space will be on Saturday, November 6 at 2pm.

The Geffen Playhouse began its Story Pirates partnership in 2009 as a way to expand the resources of the theater's current in-school initiatives. Story Pirates, originally founded in New York in 2003, works to engage students in under-resourced public schools by showing them that their ideas, their words and their stories are important. As such, the cornerstone of the company is the in-school Play/Write Program, a series of creative writing and drama workshops that lead to a musical sketch comedy show acted by professional actors and comedians and comprised entirely of stories written by kids. As a partner of the Geffen Playhouse, Story Pirates recently opened a West Coast branch and now visits over 20 Title I Los Angeles public schools each year in addition to performing for the general public as part of the Geffen Playhouse's Saturday Scene program.

The shows and classes held in the new Geffen Playhouse Kinross Annex will expand Story Pirates' activities and make them accessible to all children in the greater Los Angeles community. The current slate of programs includes a weekly matinee of the the Story Pirates sketch comedy show, featuring the debut of at least one new story every Saturday at 2pm by a young author in attendance. Any child under twelve years old may submit a story, and all stories that meet the Pirates' simple guidelines will be selected on a first come-first serve basis. In addition, several greatest hits stories from the Pirates' repertoire, along with many stories from their in-school Play/Write Program, will also be performed each week. Information on submitting new stories can be found at the Story Pirates' website at www.storypirates.org/get-involved/submit-a-story. And, in a Story Pirates time-honored tradition, the entire audience will be treated to cookies and ice cream following each performance.

Following the launch of their weekly show, Story Pirates will begin offering a slate of morning and after-school courses in February, ranging from their signature toddler sing-along class Everyone Gets a Song, in which the Pirates write a personalized song about each child enrolled, to Secret Agent Spy Training, a series for elementary school students that slyly builds literacy-building skills under the guise of puzzles, riddles and pure play.

“Our partnership with Story Pirates will be a big boost to the community, bringing people together in a beautiful new space to support the creative development of our children and to celebrate their growth as writers and communicators, both on and off stage,” said Geffen Playhouse Education Director Debra Pasquerette.

Story Pirates and the Geffen plan to serve hundreds of families each week at the new Geffen Playhouse Kinross Annex.

EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

Geffen Playhouse Kinross Annex
10920 Kinross Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90024
www.geffenplayhouse.com

ABOUT THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

The Geffen Playhouse has been a hub of the Los Angeles theater scene since opening its doors in 1995. Noted for its intimacy and celebrated for its world-renowned mix of classic and contemporary plays, provocative new works and musicals, the Geffen Playhouse continues to present a body of work that has garnered national recognition. Named in honor of entertainment mogul and philanthropist David Geffen, who made the initial donation to the theater, the company is helmed by Producing Director and President of the Board Gilbert Cates, Artistic Director Randall Arney, Managing Director Ken Novice and Chairman of the Board Frank Mancuso. Proudly associated with UCLA, the Geffen Playhouse welcomes an audience of more than 130,000 each year, and maintains an extensive education and outreach program, designed to engage young people and the community at large in the arts. For more information, please visit geffenplayhouse.com.

ABOUT THE GEFFEN’S EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS

The Geffen Playhouse’s education and outreach programs seek to make the cultural resources of the theater available to all of Los Angeles’ diverse communities. The wide range of programs focuses on serving populations in need from ages 3 to 100 through programs such as Saturday Scene, School Tours, Student Matinees, Golden Ticket and the theater’s award-winning CREATE program. For more information, please visit geffenplayhouse.com/education.

ABOUT THE STORY PIRATES

Story Pirates has been committed to providing high quality arts education to children since 2003. Their Play/Write Program began as a pilot in a single low-income Harlem school and has grown to become a nationally respected creative writing and drama curriculum in place annually at over 100 schools across the country. Their assemblies and performances have been recognized and sponsored by partners such as Penguin Books, theaters like the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. and on respected television programs such as The Daily Show on Comedy Central. Story Pirates’ curriculum focuses on core elements of national standards for Arts Education and English Language Arts, while providing rich cultural experiences that push the boundaries of traditional enrichment to tackle substantive educational goals like vocabulary development, story structure, revision and confident self-expression. Over the past six year, Story Pirates has invited tens of thousands of students to see their own words and ideas come to life on stage, and watched as, one by one, these children began to call themselves writers.

###