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March 2, 2015

PRESS RELEASE

What: NJ Theatre Alliance's Stages Festival performances @ 13 OCL branches

When: Various March dates

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NJ's Theatre Alliance's Stages Festival returns to 13 OCL branches

TOMS RIVER - New Jersey Theatre Alliance's "Stages Festival" will present eight programs at 13 Ocean County Library branches and two local schools in March. These programs will mark the 18th anniversary of the library's partnership with the Alliance.

The festival brings professional, Broadway-quality programs to communities throughout March and Ocean County Library presents them to the public free of charge.

Throughout the years the performances have touched people of all ages and this year will be no different. Preschoolers can enjoy programs like "Stone Soup and Other Tales" and "If You Give a Pig a Pancake." Seniors and families will be entertained by "If You Give a Mouse a Cookie" and educated by "Tales from the Garden."

The presentations are free and meet many of the Common Core Curriculum Standards.

Registration is required for each of the presentations. Telephone the branch to register.

"If You Give a Mouse a Cookie," presented by Centenary Stage Company, is an adventurous, fun-filled performance complete with slap-stick comedy. In this family program an innocent milk-and-cookie snack time goes from mishap to calamity to catastrophe faster than the twitch of a whisker.

The performance will be held 3:30 p.m. Fri. March 13 at Lakewood, 301 Lexington Ave., 732-363-1435.

"Stone Soup and Other Tales," presented by Pushcart Players, is a charming blend of carefully selected folk tales from around the world. Supporting the literacy movement's emphasis on the joy of reading, this dynamic and participatory program is not to be missed by young viewers and families.

The performance will be held:

2 p.m. Sat. March 7 at Stafford, 129 N. Main St., Manahawkin, 609-597-3381,

3:30 p.m. Wed. March 11 at Plumsted, 119 Evergreen Rd., New Egypt, 609-758-7888,

2 p.m. Sat. March 14 at Barnegat, 112 Burr St., 609-698-3331,

11 a.m. Sat. March 21 at Lacey, 10 E. Lacey Rd., Forked River, 609-693-1197.

6:30 p.m. Mon. March 23 at Brick, 301 Chambers Bridge Rd., 732-477-4513.

"If You Give a Pig a Pancake," presented by Centenary Stage Company, shows what happens when a young girl accommodates the demands of a quirky piglet after eating pancakes. Their adventure is just beginning as they take a bubble bath, tap dance, take a photo, mail a letter, build and decorate a tree house, and of course, go back for more pancakes.

The performance will be held 11 a.m. Sat. March 7 at Waretown, 112 Main St., 609-693-5133.

"Tales from the Garden," presented by The Growing Stage, is a fun-filled journey through the rich history of the Garden State and examines the unique roles New Jersey has played in American history.

It will be performed:

6:30 p.m. Thur. March 26 at Berkeley, 30 Station Rd., 732-269-2144,

6:30 p.m. Mon. March 30 at Toms River, 101 Washington St. 732-349-6200 or 609-971-0514.

"Red Riding Hood and Other Stories," presented by Pushcart Players presents classic tales such as "The Princess and the Pea," "The Emperor's New Clothes," and "Little Red Riding Hood" in music and is told with a contemporary spin.

It will be performed:

6 p.m. Tue. March 10 at Little Egg Harbor, 290 Mathistown Rd., 609-294-1197,

7 p.m. Thur. March 12 at Manchester, 21 Colonial Dr., 732-657-7600,

6 p.m. Tue. March 31 at Pt. Pleasant Beach, 710 McLean Ave., 732-892-4575.

"Mi Casa Tu Casa," presented by Dreamcatcher Repertory Company, is a bilingual blend of music and folktales for the entire family. Musicians and storytellers are your guides on this unique journey through time, place and imagination.

It will be performed 3 p.m. Wed. March 25 at the Hugh J. Boyd Elementary School, 1200 Bay Boulevard, Seaside Heights. Telephone 732-793-3996.

"New Kid," presented by the George Street Playhouse, is a play that addresses racism, prejudice, peer pressure and conflict resolution. It prompts its audience to explore issues of moving to a new place, being the outsider, and making and keeping friends.

It will be performed 6:30 p.m. Mon. March 16 at the Island Heights Grade School, 115 Summit Ave., 732-270-6266.

The George Street Playhouse will also present "Austin the Unstoppable," 2:30 p.m. Sat. March 28 at Long Beach Island, 609-494-2480. This fun, upbeat musical engages audiences in the benefits of a healthy diet and exercise by celebrating how positive change can occur through the power of love, hard work, and support.