

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT  
STANDING UP TO BULLYING, BALANCING ACTIVITIES  
WITH THEATREWORKS' AWARD-WINNING OSKAR TOUR**  
*February 26 to April 13, 2018*

REDWOOD CITY, CA (30 January 2018) — In an effort to help today's K-5 students develop the resiliency and coping strategies needed to deal with bullying at school and avoid bullying others, and to learn how to manage when stress and pressure become overwhelming, **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley's** Education program will be touring Bay Area schools with its award-winning shows *Oskar and the Big Bully Battle*, and *Oskar and the Last Straw*. The *Oskar* tour runs **February 26 to April 13, 2018** with performances scheduled in the South Bay, Peninsula, East Bay, and San Francisco (see tour location list below for specific schools). To contact TheatreWorks Education about scheduling an assembly, schools may email [learn@theatreworks.org](mailto:learn@theatreworks.org) or call 650-463-7154.

Oskar and his friends are back to teach students the skills for handling the epidemic of bullying that occurs in schools every day. *Oskar and the Big Bully Battle* illustrates how a small schoolyard scuffle can escalate out of control as three elementary students become entangled in a tale about victims, bullies, and what it means to be an "UPstander" and "BYstander."

In response to growing concerns about the damaging and potentially fatal consequences of bullying in schools, *Oskar and the Big Bully Battle* was commissioned by the Palo Alto Unified School District and TheatreWorks Silicon Valley. Written by award-winning playwright Prince Gomolvilas, the show is designed to teach K-5 students the tools needed to recognize the most common types of bullying (including cyber bullying) and learn the difference between being a "BYstander" and an "UPstander," allowing kids to not only rebuff bullying, but strive to eliminate it from the schoolyard.

While the show deals with its subject in a humorous fashion, it offers serious solutions for dealing with bullying. "Oskar helps instill awareness in the K-5 grader, so that as they move into

those difficult middle school years, they are prepared,” says TheatreWorks Associate Director of Education, Katie Bartholomew. “Although it takes a fun and lighthearted approach, this show gives kids a real understanding of what bullying is, and how they might even be taking part, without realizing it.”

In *Oskar and the Last Straw*, 10-year-old Oskar faces an overwhelming amount of schoolwork, extracurricular activities, social events, and pressure from all around him. As his backpack gets fuller and voices from the outside world get louder, Oskar can’t help but feel like he can’t handle any of it. This comic show encourages kids to bounce back when they’re down, recognize their personal power, and be optimistic about the future.

*Oskar and the Last Straw* was originally commissioned, developed, and produced by TheatreWorks Silicon Valley. It was written by Prince Gomolvilas and directed by Mary Sutton. The show tours in both California and Texas.

This year’s *Oskar* tour includes three local actors ready to tell the story of Oskar and his friends. Recently seen in Hillbarn Theatre’s production of *Peter and the Starcatcher* as Peter, **Sean Okuniewicz** will play the beloved 10-year-old Oskar. He has also performed with City Lights Theater Company, Foothill Theatre Arts and Foothill Music Theatre, Children’s Musical Theatre San Jose, and Broadway By the Bay.

As part of Oskar’s motley crew, **Brigette Losey** and **Lorenz Angelo Gonzales** will join Okuniewicz across Bay Area school stages as Beth and Frank. Losey has performed with TheatreWorks Silicon Valley in *Jane Austen’s EMMA*, and other local theatre companies such as Palo Alto Players and Hillbarn Theatre. Gonzales has been seen on Bay Area stages including the New Conservatory Theatre Center, PianoFight, and Theatre Rhinoceros.

In 2016/17, **TheatreWorks Education and Outreach** programs served some 20,000 students, 1,800 adult learners, and 1,013 teachers from 57 schools in 7 counties. In addition to the *Oskar* presentations, **TheatreWorks Education** has created a variety of programs for Bay Area elementary, middle, and high schools including the wildly popular Playing with Poetry, Playing

with Science, the TELL Project (Theatre for English Language Learners), and the Young Playwright's Project, and Young Storytellers Lab. Last summer, TheatreWorks Education launched the Teaching Artist in Training program in which teens in grades 9-12 gain valuable teaching experience at TheatreWorks Summer Theatre Camps, receiving mentorship from experienced, professional Teaching Artists. TheatreWorks Education also offers professional development opportunities for area educators, and partners with Lucile Packard Children's Hospital to provide theatre classes for youth and siblings facing long-term illness, as well as piloting a theatre program for the children at Ronald McDonald House this past fall.

With some 100,000 patrons per year, **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** has captured a national reputation for artistic innovation and integrity, often presenting Bay Area theatregoers with their first look at acclaimed musicals, comedies, and dramas, directed by award-winning local and guest directors, and performed by professional actors cast locally and from across the country.

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**PHOTOS:** Downloadable high-res photos are available here:  
<http://www.cbpr.co/press/oskar2018>

**TOUR LOCATIONS – Please contact us for more site-specific details.**

***South Bay***

Dahl Elementary School, San Jose  
Regnart, Cupertino  
Eaton, Cupertino  
Mattos, Fremont  
Paradise Valley, Morgan Hill  
Laurelwood School, Santa Clara

***East Bay***

Frederiksen, Dublin  
John Greenm Dublin  
Fairlands, Pleasanton  
Garfield, San Leandro

***San Francisco***

Brandeis School, San Francisco  
Dianne Feinstein, San Francisco

***Peninsula***

Mistral School, Mountain View  
Huff Elementary, Mountain View  
Mistral School, Mountain View  
Bubb, Mountain View  
Sunset Ridge, Pacifica  
Oak Knoll School, Menlo Park  
Fairmeadow, Palo Alto  
Duvneck, Palo Alto (continues next page)

***Peninsula - Continued***

Palo Verde, Palo Alto

Palo Alto Rotary, Palo Alto

Aspire EPA Charter, East Palo Alto

Cipriani, Belmont

Heather School, San Carlos

Sandpiper, Redwood City

Henry Ford, Redwood City

John Gill, Redwood City

Lohman Theatre, Los Altos Hills

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