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BERKELEY REP BRINGS STORYBOOKS TO LIFE IN LOCAL CLASSROOMS
2nd & 4th graders improve reading and writing skills with Target ® Story Builders

NOVEMBER 9, 2006 – Berkeley Repertory Theatre invites Bay Area elementary schools to participate in **Target ® Story Builders** – a program in which teaching artists from the Tony Award-winning theatre visit local classrooms and bring storybooks to life with students. Second- and fourth-graders who participate in this dynamic and interactive program think they're just having fun – but teachers know that the workshop increases literacy, encourages writing skills, and reinforces state education standards. **Visits are available between January 8 and March 2, 2007.** Each visit is one hour long, and the cost is only \$75. Discounts are available to teachers paying out of pocket and to classes in Title One schools.

"Kids can do way more than we expect them to do," says **Daly Jordan-Koch**, a teacher at Widenmann Elementary School in Vallejo whose students loved the program. "They can read a book, create a play, and do a performance in an hour. All they need are the tools. Target ® Story Builders allowed for a great collaboration between the students, bridging the different ethnicities present in the classroom."

"With Story Builders, students transform their classroom into a theatre," adds **Susan Medak**, managing director of Berkeley Rep. "The one-hour commitment and the low fee make this program the perfect option for many local schools facing drastic cuts in the arts. I salute Target's longtime support of Berkeley Rep and its stellar philanthropic leadership in our community."

Target ® Story Builders is an hour-long program designed by the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre to strengthen students' literary and artistic skills. Teachers start the process by choosing a book that has been recommended by the California Department of Education, honored with awards from major literary institutions, and approved by the School of Theatre. Berkeley Rep provides a trained teaching artist, who leads the class in exercises that explore the story through voice, movement, improvisation, thematic analysis, and other skills suggested by state standards for second- and fourth-grade education. Finally, students create an original performance based on the book, inspired by the exercises with the teaching artists, and expertly executed at the end of just one hour.

The program has been specifically designed to meet the needs of California students and teachers. It reinforces the Department of Education's content standards in Theatre and English Language Arts, including Narrative Analysis, Organization of Delivery of Oral Communication, and Development of Theatrical Skills. In the past two years, Target ® Story Builders has visited 106 schools in seven counties, made 269 classroom visits, and served nearly 6,000 students.

Teachers like Jordan-Koch choose one of six books to share with their students. The **literature selections for second-graders** are as follows:

- *Abuela* by Arthur Dorros is a celebration of ethnic and linguistic diversity in which a girl and her grandmother soar over the city in an imaginary excursion.

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1997 tony award for outstanding regional theatre / a nonprofit corporation since 1968

- *Anansi the Spider* by Gerald McDermott is a West African story about a mischievous folk hero that demonstrates how the cooperative whole is worth more than its parts.
- In *The Two Bullies* by Junko Morimoto, the strongest man in Japan challenges his counterpart in China, and both heroes learn important lessons about respect and power.

The **literature selections for fourth-graders** are as follows:

- *Silent Movie* by Avi is a family's tale of traveling from Sweden to Ellis Island and a new life in America, told in the form of a black-and-white moving picture show.
- *Smoky Night* by Eve Bunting is a story about how a scary event unites cats that at first couldn't get along. Set amidst the Los Angeles riots, it delicately expresses how we can survive and learn from upheavals in our communities.
- *Thunder Rose* by Jerdine Nolen is an African-American folktale about a hopeful child who turns away a tornado with her song and the depth of her feelings.

Target has been an ongoing supporter of Berkeley Rep's education programs since 1986. "We are pleased to continue our partnership with Berkeley Rep to bring free and discounted programs to families in the Bay Area," remarks **Laysha Ward**, vice president of community relations for Target. "Through our sponsorship of community programs, Target can make a real difference every day by making the arts more accessible to families, youth, and teens."

For more information about Target ® Story Builders, or to schedule a classroom visit, contact Elena Mulroney at 510.647.2973 or emulroney@berkeleyrep.org.

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ABOUT THE BERKELEY REP SCHOOL OF THEATRE

The Berkeley Rep School of Theatre provides a wide array of programming for individuals of all ages. In addition to Target ® Story Builders, the School offers theatre classes for youth and adults; a Student Matinee Series for middle- and high-school students; the Playmaking Project for high-school students and incarcerated youth; in-school residencies; teacher training; and a variety of outreach activities that encourage lifelong learning. The School also hosts the Teen Council, which allows youth to participate in all aspects of the dramatic process: on stage, backstage, and in front of the stage. Housed in the Nevo Education Center, the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre is supported by the Mosse Foundation for Arts and Education. For complete details, call 510.647.2972 or visit www.berkeleyrep.org/school.

ABOUT TARGET

Minneapolis-based Target serves guests at 1,351 stores in 47 states nationwide by delivering today's best retail trends at affordable prices. Target is committed to providing guests with great design through innovative products, in-store experiences, and community partnerships. Whether visiting a Target store or shopping online at Target.com, guests enjoy a fun and convenient shopping experience with access to thousands of unique and highly differentiated items. Target (NYSE:TGT) gives back more than \$2 million a week to its local communities through grants and special programs. Since opening its first store in 1962, Target has partnered with nonprofit organizations, guests, and team members to help meet community needs.

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