

## **For Immediate Release**

DATE: August 2016

CONTACT: Kori Radloff, korir@rosetheater.org, 402-502-4641

### **Rose Theater to Host Professional Development Seminar** *Focus will be using musical theater to teach students with special needs*

(OMAHA, Nebr.) The Rose Theater will host a professional development session entitled *All Children Can Play: Designing Instruction for Diverse Learners* on Saturday, August 27, from 10 am to 4 pm, located at the The Rose Theater, 2001 Farnam St., Omaha. The workshop is free of charge.

This interactive workshop will present strategies and techniques for successfully addressing the social and emotional needs of students on the autism spectrum using the vehicle of musical theater. This hands on workshop will be led by Tessa L. Derfner, Coordinator for Arts Instruction for the Spectrum School in New York City Public Schools.

“This workshop will be a fantastic opportunity for classroom teachers, administrators, teaching artists, and parents, to gain new and exciting knowledge to engage young people in new and exciting ways. Tessa is a well-known figure in the theater education world, and we are honored that she is willing to share her insights with our community,” says the Rose Theater’s Accessibility Coordinator, Fran Sillau.

**=MORE=**

The Rose Theater  
2001 Farnam Street  
Omaha, NE 68102

t (402) 345-4849  
f (402) 344-7255  
www.rosetheater.org



## **Rose Theater Presents Professional Development Seminar**

**Page 2 of 3**

**Contact: Kori Radloff, 402-502-4641**

Derfner's work in the arts and special education is highlighted in the documentary *Spectrum of Hope* that has been presented with: the National Inclusion Project at the National VSA Conference, the Pratt Institute, ArtsConnection, and the NYC Department of Education. She and her school are the recipients of: the Music Theatre International Courage in Theater Award; The Junior Theater Festival Spirit of the Festival Award and Best Ensemble Performance Award; the Broadway Jr. Freddie G. Award; the New-York Historical Society American Musicals Project Award; and the NYC Mayor's Award for Arts & Culture, presented by Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

Prior to her career in education, Tessa excelled as a theatrical producer, director, and playwright in Off-Broadway and Off-Off Broadway theaters. Not only was she the Company Manager for the Lincoln Center Festival and the Henson International Festival of Puppet Theatre, but she also served as manager for singer Diamanda Galás. Tessa holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in American Studies from Barnard College, a Master of Fine Arts degree in Fiction Writing from Vermont College of Fine Arts, and a Master of Education degree from Mercy College.

The Rose has been working with children with special needs (and particularly children on the autism spectrum) for many years. Each year, at least two performances of its mainstage shows are designated "autism-friendly," with special accommodations available for families attending with a child who has autism spectrum disorder. Some of the available accommodations include a private room for congregating before the show, a special reserved seating area, a private post-show question and answer period, a helpful social story to help prepare children for their experience at The Rose and reduced ticket prices.

In addition, The Rose presented *A Palette of Possibility* last fall on its Hitchcock Stage. This innovative theatrical piece was created specifically for children on the autism spectrum by The Rose Theater under the direction of Gretta Berghammer. The piece allowed children to interact with performers, explore the many uses of color and experience the magic of theater in a space best suited for their needs.

**=MORE=**

## Rose Theater Presents Professional Development Seminar

Page 3 of 3

Contact: Kori Radloff, 402-502-4641

The workshop is made possible through a professional development contract with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

There will be a 45-minute lunch break. Attendees should bring their own lunch. Snacks will be provided throughout the day.

Admission to the workshop is free, but space is limited so reservations are needed. To register, visit <http://www.rosetheater.org/education/educators/professional-development-workshop/>.

---

### **About The Rose**

The Rose Theater is one of the largest and most accomplished children's theaters in the nation, with a reputation for enriching the lives of children and families through top-quality professional productions and arts education. In 2016, *American Theatre* magazine named The Rose one of the 20 top children's theaters in the United States. The Rose is committed to making the arts accessible to all children, providing opportunities for thousands of children throughout the community to attend shows and participate in classes each year. Over the course of a year, approximately 70,000 people attend the public performances held at the theater, and nearly 30,000 students attend field trip shows annually. The theater strives to introduce young people to a mix of both traditional favorites and ground-breaking original productions. A number of plays and musicals have made their world premiere on The Rose stage, including *Pete the Cat: The Musical*, *Sherlock Holmes & the First Baker Street Irregular*, *Zen Ties*, *Buffalo Bill's Cowboy Band*, and *The Grocer's Goblin & The Little Mermaid*. We take pride knowing that The Rose is the place where children of all ages experience theater for the first time, and we are dedicated to helping them appreciate theater for a lifetime.

###