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KCSARC AND SCT JOIN FORCES FOR THE THIRD YEAR TO HELP TEENS CONFRONT ISSUE OF BULLYING

In-school workshops provide a safe place for students to explore difficult issues

(Seattle, WA) — Seattle Children's Theatre (SCT) and King County Sexual Assault Resource Center (KCSARC) are joining forces to help schools address the complex issues of bullying and the impact of being a bystander. In conjunction with SCT's production of *The Shape of a Girl*, the two organizations have jointly developed in-school workshops to be presented to 40 King County middle and high school classes in February, March and April.

These classes will receive both a pre- and post-play workshop to address the issues in *The Shape of a Girl*, and in their lives, in more depth. Two workshop leaders, one from SCT and one from KCSARC, will facilitate the one-hour sessions. The workshops, funded by KCSARC and free to schools, will incorporate drama activities and discussion to enhance reflective dialogue and promote critical thinking among the students. KCSARC will also provide each classroom with a packet of information that will give the students additional tools for dealing with difficult subjects.

The partnership between SCT and KCSARC, which is in its third year, will result in successful outreach to over 120 classrooms. Last year, workshops were facilitated around SCT's production of *The Outsiders*, and two years ago, around *The Wrestling Season*.

"The success of the workshops has grown every year as we continue to learn how to strengthen our partnership with KCSARC and take advantage of what each of us brings to the experience," said Karen Sharp, SCT Program Director, Education Programs.

Inspired by the real-life tragedy of a teenage girl who was killed by a group of her peers, *The Shape of a Girl* raises questions about female bullying by delving into the thoughts and feelings of 15-year-old Braidie. Facing up to the aggression around

her, and to her own role in that violence, Braidie's courageous, honest examination of her life shows us the often-subtle, but serious, ways girls influence each other.

"The teaching goals for the project this year highlight the role of the bystander and the tool of observation," said Sharp. "*Shape* is a perfect fit for our partnership, and schools are not only excited to have us come in, but in many cases are required to spend some time addressing the issue of bullying in their curriculum."

"Until recently, bullying has been dismissed as a trivial problem", says Mary Ellen Stone, Executive Director of KCSARC. "Bullying can be a pre-courser to much more serious violence, including sexual assault. Stopping bullying behavior is important to stopping other forms of violence."

The Shape of a Girl is recommended for ages 12 and older. Public performances run Fridays at 7 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays at 2 and 5:30 p.m. from February 27 through April 4 in the Eve Alvord Theatre at Seattle Center. Tickets range in price from \$14 to \$26 and may be purchased by calling SCT's ticket office at (206) 441-3322 or by visiting www.sct.org.

Seattle Children's Theatre, in its 29th season, performs September through June in the Charlotte Martin and Eve Alvord Theatres at Seattle Center. Since its inception, SCT has become the second largest children's theatre in the nation and has gained acclaim as a leading producer of theatre, education programs and new scripts for young people. SCT has presented 163 plays, 82 of which have been world premieres, and entertained nearly 4 million children.

Founded in 1976, KCSARC is a private non-profit agency committed to ending the silence surrounding sexual assault, and to eliminating sexual abuse and assault through community education and prevention programs. In 2003, KCSARC served more than 3300 victims and their family members, at no charge. Its 24-hour resource and information line is **888-99-VOICE**. More information is also available at www.kcsarc.org.

For more information on the partnership between Seattle Children's Theatre and King Country Sexual Assault Resource Center, or on the workshops, call (206) 443-0807.

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