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Seattle Children’s Theatre launches new mental health curriculum following longtime partnership with Kaiser Permanente

Seattle, Wash.— Following a four-year partnership, Seattle Children’s Theatre (SCT) and Kaiser Permanente of Washington have decided to conclude its Arts-Based Learning (ABL) program as Kaiser Permanente moves toward a shared national theatre education service model. The partnership successfully developed and implemented the ABL program which reached more than 22,000 students and 2,100 teachers by using drama-based initiatives to support the health and wellness in classrooms across Washington State.

“SCT has been a critical partner in the creation, delivery and success of ABL since its launch in 2017. As Kaiser Permanente makes this transition, we thank SCT for its years of deep partnership,” said Jill Patnode Thriving Schools Manager for Kaiser Permanente. During this transition, both organizations are committed to exploring ways to leverage expertise and develop programming in support of students in the community, which includes SCT’s launch of [Creative Drama for Mental Wellness – a workshop series designed specifically for high school students](#).

“The pandemic has significantly impacted the mental health of young people in our region, so theatre education that gives students tools to recognize their emotions and practice self-care is especially important,” said Elizabeth Coen, SCT’s School Programs & Partnerships Manager. “Although we are sad that this terrific partnership is coming to a close, we remain committed to offering high quality school programming that supports students’ social and emotional development.

Creative Drama for Mental Wellness is a 60-minute program designed to bring students and their teachers together in an immersive learning environment that is safe, active, and community focused. Guided by SCT Teaching Artists, participants engage in creative play to strengthen trust and collaboration, and then focus their energies inward using structured activities that encourage self-reflection.

“This new program bridges theatre education with evidence-based strategies in Social-Emotional Learning to help students develop self-awareness and make positive choices in

addressing their mental health needs, even in situations that are unjust or outside of their control,” said Johamy Morales, SCT’s Director of Education and Engagement. “These concepts are rehearsed using role-play exercises within the safety of the classroom so that they develop confidence to advocate for themselves when faced with challenges in the real world.”

Previously offered through ABL, *Ghosted*, a touring production for students in 9-12 grade and RISE-Up, a professional development workshop for teachers, administrators, and school staff, will transition to Kaiser Permanente’s Educational Theatre Education Program. As Kaiser Permanente transitions to this new model, delivery of *Ghosted* and RISE UP workshops in Washington will be paused until the 2022-23 school year. If your school or district is interested in booking a workshop, please reach out to Haley Ballenger, Program Manager at Kaiser Permanente, haley.x.ballenger@kp.org for more information. Booking slots for next school year will begin Spring 2022.

“SCT has had a tremendous opportunity to work alongside Kaiser Permanente and we are honored to have helped develop programming that will continue to meet the needs of our national communities,” said Kevin Malgesini, SCT’s Managing Director. “Although we will certainly miss this partnership, we are excited to expand our curriculum and scope of work through workshops and residencies that are unique for every classroom.”

To learn more about [this](#) or other SCT’s @ Your School programs for elementary, middle, and high schools, [click here](#), or contact Elizabeth Coen, School Programs & Partnerships Manager at elizabethc@sct.org.

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Seattle Children’s Theatre celebrates its 47th season in 2021-2022 and is recognized as a leading producer of professional theatre, educational programs and new works for young audiences, serving more than 6 million children. Since 1975, SCT has produced 269 plays, 115 of which are world premieres, and provides \$1.3 million in significantly reduced or complimentary tickets for schools and community organizations in the Puget Sound area through its Student Access Series. SCT’s mission is to provide children of all ages and backgrounds access to professional theatre, with a focus on new works, and theatre education. For many children, we are the first, and sometimes, sole, exposure they have to live theatre.