

# EDUCATION & COMMUNITY OUTREACH BACKGROUNDER

The Geffen Playhouse has six major education initiatives that engage more than **18,000** students and community members in the live arts each year, touching people of all ages who otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity to experience theater. These programs extend the reach of traditional education programs to include children from as young as toddlers at the theater's **Saturday Scene** performances, to seniors as old as 100 with the Geffen's landmark **CREATE** program.

## STUDENT MATINEES

The foundation of the theater's education program, Student Matinees began in 1997 with a free performance of *Harriet's Return* featuring Debbie Allen. Since then, the Geffen Playhouse has refined the program to consistently provide complimentary tickets and free transportation to see the Geffen's productions for students of Title I, low-performing schools in the Los Angeles area, as well as special groups such as incarcerated youth and members of gang rehabilitation programs. Before each student performance, the Geffen offers pre and post show workshop with its teaching artists to provide in-depth insight and original study guides to the teachers. In addition, all Student Matinee performances are followed by interactive discussions with the actors and staff.

## SCHOOL TOURS

Launched in 2000, the Geffen Playhouse's school tour program brings live performances of professional productions onsite to local elementary and middle public schools. To help the students gain a greater understanding of each performance, the theater's education department prepares age-specific study guides and provides pre and post show workshops tailored individually to each classroom.

## CREATE

The Geffen's CREATE (Community Representatives Engaged in Active Theater Education) program, which began in 2001, is a partnership between the Geffen Playhouse and more than 40 community and social service groups. Through CREATE, the Geffen Playhouse provides access to customized workshops, free performance tickets and post-show discussion groups led by the Geffen's director of education. Called a model program by the city of Los Angeles, CREATE serves an average of 1,900 community members per season.

## SATURDAY SCENE FAMILY PROGRAMMING

Saturday Scene, which began in 2000, introduces theater to its youngest audience as well as encourages multiple generations to get involved through reduced-priced, family-oriented productions. Unlike the other components of Geffen's education program, Saturday Scene focuses on special family programming that is separate and apart from the productions currently in the theater's season. Positioned as an imaginative alternative to Saturday morning television, Saturday Scene performances begin at 11am on select Saturdays throughout the year. As part of the theater's outreach program, complimentary tickets are also offered to children's charities, schools and social service groups. Before each Saturday morning performance, activities will be held that are designed to enhance the experience and prepare viewers for what they are about to see on stage.

## GOLDEN TICKET PROGRAM

Started in 2010, the Golden Ticket Program is a new program designed to significantly improve the quality of life for economically disadvantaged and socially isolated seniors through participatory arts experiences that stimulate them intellectually, creatively, socially and emotionally. As well as providing transportation and tickets to main stage shows, Geffen Playhouse makes study guides and holds pre and post show discussions with seniors.

## STORY PIRATES

The Geffen Playhouse began its Story Pirates partnership in 2009 as a way to expand the resources of the theater's current in-school initiatives. Story Pirates, which was originally founded in New York in 2003, is a nationally recognized arts and literacy organization working to engage students in under-resourced public schools by showing them that their ideas, their words and their stories are important. As such, the cornerstone of the company is the Play/Write Program, a series of creative writing and drama workshops that lead to a musical sketch comedy show acted by professional actors and comedians and comprised entirely of stories written by kids. As a partner of the Geffen Playhouse, Story Pirates recently opened a West Coast branch and now visits over 20 Title I Los Angeles public schools each year in addition to performing for the general public in their weekly Flagship Show at the Kinross Annex and as part of the Geffen Playhouse's Saturday Scene program.