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VITTUM THEATER SELECTED AS CHICAGO SITE FOR THE CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY OF MINNEAPOLIS' NEIGHBORHOOD BRIDGES PROJECT

CHICAGO – The award-winning Vittum Theater (2007 Outstanding New Children's Theatre Company Award from The American Alliance for Theatre in Education) proudly announces that they have been selected as the 2007-2008 Neighborhood Bridges National Dissemination Project Partner for the city of Chicago.

Founded in 1997 by Peter Brosius, artistic director of the Tony Award-winning Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis (CTC), and Jack Zipes, Professor of German and Comparative Literature at the University of Minnesota, Neighborhood Bridges is a comprehensive program of storytelling and creative drama designed to help children develop their critical literacy skills and to transform them into storytellers of their own lives.

The year-round Neighborhood Bridges program brings teaching artists into affiliated classrooms on a weekly basis to work collaboratively with classroom teachers. Through theater games, storytelling, improvisation and creative writing, students develop their abilities to write, speak and think critically. As part of the national Neighborhood Bridges program, CTC disseminates the project to 12 sites across the country. Vittum Theater has been chosen as the Chicago site for this national project. For more information on the Neighborhood Bridges program, visit www.neighborhoodbridges.org.

As part of the partnership between Vittum Theater and Children's Theatre Company, CTC will provide on-site training for the Vittum. CTC teaching artists will demonstrate the Bridges program in local schools, and participants will learn the philosophical underpinning of the Bridges program as well as its teaching pedagogy. In addition, CTC provides Neighborhood Bridges curriculum, administration tools and assessment tools to evaluate the ongoing progress of the students, teaching artists and classroom teachers.

This summer, Vittum Theater Producing Artistic Director Tom Arvetis and Vittum Resident Teaching Artist Amanda Delheimer will attend the 2007 Neighborhood Bridges Conference in Minneapolis to learn more about how the Bridges curriculum can be applied to Vittum Theater's current residency program, the Vittum Learning Partnership (VLP). In the VLP, classrooms throughout Chicago team up with Vittum Theater teaching artists to identify and explore themes rooted in the season, determining which areas of the class curriculum can be investigated deeply with an arts-integration approach. Teachers conclude each partnership with a tested model for arts-integrated lesson-planning and implementation, which they can re-develop over time and across the curriculum. Participating classrooms receive 20 residency hours with a professional theatre artist, lesson plans, supplies, Learning Guides, tickets and transportation to a Vittum Theater performance, and the opportunity to present the students' learning on the Vittum Theater stage. Partnerships are offered for intermediate and upper grade elementary classrooms and are organized around one Vittum Theater production in the fall, winter or spring.

Vittum Theater creates dynamic theatre for young audiences that activates the imagination, inspires dialogue and celebrates community among families, educators and artists. Vittum strives to become Chicago's premiere source for theatrical programming designed for young people ages 8-14 and their families. As educators, Vittum endeavors to be a model for professional development through workshops, residencies and other resources that offer concrete ways to infuse theatre in the classroom. As artists, Vittum seeks to produce renowned stories as well as cultivate new work.

Vittum Theater is a program of Northwestern University Settlement House, the oldest continually operating settlement house in Chicago. Throughout its 116-year history, the Settlement has remained committed to providing resources that empower our neighbors to overcome the obstacles of poverty. Vittum Theater extends this mission by presenting Chicago's young audiences, educators and families with an affordable artistic experience rooted in performance. Last season, Vittum Theater served nearly 13,000 children from 112 schools and numerous households throughout the Chicagoland area.

Vittum Theater is located at 1012 N. Noble St., in the heart of Chicago's West Town neighborhood. Free parking is available, and the theater is close to the Noble St. stop on the #56 Milwaukee bus line and the Division stop on the CTA Blue Line. The theater is wheelchair accessible. For more information on Vittum Theater, call (773) 342-4141 or visit www.vittumtheater.org.

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