

# NTC

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## INSIDE:

NTC Television Special  
Debuts in Seattle

Climate Change Added to  
Portfolio of Programs for  
Teens

NTC Invites Students,  
Teachers and Parents to  
Play at Playworks.com

Build it and they will  
come

Spotlight on NTC Actor  
Mike Rylander

NTC Programs Reinforce  
Classroom Lessons and  
Text Materials

# SPOTLIGHT

## NTC Television Special Debuts in Seattle

Families across America: Put on your favorite TV-viewing PJs, grab the popcorn and nestle into that comfy recliner – NTC’s popular production about personal finance, *Mad About Money*, is coming to television screens around the country! And viewers in Seattle will be the first in the nation to enjoy this unique mixture of entertainment, audience involvement and expert financial advice.

Shot in November, the one-hour television debut of *Mad About Money* will air on Seattle PBS affiliate KCTS TV and be broadcast throughout the state of Washington and into Canada. The show is sponsored by the State of Wash-

We all know that our society’s dependence on fossil fuels threatens the health of our planet through pollution and global warming. NTC is helping to get ahead of the issue with a new in-school tour aimed at middle schoolers – many of whom are becoming socially aware for the first time in their young lives – that teaches about climate change, greenhouse gasses and how easy it can be to help save the planet, one light bulb at a time.

According to the Union of

ington Department of Financial Institutions and correlates with NTC’s *Mad About Money* play touring Washington



Actors James Rodriguez, Clarence Wethern, Eric Avery & Katie Melby on the set of the “*Mad About Money*” TV Special.

schools at the same time.

“In a survey administered by the Jump\$tart Coalition, 65 percent of high school seniors, on average, failed a test

Concerned Scientists, if every U.S. household replaced just one regular incandescent light bulb with a compact fluorescent light bulb, we could prevent 90 billion pounds of greenhouse gas emissions from entering the atmosphere – the equivalent of taking 7.5 million cars off the road. One of the goals of the new NTC production is to encourage audience members and their families to replace incandescent light bulbs in their homes with compact fluorescent bulbs.

of personal finance basics,” said Ward Eames, founder and president of NTC. “The *Mad About Money* Television Special airing in Seattle is the beginning of an exciting NTC initiative to help educate students and families around the country about important financial literacy topics.”

*Mad About Money*, the theatrical performance, has toured schools from coast to coast since 2005, when it opened in New York City. The play currently is running in middle schools throughout California and Washington state, and has appeared in Alaska, Minnesota, Florida, Iowa, New York, North Dakota, Texas, Tennessee and Wisconsin. *Mad About Money* features a  
*(continued on page 2)*

NTC Creative Director Jon Mikkelsen says the show’s format will follow the wildly popular format of *Mad About Money* – four sketches of improvisational comedy. He expects the show to be fully developed and touring by third quarter 2008.

Organizations interested in learning more about the climate change program and how it can add value to your communications efforts, are encouraged to call Katie Grieb at 1-800-858-3999.

## Climate Change Added to Portfolio of Programs for Teens

## NTC Television Special Debuts in Seattle

(continued from page 1)



The Mad About Money TV Special cast posing for their album cover!

pair of professional improvisational actors who play a wide variety of colorful characters in four sketches. While watching a dad teach his son the difference between “needs” and “wants,” or an unsuspecting car buyer learn about credit from a smooth-talking salesman, middle school audience members learn to prioritize how their money is spent, the importance of developing a savings habit and ways to invest for the future.

“The *Mad About Money* TV show not only enhances the lessons taught by the play in school, it brings financial literacy home to the rest of the family,” Eames said. “The live

events and television specials cross promote one another, increasing by millions the potential number of people who hear the messages and then take action.”

What’s more, the *Mad About Money* Television Special contains features not available at the school performances. A panel of local financial experts, for example, is taped in-studio to react to the sketches performed by the actors and to answer questions from a studio audience of students.

Television aficionados residing east of Seattle will be able to watch *Mad About Money* in the comfort of their homes throughout 2008 and beyond as the theater production tours schools around the

country. The TV Special will air twice in selected markets in two half-hour formats on commercial broadcast television. To reinforce the personal finance lessons, *Mad About Money* in-school performances will be scheduled to coincide with television broadcasts in selected cities.

To further augment *Mad About Money* lessons, NTC and its sponsoring partners will distribute educational DVDs that students can bring home; the DVDs contain a special message to parents. And, like all other NTC productions, the in-school performances are accompanied by student workbooks with take-home assignments, classroom posters, teacher guides and on-line assignments through [www.playworks.com](http://www.playworks.com).

## NTC Invites Students, Teachers and Parents to “Play” at Playworks.com



Landing page from Playworks.com.

After donning their virtual construction hats for months, NTC employees are proud of their redesigned educational Web site. Formerly known as NTC LearningCenter.com, the newly renamed Playworks.com offers a fresh look and streamlined approach for students, parents and teachers looking for more information and educational activities on topics addressed in NTC programs.

NTC General Manager Bill Turner and Artistic Director Jon Mikkelsen, the architects of Playworks.com, simplified the site by highlighting only

current productions on the homepage. This change helps visitors find the information they need within seconds of entering the site.

“We’re trying to keep the homepage focused on the shows we have on the road right now,” Mikkelsen said. “If a student sees a performance of *The Water Pirates of Neverland* at his school, for example, he and his parents can log onto the site and quickly find a link to information about the importance of water and ways to conserve and keep water sources clean.”

The colorful, animated site engages students, parents and teachers, all of whom are

guided to the appropriate content via clearly identified channels. Students can view video clips of NTC productions and reinforce their knowledge with interactive quizzes and games. A new section for middle-schoolers allows them to build on the lessons learned in *Mad About Money*, *Food Fit N’ Fun*, and other shows geared specifically for their age group. Parents can play along and learn more about each show’s sponsor by linking to its Web site through Playworks.com. Teachers can complete evaluation forms online and find new ways to integrate the supplementary material into their lesson plans.

## Build it and they will come!

Ever wonder how NTC actors, who travel an average of 9,000 miles per 10-week tour with all of their props and sets, manage without stage hands and moving trucks?

Collapsible, mobile sets is the first answer.

Nathaniel Johnson is the second answer.

Over the years, NTC has perfected a method for which a single pair of actors can safely and efficiently set up and strike sets that are large enough to fill a gymnasium or school stage, yet can be tucked into the back of a rental car. All of NTC's sets are crafted from three panels of painted canvas attached to

a frame made of half-inch galvanized pipe that's easy to break down, fold up, stow away and replace, if necessary, in the middle of nowhere.

"Every year, we purchase canvas by the hundreds of yards and prepare it here in our Minneapolis shop," said Pat Rowan, Director of Touring Operations. Once a script is developed, such as NTC's newest obesity prevention program *Food Fit'n'Fun*, and the raw canvas has been cut, sewn and affixed with grommets, Johnson's telephone rings. It's time to draw sketches for the sets.

After Uncle Nate (so named for his kinship to an NTC



**Nate Johnson hand paints all of NTC's sets.**

employee) finalizes the sketches, he inks them by hand onto the canvas panels and fills in the outlines with vibrant paints applied with an airbrush.

Johnson has been creating NTC's colorful sets since 1999. To date, he has created more than 60 of them – each with his trademark signature of a tiny mouse tucked in an unobtrusive corner.

## Spotlight on NTC Actor Mike Rylander

*Recently Named Cosmopolitan magazine's 2007 North Dakota "Bachelor of the Year"*

Most people would think a girlfriend or maybe even a proud mother would nominate her son for *Cosmopolitan's* Bachelor of the Year Contest. Not the case for 26-year-old, North Dakota born, NTC actor Mike Rylander, who was noticed by a modeling agent when he was shopping at the Mall of America six years ago. Then recently while touring with NTC's *Mad About Money* production, the agent called Mike to inquire about nominating him for *Cosmopolitan's* 2007 Bachelor of the Year Contest.

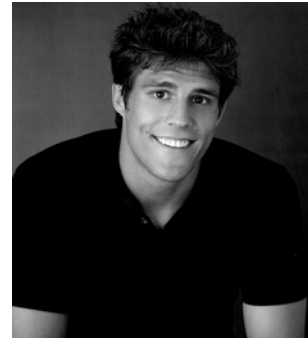
Following this inquiry, Mike received a call from a *Cosmopolitan* representative informing him that they were impressed and he should get ready to be North Dakota's bachelor of the year! Mike was asked to submit a photo and answer profile questions that were featured in the "Bachelor Bonanza 2007" section of the November issue.

While Mike didn't beat Mr. Ohio for the Bachelor title, he was invited to New York City in October for *Cosmopolitan's* Bachelor media release party and appeared on

NBC's "Today Show" on October 18 with his 49 male competitors.

"The *Cosmo* opportunity was a fun experience that I'll add to my acting and modeling portfolio," says Rylander. "But my real love is acting."

While Mike is humble about his recent *Cosmopolitan* fame, the NTC staff is more than happy to add another first to their list of actor credentials: NTC performer Mike Rylander tops *Cosmo's* hottest men charts!



**Mike Rylander toured in NTC's *Mad About Money, Pay Yourself First* during the fall of 2007.**

## NTC Programs Reinforce Classroom Lessons and Text Material

All NTC productions are rich with educational content ranging from topics on money management to alternative energy sources to eating right and exercising. NTC programs are an educational resource teachers can draw on to spark discussion, augment their current curriculum, and with take-home activities included in every workbook, help encourage parental involvement. Teachers are often thrilled to discover the lessons in NTC plays directly correspond with the topics they're covering in their classrooms.



### Renewable Energy Boomerang Jack and the Unseen Green Machine

"The material that was covered during the performance went right

along with our science and social studies curriculum. It was a great supplement!"

Jan Wyatt, Teacher

Cairo Elementary School, Cairo, MO



### Fitness and Nutrition

#### Food, Fit 'n Fun

"The students in my classroom truly enjoyed the program. This really encouraged my class to think about what they are eating. My

students are bringing in less junk food since the program."

Cynthia Bowser-Spurial

James Alcorn School, Philadelphia, PA



### Water Conservation

#### The Water Pirates of Neverland

"We look forward to this performance every single year. We are never disappointed. Brain research shows

that we need to hear the message over and over. I actually learned something new myself today! Thanks so much for offering this free and valuable event.

Louise Snyder

Thalia Elementary, Virginia Beach, VA



### Energy Safety

#### Louie, Louie

"The NTC program was very educational for my students. The program could not have come at a better time

since the students were studying different kinds of energies in science this week. Thank you for the extra visuals my students got to observe, and keep up the great work."

Adan Garcia, 5th Grade Teacher

Munoz Elementary School, Donna, TX



### Financial Literacy

#### Mad About Money

"It was fabulous having a professional theatre company

perform for the student body. Our students don't get the opportunity to see live theatre and receive the cultural enrichment brought forth through drama. It was a valuable and educational production that enlightened and informed our students about the value and importance of money. I would love to have your company come out and perform other meaningful topics with our students and staff. Thanks again for this magnificent opportunity."

Karen Redway, Teacher

Gompers Middle School, Los Angeles, CA

## Holiday Greetings



During this time of joy and laughter we wish to thank you for all you do to help others throughout the year.

Happy Holidays from all of us at  
The National Theatre for Children.