



SPOTLIGHT

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Welcome to NTC Spotlight

Welcome to the first issue of NTC Spotlight!

You'll find a familiar theme echoing through

these pages. The National Theatre for Children's mission—Teach. Entertain. Inspire—is the cornerstone for all that we do, and we're proud to demonstrate how this secret formula benefits our strategic partners and students, teachers and parents. NTC offers proven marketing tools for clients, while our productions help thousands of children and families make smart,

informed decisions on living a healthy and happy life. These three elements are all important on their own, but together they bring about

amazing results. We have developed several unique **teaching** methods that combined with an **entertaining** format—witty dialogue, edgy humor, funny characters—lessons come alive. But the real magic happens when students and their families are **inspired** to make better choices. When they decide to snack on an apple instead of a candy bar, turn off the faucet while brushing their teeth or save half of their allowance for a rainy day, we know that we're making a difference. No other social marketing strategy provides such results.

So take a few moments and enjoy the following stories and, if you're so inspired, drop me a line. We're eager to keep you up to date on our latest news, and we hope you feel free to do the same.

Ward Eames

President, The National Theatre for Children



NoMore (Pat Rowan) and SeeMore (Dana Munson) in NTC's production of WhatAWaste.

Expert Tested, Kid Approved

Studies confirm that NTC productions make the grade with educators and students alike

At a middle school in Anytown, USA, the gym fills with students who are excited that they're missing their regular math class. They meet two actors from The National Theatre for Children (NTC) who ask them about their favorite things—singers, hangouts, snacks. Minutes later, the students watch in amaze-

ment as some very familiar situations come to life on stage. The actors, now portraying middle-schoolers, must decide how to satisfy their unlimited wants with their limited allowances. But as the characters learn about budgeting and saving, are the students in the audience enlightened as well?

Absolutely, according to a recent report by Lewis Mandell, professor and former dean of the School of Management at the University at Buffalo. Dr. Mandell recently calculated the impact of NTC's *Googolplex@school* show, which teaches the importance of responsible savings and money use, on stu-

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Googplex@school
workbook and poster



“Creation of a theatre production provided a feasible, cost-effective way to change children’s knowledge and behavior,” Dr. Perry said.

2006 Friend of Public Education Award recipient, Ward Eames, founder and president of The National Theatre for Children.



Expert Tested, Kid Approved (continued from page 1)

dents at 10 Chicago-area middle schools. The students were given identical tests both before and after the performance that measured their knowledge, behavior and attitude toward saving. Not surprisingly, Dr. Mandell found that *Googplex@school* boosted the students’ knowledge about saving and helped them adapt a more positive attitude toward using their money responsibly.

Googplex@school appears to be a promising intervention, particularly among younger students,” Dr. Mandell reports. “Given the total time requirement of less than an hour, this improvisational play seems to have been remarkably ef-

fective in improving their knowledge.”

Tried and Tested

Googplex@school is far from an anomaly. Many NTC programs have been studied by some of the most well-respected academics and organizations in the country, and their research echoes Dr. Mandell’s findings. Tufts University’s Center on Nutrition Communication evaluated NTC’s nutrition education program *The Prince of the Pyramid*. Wisconsin Electric assessed the effectiveness of *The Legend of Mongoose Mountain*, an electrical-safety program it created with NTC, and the School District of Philadelphia

tested NTC’s impact on its students’ reading skills. The results were clear: NTC performances create a lasting impression on students, helping them retain the lessons, whether they are in money, fitness or environmental conservation.

The University of Minnesota School of Public Health Professor Cheryl Perry has analyzed several NTC productions, such as *2Smart 2Smoke* and *All’s Well that Eats Well*. In a study published in the *Journal of School Health*, Dr. Perry noted that NTC programs not only impact students’ behavior, but they do so in an economical manner.

Moving Policy and Improving Young Minds

NTC’s Ward Eames Honored by School Districts

NTC is thrilled to announce that its founder and president, Ward Eames, has been honored with a 2006 “Friend of Public Education” award from the Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD) in Minnesota.

AMSD singled out Ward for his success in creating an official financial-reporting program for Minnesota school districts.

“On behalf of AMSD, we are proud to honor Ward Eames for his tireless advocacy efforts for public education in Minnesota” said Scott Croonquist, executive director of AMSD. “We especially applaud Ward’s leadership in creating a tool that makes school financial reporting understandable for the local business community and general public for the first time. This is truly a milestone for Minnesota’s education community.”

As of January 2007, all school financial reports in Minnesota will be required by law to be transformed into a new Excel format that will be available for the general public to view online.

“I am committed to serving public education through NTC’s in-school theatre programs and as an advocate for our children,” said Eames.

Stories from the Road



It was a typical day at the office for Nate Metcalf, a 10-year National Theatre for Children veteran. He and his partner arrived at one of the many elementary schools where they would present *Shockzilla*, a high-energy, character-filled show about electrical safety. But when the centerpiece of the production—an extraterrestrial, dinosaur-like creature named Shockzilla—stepped on stage, he gave the audience of kindergarteners the fright of their lives! In an effort to calm the students, the actor lifted off the head of the costume to show the kids that it was OK, but this caused the youngsters to think that Shockzilla had eaten the poor thespian. So what does an NTC actor do in this situation?

“My partner had to perform the rest of the show without wearing Shockzilla’s head,” Nate laughs. “As we often say at NTC, be flexible and solve problems.”

Though he now spends most of his time directing and writing new shows at NTC headquarters in Minneapolis, Nate has years of great stories and memories from his 27 tours in 31 states. And while life on the road had its challenges, the light-hearted moments never failed to brighten his day.

The students provided many of the laugh-out-loud moments in Nate’s career. While starring in NTC’s *The Power of the Pyramid*, he played a restaurant

owner who was threatening to fire a waiter if he didn’t learn more about fitness and nutrition. When it became time to call upon an audience volunteer, the student chastised Nate for being too mean to his employee.

“We give the kids liberty to be rambunctious and encourage them to shout answers,” he says. “But the scolding was unexpected!”

Memories like these have convinced Nate that NTC is a fantastic place to develop a career in theater. Not only is NTC a tremendous confidence builder, but it also allows actors to bring live theatre to kids who, in a world where video games and movies rule, may not have the opportunity to experience it otherwise. “It’s not high art. It’s fun and silly,” Nate says. “But at the end of the day, I get to hold my head up high and say that I taught kids not to waste water. That’s pretty cool!”

*Interested in becoming an NTC performer?
Call the Audition Hot Line at 800-858-3999 ext. 2*



Nate Metcalf (right) as Pierre Cleauseau and Trevor Hartman as Captain Doorknob in *The Water Pirates of Neverland*.

Where Are They Now?

Do you think your life feels like a circus sometimes?

For former National Theatre for Children performer Gregory Parks, it’s a reality. His experience at NTC led him to a career with Feld Entertainment, Inc., which produces the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. Gregory spent four years as a clown with Ringling Bros. and now tours the world with *Disney Live! Winnie the Pooh*. Gregory credits NTC for instilling in him a strong work ethic and showing him that work and fun can—and should—mix. “NTC reinforced the importance of having fun with what you’re doing. Work hard, have fun and the success will follow,” Gregory says.



Gregory Parks as a Hunny Helper in *Disney Live!*

Teacher Feedback Keeps NTC Teaching By Entertaining

NTC relies on feedback from teachers to measure the success of its programs. Using an online form, teachers evaluate each NTC performance's theme, educational content and ability to capture their students' attention. The evaluations are invaluable to NTC as they examine each production's effectiveness in helping students learn and retain new knowledge.

Since teacher evaluations are a valued measuring tool, NTC offers teachers across the country the chance to win \$250 worth of academic books from Sundance/Newbridge Educational Publishing for returning their evaluations to NTC. At the end of each school year, NTC randomly chooses one evaluation from the pool and the winning teacher receives the book-prize.

Lynn Swallow, a Perry Elementary second grade teacher from Selma, Ind., received NTC's first-ever book prize during the 2004-2005 school year.

"My students loved the Louie the Lightning Bug performance. It was both informative and fun," said Swallow. "I was so excited to discover I had won the books for my classroom. It was awesome to be able to add to my library! I highly recommend NTC to other schools!"



Debra Redinger shares some of her new books with her second grade class.

NTC congratulates Debra Redinger, a second grade teacher from East Elementary in Weatherford, Okla., who recently was awarded with the 2005-2006 book-prize.

"I was surprised and thrilled to hear from NTC that I won free books for my classroom," Redinger said. "NTC's actors made my kids laugh while learning about safety with electricity."

"NTC's actors made my kids laugh while learning about safety with electricity. I highly recommend NTC to other schools."

Allina Mummy wins Mascot Invitational

The Allina Food Pyramid Mummy, best known for his starring role in the NTC production *The Power of the Pyramid*, celebrated his victory in the Harry and Shelly's Mascot Invitational at the 2006 Twin Cities Marathon. To the delight of young fans, the Mummy outran several local corporate mascots to win the race, which was part of the Twin Cities Marathon's day of family events.

"We're proud of our Mummy's win, of course," said Ellie Zuehlke, Allina's director of community benefits. "But I'm not surprised, he's so athletic. After all, he's helping kids at schools all over Minnesota win the fight against obesity by showing them how healthy eating and exercise gives them the power to be fit."



The Allina Mummy poses with "fit kids" at the 2006 Harry and Shelly's Mascot Invitational