

Nutcracker Suite Includes 36 Santa Monica Ballerinas

A West Los Angeles Family Tradition Celebrates its 36th Year

Santa Monica (November, 2008) -- For 36 years, audiences have thrilled to Westside Ballet's annual lavish full-length production of "The Nutcracker," showcasing the most promising young dancers in Los Angeles. It's the story of Clara, a girl who receives a nutcracker for Christmas and is transported to a magical world of Sugarplum Fairies and villainous mice.

Brought to life by falling snow and a Christmas tree that grows, Westside Ballet's Nutcracker is not only the longest running production in Los Angeles history – it's the closest to George Balanchine's original version in quality, integrity, and musicality.

Special attention to costumes, choreography and characters come from the input of an esteemed faculty at Westside School of Ballet, located in Santa

Monica.

Overseeing the production as Artistic Director is Yvonne Mounsey, founder of Westside Ballet and former soloist and principal dancer with New York City Ballet. During her distinguished career as a performer, she joined New York City Ballet as a principal dancer for George Balanchine. There she created roles in Balanchine's The

Westside Ballet Announces 2008 Performances of the Nutcracker Ballet

Nutcracker and La Valse, Jerome Robbins's The Cage, Fanfare, and The Concert, and Frederick Ashton's Picnic at Tintagel.

Westside Ballet draws its company from the affiliated

Westside Ballet School, customarily considered the premier ballet school in Los Angeles. Students have gone on to distinguished careers with the country's top ballet companies.

As a special engagement, this year's cast was invited to perform excerpts of the Nutcracker with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at Disney Concert Hall as part of "Twas the Week Before Christmas."

Past Nutcracker productions have included Monique Meunier (New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theater), Anna Liceica (American Ballet Theater), Martine Harley (Houston Ballet), Melissa Barak (New York City Ballet, Los Angeles Ballet), Andrew Veyette (New York City Ballet), Kylee Kitchens (Pacific Northwest Ballet) and many more.

This season, The Nutcracker will be hosted in two locations. It will first appear in Smothers Theatre at Pepperdine University

on November 29 at 2:00 pm & 7:30 pm, and November 30 at 1:30 pm & 5:30 pm. Location: 24255 Pacific Coast Highway, Malibu, CA. Call 310-828-6211 for tickets or visit www.westside-ballet.com.

Performances resume at the Wadsworth Theatre in Brentwood/Los Angeles on December 13 at 2:00 pm & 7:30 pm, and December 14 at 1:00 pm & 5:00 pm. Wadsworth Theater address: 11301 Wilshire Blvd, Brentwood, CA 90073. Call Ticketmaster at 213-365-3500 or purchase through www.ticketmaster.com. All tickets are \$26.

Westside Ballet Company, company was created by Yvonne Mounsey and Rosemary Valaire in 1970.

The company provides the promising young dancers of the Westside School of Ballet the performance opportunities that are so vital to their growth — and makes dance more accessible to local children and families. Based in Santa Monica, California, Westside Ballet Company now comprises approximately 100 dancers, ages 8 to 18.

-- Livia Squires



Million Dollar Grant to St. Johns

\$1 Million Everychild Foundation Grant Goes to St. John's Well Child and Family Center

St. John's Well Child and Family Center is the recipient of the Everychild Foundation's Annual \$1 million grant. The grant will implement the agency's environmental health project, Healthy Homes, Healthy Kids.

The announcement was made on November 13 by Everychild Foundation President and Founder, Jacqueline Caster, and Hilary Nelson Jacobs, Chair of the foundation's Grant Screening Board.

Each year the group of 215 philanthropic Los Angeles women selects one project to receive a grant award of \$1 million. The project must fill a critical and unmet need of children in the Los Angeles area by easing suffering due to disease, disability, neglect or poverty.

Healthy Homes, Healthy Kids uses a comprehensive approach to help children who have literally been sickened by slum housing. The program specifically targets two primary illnesses: asthma, one of the leading causes of missed school days, and lead poisoning, a serious condition that can lead to brain damage, kidney disease and nerve damage.

The project integrates comprehensive pediatric medical care with education, case management services and tenant assistance to reduce children's exposure to health hazards present in their homes including lead-based paint, mold, vermin, cockroaches and dust mites. The project uses successful strategies employed by St. John's in earlier, smaller projects.

"Our members like this project because it clearly seeks to repair a part of the health care system that is broken in impoverished communities in the Los Angeles area," said Jacqueline

Caster. "The program breaks the cycle of illness by educating families, providing resources and materials and helping them navigate the housing bureaucracy."

Over an 18-month period, Healthy Homes, Healthy Kids will provide comprehensive health care and educational services to 4,000 children suffering from asthma, lead poisoning, or other serious environmental conditions. Three hundred of these children would also receive intensive home-based case management services.

The project will improve the health of hundreds of other children because the vast majority of families in the community have multiple children and many share homes with others. In addition, the project will eventually have a large-scale impact on slum housing by channeling compelling health data into advocacy that helps children across Los Angeles.

Horseback Riding at Will Rogers State Park

California State Parks announced today that horseback riding is now available at Will Rogers State Historic Park.

Park Superintendent Lynette Hernandez said the park is welcoming Rocking K Horse Rentals to the park. Said Hernandez, "Our visitors will be able to enjoy a trail-lead horseback ride on the beautiful Will Rogers Loop Trail that leads to Inspiration Point, which provides a magnificent view of our local mountain ranges and the Santa Monica Bay."

Rentals are available on Saturday's and Sunday's from 8am to 4pm. (Approximately 1 hour, last ride leaves at 4pm)

Children and Adults welcome. Cost is \$40.00 per person. All rides are on a first come, first serve basis, or call for reservations at; (310) 597-1480.

SM Red Cross free flu shots, Thursday, Nov. 20.

Flu shots will be given out from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008, at the SM Red Cross chapter, 1450 11th Street (near Broadway). If you are pregnant, a health care worker, nursing home or chronic-care facility resident, over 50-years of age and/or have a chronic condition such as asthma, heart disease, kidney disorder or diabetes, you are eligible for the free flu shot. If you are allergic to eggs or have any other serious illness, consult with your doctor before obtaining any flu shots.

Phone: 310-394-3773 or go online at www.redcrossofsantamonica.org.