

Funds Distribution Report

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Taproot Theatre Company

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Organization's General Goals:
Founded in 1976, Taproot Theatre Company tells stories of hope, serving the Pacific Northwest through live theatre and educational programs.

Date of Award:	Level:
2020 Q4	\$500 to \$2,500

For more information, please read the attached report from Taproot Theatre Company.

8802 27th Ave NE
Tulalip, WA 98271
TulalipCares.org

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July 16, 2021

Marilyn Sheldon
Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund
8802 – 27th Ave. NE
Tulalip, WA 98271

Karen Lund
Producing Artistic Director

Re: Final Report Letter: Q4 2020 14.2

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A THEATRE OF HOPE

Taproot Theatre Company creates theatre experiences to brighten the spirit, engage the mind and deepen the understanding of the world around us while inspiring imagination, conversation and hope.

We value faith.
We respect people.
We celebrate theatre.

Dear Marilyn,

I'm writing to once again express our thanks to the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund for your generous grant to Taproot Theatre Company. I'm excited to share this final report regarding the completion of our Road Company's 2020-2021 "virtual school tour" for Taproot's bullying prevention educational plays.

The 2020-2021 school year was drastically different for all schools in Washington State. Our teachers and administrators have proven themselves heroes; pivoting to adapt for online instruction and creating new schedules for hybrid school days. Students, teachers, and parents have spent this past school year doing the best they can during a pandemic reality. Here at Taproot Theatre, as we were planning for our 2020-2021 Road Company bullying prevention plays, we were very aware that these kinds of stressful conditions create an even greater need for social/emotional tools to equip kids and families coping with an ongoing crisis situation. With teachers physically removed from interacting with their students, it is crucial that students are empowered to report bullying behavior (including cyberbullying) to trusted adults.

Like so many schools and families, the Taproot Road Company team was also adapting to a new reality and looking for a way to make our bullying prevention plays available to students despite the COVID-19 school closures. Thanks in part to your support, we did it! Taproot's Road Company team recorded two of our elementary school bullying prevention plays in August 2020. As Producing Artistic Director, I have prior directing experience in both film and television, and I got a chance to put those skills back to work behind a camera again.

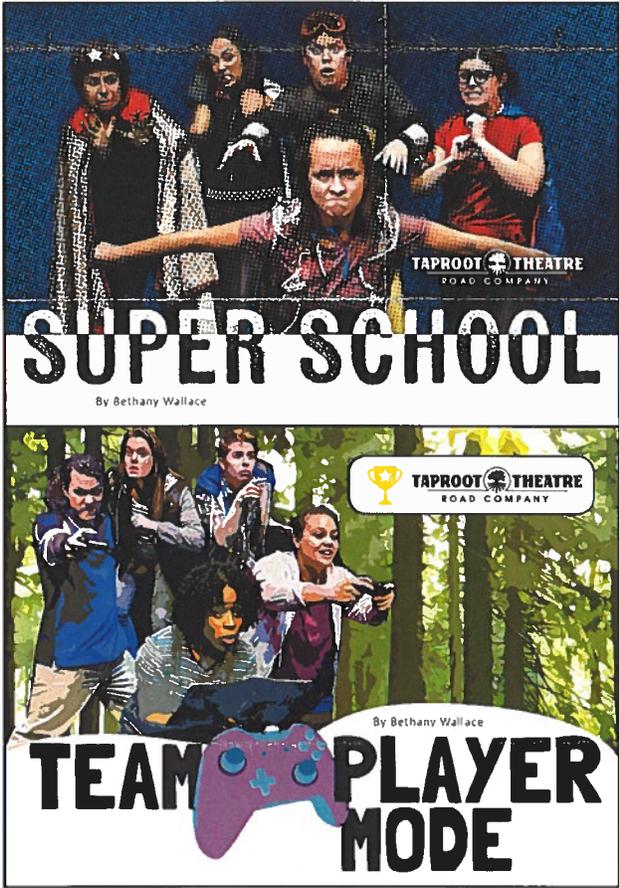
These recorded plays were then made available to schools via online streaming sessions so that they could show these bullying prevention plays as "virtual student assemblies"



for their school population. A classroom study guide was also sent out with each play to help teachers lead students in Zoom discussions after they watched the bullying prevention play.

This was an experimental project for Taproot Theatre’s Road Company this year, and we are so grateful for the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund’s trust and support of our mission. Your generous grant of [REDACTED] helped the Road Company’s bullying prevention plays to reach students across Washington State, even during the midst of pandemic isolation. Thanks to your support the Road Company’s “virtual tour” reached 49,213 students in 96 schools in 12 counties. The fact that so many schools made room in their complicated online schedules for a bullying prevention play is a tribute to the quality of the Road Company’s work and the need that these schools felt for bullying prevention education to continue.

This past year, the Road Company’s virtual tour featured two elementary school plays teaching the bullying prevention strategies and Social/Emotional Learning concepts highlighted in the Committee for Children’s *Second Step* bullying prevention curriculum.



Team Player Mode presented a story of student friendships and challenges as the characters interact in person and within the online gaming world. This play also taught students skills to “recognize, report and refuse” bullying behavior. **Super School** told the story of young superheroes who are learning to use their superpowers for good. In addition to bullying prevention strategies, **Super School** also dealt with themes of empathy and taught students ways to manage their emotions.

One of our ongoing goals at Taproot Theatre is to keep our school touring program accessible to as many schools as possible. We are pleased to report that the decrease in production costs this year allowed us to offer the virtual student assembly experience at a lower price for schools. In 2020-2021, our bullying prevention plays served 45 low income schools (46% of all schools served this year). We were able to reach schools in Benton, Island, Clark, Grant, Island, Jefferson, King, Pierce, Snohomish, Suffolk, Thurston and Yakima Counties. We are also particularly excited to report that the new virtual format allowed us to serve

more schools in more remote areas. Taproot’s 2020-2021 virtual tour, for example, reached twice as many Yakima students as we have in previous in-person tours.

During the 2020-2021 school year, teachers, students and families were all forced to try new ideas and new ways of working. Taproot’s Road Company was in the same situation and we are grateful to all the schools who decided to take a chance on us and try out a new format for bullying prevention student assemblies. In the final part of our Final Report, therefore, we wanted to let our teacher partners speak for themselves. Here is some of their feedback from last year:

Centennial Elementary School: *Myself and my students LOVED it! I had a student request that I share the online code in Schoology so they could watch again. Later he said he watched it several more times. This program goes hand-in-hand with our Second Steps Social/Emotional Curriculum. The use of Super School was so engaging for the kids. The sound effects were great and the storyline hooked the kids. We really enjoyed the show. The kids were disappointed when the online code expired. Thanks for bringing theater to our on-line audience.*

Southworth Elementary: *My students were engaged throughout the entire 45 minutes! Zoom fatigue is setting in for students. This was a great break from our regular schedule.*

East Ridge Elementary: *I was really happy with how well the performance was received by students and staff. To be honest, I was worried how our younger students, specifically K and 1st, would engage with the content. However, they really seemed to enjoy and digest a lot of the content. I did some follow-up bullying prevention lessons afterwards to see what students learned from the performance, and a lot of students remembered the three R's which I thought was fantastic!!*

Dieringer Heights Elementary: *Staff and kids loved it. One staff member said it was one of the best ever. She also indicated it was great for both lower and upper elementary. Thanks for adjusting to the times.*

McDonald International School: *Teachers and students found the virtual assembly, Team Player Mode, entertaining and it provided an access point to common language around bullying. It was empowering! Fantastic experience.....now we will want to book Super School :-)*

Discovery Elementary: *My students were totally engaged, and we had a great discussion before and afterwards. Almost 1/3 of my class said they had been bullied at our school (!) so we had a good talk about what bullied really means....We also had a good discussion about bystanders, and one child asked me about it again at the end of the day – “What is a bystander again?” – so I could tell the assembly made an impression on him. I thought the assembly was particularly good because it covered different, and more subtle, situations...I would definitely recommend it. In some ways the assembly was even better as a video. The kids could focus and see much better that they can in a live assembly. Thank you!*

We are proud of all the moments of learning and connection that are described above. And these are moments made possible by the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund! Thank you for being a part of this important work. This past year has been an extraordinary one in so many ways, and now we are looking forward to getting the Taproot Road Company back on the road for the 2021-2022 school year.

If you would like to learn more about Taproot’s Road Company bullying prevention plays or would like to see a performance at a school near you, then please feel free to contact our grant writer, Sonja Lowe at 206.529.3672. Thank you again for your support!

With deep gratitude,



Karen Lund
Producing Artistic Director
Taproot Theatre Company