



For Immediate Release  
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**J. Walton Bissell Foundation Funds**  
**Little Theatre of the Deaf New Play Development**  
**at O’Neill Center Residency**

**West Hartford, CT:** The National Theatre of the Deaf is pleased to announce that they are the proud recipient of a grant from the **J. Walton Bissell Foundation** funding a new play development residency at the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center beginning May 7 thru May 18, 2012. The new play project will focus on the development of original playwriting, script improvisation and concept to the stage rehearsals for a touring production. The conceptual work is entitled ***The W-5 The Stories Behind Who, What, Where, When and Why.***

This original theatrical work is being written and directed by NTD Interim Executive Director, **Betty Beekman** and will feature the Little Theatre of the Deaf acting company; **Joey Caverly, Christina Cogswell** and **Christina Stevens**. There are preliminary plans to stage the work that comes from the residency later this summer to ready the production for the 2012-13 touring season.

**Ms. Beekman describes her concept as follows:**

*Join **The W-5** and discover the stories behind Who, What, Where, When and Why. Take a trip with the “Where” story and “Who” knows “Why” will take you! Have fun with the Little Theatre of the Deaf as they combine visually exciting **American Sign Language** with the spoken word to create a performance that will be **seen, heard and long remembered.***

**There will be an invited reading of the first stage of work completed on the script on Friday, May 18 at 7:30 pm.**

Following the residency at the O’Neill, Beekman will finalize the script and schedule rehearsals to mount the production. Ultimately the 50-minute program will be filled with stories, interactive improvisations and signing fun will draw the youth and family audiences in as the **Little Theatre of the Deaf** entertains, engages, and educates its audiences.

**Each presenting school will receive the company’s acclaimed *Learn and Study Together Guide*.** It will provide exercises and ideas for working with classroom curriculum and providing information to educators **about the third most used language in the United States and the people who use it.**

**The Company is excited to once again be creating new work at the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center, where so many great moments in NTD history began 45 years ago**

“We continue to extend our thanks to Preston Whiteway, Executive Director of the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center and the entire O’Neill staff for their hospitality” Ms. Beekman said, “ there is no more creative place for new work than at The O’Neill. ”

Additional funding provided by the Beatrice Fox Auerbach Foundation Fund of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, City of New London Water Authority Community Fund, Connecticut Office of the Arts, Crown Foundation, Hartford Performs, The Katherine Lindsay Howell Fund, The Frederick Loewe Foundation, Mead Witter Foundation, NewAlliance Foundation and Edward T. & Anne E. Roberts Foundation, The Dorothy Strelsin Foundation, Spiritus Gladius Foundation, State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development and the National Endowment for the Arts.

For more information about NTD/LTD and the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center log on to NTD.ORG. For general information contact the NTD offices at 860-236-4193, VP (video phone) 860-607-1338

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