

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse Family Festivities Series Presents ArtsPower's New Musical about a Puppy Named "Biscuit"

Westport Country Playhouse's Family Festivities Series will present ArtsPower's new musical about a puppy, "Biscuit," based on the book by Alyssa Satin Capucilli with over 17 million copies in print, on Sunday, January 22, for two performances, at 1 p.m., and 4 p.m. The show is recommended for ages 4 to 8. Running time is approximately one hour. Tickets are \$20.

The musical features a frolicking little puppy named Biscuit who loves exploring, making new friends, and stirring up some mischief. Along the way, Biscuit learns about the joy of having a family. Musical numbers include "Best Puppy in the World," "What a Friend!," "The Dog Who Went to School," and "Biscuit Is Love."

In between "Biscuit" performances, adoptable puppies/dogs from the Connecticut Humane Society's Westport location will be playing in the Sheffer Studio. The audience is invited to visit them and explore adoption opportunities at 2 p.m. (following the 1 p.m. performance, and prior to the 4 p.m. performance).

Children's pre-show activities will be led by Adelka Polak one hour prior to each performance, at 12 p.m. and 3 p.m., in the Playhouse's Smilow Lounge on the mezzanine level.

"Biscuit" is produced by ArtsPower, founded in 1985 by identical twins Mark and Gary Blackman. Its 30 original, professional touring musicals and dramas have been seen by 13 million people in 49 states in hundreds of the nation's top regional theaters, including The Kennedy Center and Lincoln Center.

One week before the Playhouse presentation, a new, free-of-charge program, "Story Explorers," will offer an interactive book reading of "Biscuit" on Saturday, January 14, at 2 p.m., in The Westport Library's Smilow Family Children's Department. "Story Explorers" is intended to promote childhood literacy while also enhancing children's experiences of attending the Playhouse's Family Festivities shows. Each "Story Explorers" will include readings of books based on the upcoming shows, plus activities surrounding the book's theme. Presenting partners for "Story Explorers" are Westport Country

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Playhouse, The Westport Library, and Westport Young Woman's League. Programs will be approximately one hour.

In conjunction with the Family Festivities Series, the Playhouse will once again host a book collection for Read to Grow, Inc., a statewide nonprofit organization that helps parents take an active role in their children's literacy development by providing free children's books to families with limited access and to community resources that serve them. At each Family Festivities performance, bins will be located in the Playhouse lobby for donations of gently used and new children's books which will be given to families and programs in the greater Fairfield County area through Read to Grow. During last season's Family Festivities series, the Playhouse collected nearly 300 books.

Upcoming Family Festivities shows include "Twinkle Tames a Dragon, The Musical," on Sunday, February 12, produced by Vital Theatre Company. From Katharine Holabird, the author of the classic book series, "Angelina Ballerina," comes a brand new show for all those who love fairies, friendship, dragons. "Dr. Seuss' The Cat in the Hat" will be presented on Sunday, March 19, produced by Childsplay. Sally and her brother find out that the Cat in the Hat is the most mischievous cat they will ever meet when a rainy afternoon is transformed by the Cat and his antics. "Pete the Cat," on Sunday, April 2, produced by Theatreworks USA, finds Pete the Cat sent by the cat-catcher to live with the un-hip Biddle family to learn manners. "Story Explorers" interactive book reading programs at The Westport Library are scheduled one week prior to each of the shows at 2 p.m. on Sun., Jan. 29; Sat., Mar. 11; and Sat., Mar. 25.

Family Festivities shows are presented on selected Sundays from November through April. Family Festivities Corporate Sponsors are Pitney Bowes and Northern Trust. Family Festivities Sponsor is Darlene Krenz. The Family Festivities Series is also supported by the Westport Young Woman's League.

Everyone in the audience requires a ticket. For more information or tickets, call the box office at (203) 227-4177, or toll-free at 1-888-927-7529, or visit Westport Country Playhouse, 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport. Tickets are available online 24/7 at www.westportplayhouse.org. Stay connected to the Playhouse on Facebook (Westport Country Playhouse), follow on Twitter (@WCPlayhouse), or view Playhouse videos on YouTube (WestportPlayhouse).

About Westport Country Playhouse

The mission of Westport Country Playhouse is to enrich, enlighten, and engage the community through the power of professionally produced *theater worth talking about* and the welcoming experience of the Playhouse campus. The Playhouse creates this relationship with the community and provides this experience in multiple ways by offering: Live theater experiences of the highest quality, under the artistic direction of Mark Lamos, from May through November; educational and community engagement events and opportunities to further explore issues presented by the work on stage; special performances and programs for students and teachers with extensive curriculum support material; *Script in Hand* play readings throughout the year to deepen relationships with audiences and artists alike; the renowned Woodward Internship Program during the summer months for aspiring theater professionals; *Family Festivities* presentations from November through April to delight young and old alike and to promote reading through live theater; and the beautiful and historic Playhouse campus open for enjoyment and community events year-round. The value of the Westport Country Playhouse to all it touches is immeasurable.

About Connecticut Humane Society

The Connecticut Humane Society is the leading resource in the state for companion animal welfare, enriching the lives of families and communities through adoption services, medical care, education and prevention of cruelty. Its Westport Pet Wellness and Adoption Center is located at 455 Post Road East and is open seven days a week. The organization does not euthanize for time, space, breed or age. To learn more about the Connecticut Humane Society, please visit www.cthumane.org.

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