

# WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

## NEWS RELEASE

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### Westport Country Playhouse Family Festivities Series Presents New Musical “Pete the Cat” on April 2

Westport Country Playhouse’s Family Festivities Series will present the new musical “Pete the Cat,” based on the series of books by Kimberly and James Dean, on Sunday, April 2, for two performances, at 1 p.m., and 4 p.m. Produced by Theatreworks USA, the show is recommended for ages 4 to 8. Running time is approximately one hour. Tickets are \$20.

Pete the Cat is caught rocking out after bedtime. The cat-catcher sends him to live with the Biddle family to learn his manners – and boy, are they square! But for the groovy blue cat, life is an adventure no matter where you wind up. The minute Pete walks in the door, he gets the whole family rocking, except young Jimmy, the most organized second grader on earth. But, when Jimmy draws a blank in art class, Pete is the perfect friend to help him out. Together, they set out on a mission to learn about inspiration and friendship – all the way to Paris and back in a VW bus.

Theatreworks USA is America’s largest and most prolific professional not-for-profit theater for young and family audiences. Since 1961, Theatreworks USA has enlightened, entertained, and instructed over 90 million people in 49 states and Canada, now performing for about three million people annually. It is the only children’s theater to receive both a Drama Desk and a Lucille Lortel Award. In addition, Theatreworks USA was the recipient of a Jonathan Larson Performing Arts Foundation Award, and The Actors Fund of America bestowed its Medal of Honor upon its founders, Jay Harnick and Charles Hull.

In between “Pete the Cat” performances, adoptable kittens from the Connecticut Humane Society’s Westport location will be 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. Polak is the artistic director and founder of Sova Theatre. She has worked for 15 years as a dancer, puppeteer, mask-performer, and movement director with various companies.

One week before the Playhouse presentation, The Westport Library will offer a new, free-of-charge program, “Story Explorers,” with an interactive book reading of “Pete the Cat,” on Saturday, March 25, at 2 p.m., in the 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

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[www.WestportPlayhouse.org](http://www.WestportPlayhouse.org)

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 Playhouse, The Westport Library, and Westport Young Woman’s League. Adella Polak will lead the activities. The program is 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.

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](http://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 open seven days a week. The organization does not euthanize for time, space, breed or age and is not affiliated with any national animal welfare groups. To learn more about the Connecticut Humane Society, please visit [www.cthumane.org](http://www.cthumane.org).

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