

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Patricia Blaufuss, Public Relations Manager
203-571-1287 | pblaufuss@westportplayhouse.org

For Immediate Release: June 30, 2021

Westport Country Playhouse's "Story Hour with Jenny" Presents In-Person, Interactive Reading of "Wings"

Westport Country Playhouse's "Story Hour with Jenny," a live, in-person series to engage children, grades K-3, will present an interactive reading of the picture book, "Wings," about a boy whose appearance makes him the target for school bullies, on Sunday, July 11, at 11 a.m., on the Playhouse campus. The book is written and illustrated by Christopher Myers, ©2000. Jenny Nelson, who is the Roz and Bud Siegel director of education and community engagement at the Playhouse, will lead the one-hour session.

"Story Hour with Jenny" is a series of interactive readings of social justice picture books written and illustrated by BIPOC artists. Their themes center on the four pillars of the Playhouse's education department: Empathy, collaboration, activism, and literacy. "Wings" represents the pillar, empathy.

Inspired by the myth of Icarus, "Wings" asks the question: Are you brave enough to be your true self? Ikarus Jackson is, but it isn't always easy. The people in his neighborhood point at his wings. The kids at school laugh. The teachers call him a distraction. One girl identifies with Ikarus, but she is too shy to speak up for herself, let alone for him. Maybe I should have said something to those mean kids, she thinks, when their taunts send him drifting into the sky. Inspired by Ikarus's own courage, she sets out in search of him and so begins her own journey of self-discovery — leaving both of them transformed.

Author Christopher Myers said, "I wanted to create a book that tells kids never to abandon the things that make them different, to be proud of what makes them unique. Every child has his own beauty, her own talents. Ikarus Jackson can fly through the air; I want kids to find their own set of wings and soar with him."

Jenny Nelson, who leads "Story Hour with Jenny," hails from Arizona where she received her bachelor's degree in theater, master's degree in theater from the University of Arizona, and a second master's degree in education from Fairfield University. She is the associate artistic director of Collective Consciousness Theatre, a social justice theater in New Haven. She has taught at several universities, including City College of New York in the graduate program for theater professionals and educators. She has also worked as an artist and educator at several theaters, including Long Wharf Theatre, Shubert Theatre, and Yale Repertory Theatre. Recently, Nelson was a nominee for the Tony Teaching Award of Excellence.

Tickets for each "Story Hour with Jenny," including picture book, activity packet, and crayons, start at \$10. All books were purchased by the Playhouse from People Get Ready, a Black-owned community book space in New Haven. <https://www.peoplegetreadybooks.com/>

- MORE -

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

25 POWERS COURT WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE T (203) 227-5137 F 203.221.7482 | BOX OFFICE T (203) 227-4177 F (203) 454-3238

westportplayhouse.org

To register, visit <https://tickets.westportplayhouse.org/overview/storyhour>, call the Playhouse box office at (203) 227-4177, or email boxoffice@westportplayhouse.org.

2021 Education Program supporters include the Eunice and David Bigelow Foundation; The David and Geri Epstein Foundation; George A. and Grace L. Long Foundation; Adolph and Ruth Schnurmacher Foundation, Inc.; The Westport Young Woman's League; as well as Athena and Daniel Adamson; Paige and Jodi Couture; Anna Czekaj-Farber; and Roz and Bud Siegel.

Covid-19 health and safety protocols, including social distancing and mask wearing, will be observed at all Playhouse in-person events.

For Westport Country Playhouse tickets and information, visit westportplayhouse.org, leave a message on the box office voicemail at (203) 227-4177, or email at boxoffice@westportplayhouse.org. Stay connected to the Playhouse on Facebook (Westport Country Playhouse), follow on Twitter (@WCPlayhouse), and on YouTube (WestportPlayhouse).

ABOUT WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

Founded in 1931, Westport Country Playhouse is celebrating its 90th anniversary year. The mission of Westport Country Playhouse is to enrich, enlighten, and engage the community through the power of professionally produced theater of the highest caliber and the welcoming experience of the Playhouse campus. The not-for-profit Playhouse provides this experience in multiple ways by offering live theater experiences of the highest quality, under the artistic direction of Mark Lamos; educational and community engagement events to further explore the work on stage; the New Works Initiative, a program dedicated to the discovery, development, and production of new live theatrical works; special performances and programs for students and teachers with extensive curriculum support material; Script in Hand play readings to deepen relationships with audiences and artists; the renowned Woodward Internship Program during the summer months for aspiring theater professionals; Family Festivities presentations to delight young and old alike and to promote reading through live theater; youth performance training through Broadway Method Academy, Westport Country Playhouse's resident conservatory program; and the beautiful and historic Playhouse campus open for enjoyment and community events year-round. Charity Navigator has recently awarded its top 4-star charity rating to the Playhouse in recognition of its strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency.

###