



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 22, 2017

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Lynwood Unified Elementary Students' Original Play to be Performed in Africa

Lynwood – Fifteen Abbott Elementary School students will soon be globally known for their playwriting talents when their story is performed in Rwanda in July about two neighboring families who decide to end their prejudiced ideologies and tear down a wall commissioned by President Donald Trump.

The play, called "The Wall," is one of 76 productions created by Lynwood Unified's elementary and middle school students as part of the Building Relationships and Inspiring Dialogue through Global Exchange (BRIDGE) Theatre Project. Abbott Elementary's play will be performed by Rwandan children during the Ubuntu Arts Festival on July 14.

"We are very proud of our Abbott Elementary students for all their hard work in creating such a lively and introspective play with great political and social commentary," Lynwood Unified Superintendent Gudiel R. Crosthwaite said. "The District is heavily invested in providing programs like this to stimulate student participation and creativity, which we know supports academic achievement."

The District has partnered with the BRIDGE Theatre Project for the last three years, teaching Lynwood Unified students in grades four through eight how to write short plays, perform the plays and study other cultures. The program provides 19 workshops for nearly 500 District students over eight weeks to teach students the basics of improvisation, character creation, writing conflict and dialogue, and how to collaborate with other student writers.

BRIDGE cofounder Adam Kalesperis said "The Wall" was selected for its relevant topic, well-written script and humor, and how the threat of xenophobia is a subject that can be relevant to many countries – not just the U.S.

"Our mission is to educate, inspire and connect young people around the globe through intensive theater education programs," BRIDGE Theatre Project cofounder Joe Quintero said. "This program is meant to encourage self-expression, foster self-confidence, promote cultural tolerance, expand world views and perspectives and explore solutions to community problems."

While this is the first international project that Lynwood Unified has participated in with the BRIDGE Theatre Project, Kalesperis and Quintero said they hope to make it an annual event, giving more Lynwood Unified students the chance to have their work showcased across the globe.

"Our partnership with the BRIDGE Theatre Project is a great way for our elementary and middle school students to gain interest in writing and the performing arts while simultaneously promoting tolerant beliefs," Lynwood Unified Board President Alma-Delia Renteria said. "We're so proud to have our students' work reach a global audience."

MORE

The **Lynwood Unified School District** is dedicated to offering students a world-class education to prepare them for success in college and career in the 21st century. Under its Achieving Greatness Initiative, the district is realigning all aspects of its organization to strengthen and expand instructional programs, enrichment and extracurricular activities, and support system for students and staff. For more information, visit www.lynwood.k12.ca.us.

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PHOTO CAPTION

062217_LUSD_BRIDGE: (Back center) BRIDGE Theatre Project cofounder Adam Kalesperis, teaching artist Claire Larsen, (back right) Abbott Principal Adolfo Herrera and BRIDGE Theatre Project cofounder Joe Quintero stand with the Abbott Elementary playwrights and actors of "The Wall," a Lynwood Unified play selected to be performed in Rwanda in July.

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The mission of **Lynwood Unified School District**, the cultivator of innovative thinkers, is to ensure each student fearlessly achieves his or her highest academic and personal aspirations while contributing to the greater society through a unique system distinguished by:

- ★ People of great character who inspire and lead by example
- ★ The instilling of courage to be creative
- ★ The transformative uses of technology
- ★ Safe and clean environments
- ★ The honoring of all voices of our community