



# Press Release

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## Lynwood Unified Elementary Students Stage 100th Play for BRIDGE Theatre Project

**Lynwood** – Lincoln Elementary School fourth- and fifth-grade students shared the feelings of losing a friend or family member during two plays performed on April 25 that were the 99th and 100th written and produced through the District's Building Relationships and Inspiring Dialogue through Global Exchange (BRIDGE) Theatre Project.

The two plays – “Sad and Stuck, Without Tears” and “Facing Deportation” – were performed in front of fellow students and family members at the Lincoln Elementary library. The BRIDGE program productions gave Lynwood students the opportunity to address issues of great concern in their voice.

“We have some amazing minds at Lincoln Elementary,” BRIDGE Project teaching artist Tony Gatto said. “What BRIDGE does is give them the opportunity to share what’s going on in their hearts and their heads.”

In “Sad and Stuck,” a girl has difficulty coping after the death of her best friend and efforts to console her are unsuccessful. The girl discovers a magic bracelet in her room and an angel in the form of her best friend appears. After a heart to heart, the girl realizes she has been in denial, unable to reveal her true emotions. Finally, she breaks down in tears.

“We are kids and we are tough. We know it’s always hard to deal with death. And it is new to us, because we are just beginning our lives,” Lincoln Elementary School’s Melanie Gonzalez said. “But we want you to know that communication is a good thing. We want to be able to share our feelings with you, and have you share yours with us.”

“Facing Deportation” used a mock trial to address the challenges immigrant families experience in the face of expulsion, calling on political leaders to seek compassion and understanding of cultures different than their own.

The plays were bookended by two cultural ensemble pieces performed by Lincoln students. “Dancing in the Streets” explored the Civil Rights era through dance and Motown music. “Imbabazzi” explored the creative spirit of Rwanda. After each play, audience members were asked to share their thoughts.

“BRIDGE students work collaboratively in an environment where every voice is heard, building confidence and establishing leadership skills,” Lynwood Unified Board President Alfonso Morales said. “By allowing students to express themselves through the dramatic arts, their stories become powerful vehicles for the community and accelerates personal development.”

Through the BRIDGE Theatre Project, Lynwood Unified students in grades four through eight learn to write and perform short 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.

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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](http://www.lynwood.k12.ca.us).

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“Lynwood Unified’s partnership with BRIDGE empowers our students to think creatively and channel their passions into an art form that is an extension of the students themselves,” Lynwood Superintendent Gudiel R. Crosthwaite said. “Over the course of four years and 100 plays, Lynwood students are speaking their minds while learning empathy and compassion for international culture.”

#### PHOTO CAPTIONS:

**050318\_LUSD\_BRIDGE1:** Lincoln Elementary School students perform a play on April 25 through the District’s Building Relationships and Inspiring Dialogue through Global Exchange (BRIDGE) Theatre Project. The District recently enjoyed its 99<sup>th</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup> BRIDGE performances.

**050318\_LUSD\_BRIDGE2:** Lincoln Elementary School students hold up certificates of completion on April 25 following the 99<sup>th</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup> performances by Lynwood Unified’s Building Relationships and Inspiring Dialogue through Global Exchange (BRIDGE) Theatre Project.

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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