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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE LITTLE THEATRE COMPANY THAT COULD

Los Angeles, CA - Much like the little train in the renowned children's story, *The Little Engine That Could*, *We Tell Stories* and other small and mid-sized arts organizations in Los Angeles are chugging along in an up-hill battle to keep their doors open. Less prominent, but no less respected and valued, these organizations struggle for funding as larger organizations get the attention of the funder, first, and consequently a bigger share of the funding pie.

In a city known for its creativity, known for entertainment and theatre, support for the arts falls short. According to the California Community Foundation, "the need for arts funding in the City of Los Angeles is dire considering public grant awards per capita stand at 78 cents compared with San Diego at \$5.48 and San Francisco at \$20.67." Despite California being the fifth largest economy in the world and an eighth of the United States economy, it lags behind other states in its investment in the arts. Currently, California invests only 3 cents per capita of general funding compared to New York's \$2.35 and Hawaii's \$5.55 per capita spending. But, arts mean business for California:

- The non-profit arts community, large and small, is a feeder to California's very profitable creative industry that employs 500,891 as of January 2008. (Dun & Bradstreet data.)
- Non-profit arts organizations are a proven economic driver for California's economy, a \$5.4 billion industry that generates \$300 million in state and local taxes.
- Non-profit arts organizations and artists serve 37 million Californians and the millions of people who visit California every day.

How are the smaller organizations coping?

Many organizations like *We Tell Stories* are reaching out to the individual, collaborating, cutting costs, and stretching their resources to stay alive. Support has been good but not enough. *We Tell Stories* like other small and mid-size arts organizations is asking for help and a chance to prove their worth with the funding community. It's the small and mid-size organizations that can serve our children and families throughout our community at the grassroots level, nurturing our artists and theatre-goers of the future. *We Tell Stories* and other small and mid-size organizations are a viable part of the arts mix in Southern California that makes Los Angeles so unique.

Over the past 28 years, *We Tell Stories* has performed nearly 16,000 shows and over 26,000 student workshops to close to 5,000,000 children, their families and their teachers. *We Tell Stories* is a vanguard in the field of arts education and theatre for young audiences. According to Lynne Heffley of the Los Angeles Times, *We Tell Stories* "is one of Southern California's oldest and most respected educational children's theater companies." WTS performs at schools, libraries, theatres, art centers, museums, festivals, and special events, reaching 150,000 children and families, annually.

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