

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The Broadway League Announces
2011 “League Educator Apple Awards”**

***Arts Educators from Florida and California
Honored for Bringing Broadway Theatre to the Classroom***

(New York, NY) May 5, 2011 -- The Broadway League, the national trade organization for the commercial theatre industry, announced the 2011 “League Educator Apple Awards” recipients. The awards acknowledge the efforts of local schools and community groups that support programs relating to Broadway or touring Broadway shows, promoting further development of theatre education.

The League is committed to working with its members to develop new audiences and model projects by supporting education initiatives across the country. Now in its eighth year, the League’s Education and Community Engagement Committee has honored educators, administrators, and school district leaders from around the country for their commitment to arts education and their work in collaboration with League-member venues that present touring Broadway shows. Through this award, the League encourages the development of theatre education programs nationally while helping to build a future generation of theatregoers.

“We are honored to present two awards this year,” said Charlotte St. Martin, Executive Director of The Broadway League. “These teachers celebrate and foster the relationship between schools and Broadway League member venues around the country as well as continuing the tradition of quality arts education for our children.”

THE RECIPIENTS

The 2011 recipients are **Lisa Okikawa, Teacher of Visually Impaired Students in the Pasadena Unified School District, and the first to receive this award from the Los Angeles area, and Nelson Torres, Director of Technical Theatre Studies at Howard W. Blake School of the Art in Tampa, Florida, representing the fourth recipient from Tampa, the most ever from one city.**

Lisa Okikawa, Teacher of Visually Impaired Students in the Pasadena Unified School District, Pasadena, California

Ms. Okikawa began her ongoing collaboration with Center Theatre Group in April of 2009 with *Ain’t Misbehavin’*. Ms. Okikawa’s innovation tailored the recent

production of *Mary Poppins* so that visually impaired students could experience the show through a “touch tour” and modified lesson plans that best accommodated their needs. Her efforts led her students to realize that art and creativity could be vital parts of their lives, allowing for new topics of discussion and academic exploration.

Nelson Torres, Director of Technical Theatre Studies at Howard W. Blake School of the Arts, Tampa, Florida

This past year, Mr. Torres partnered with the Patel Conservatory at the David A. Straz Jr. Center for the Performing Arts. This collaboration built a strong foundation for introducing students to the non-performance side of theatre, by providing them with internship opportunities in production and administration as well as hands-on experience in the scenic design and construction of a local youth show. Mr. Torres’s students also saw *In the Heights* and complemented the performance with creative exercises exploring their own neighborhoods as artistic spaces.

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The Broadway League engages in various audience development activities. Among these programs are “Kids’ Night on Broadway[®]” www.KidsNightOnBroadway.com, where parents take their children for free to the theatre, and “Family First Nights[®],” a national program providing underserved families with the opportunity to attend theatre on a regular basis.

The Broadway League, founded in 1930, is the national trade association for the Broadway industry. The League’s 700-plus members include theatre owners and operators, producers, presenters, and general managers in over 240 North American cities, as well as suppliers of goods and services to the theatre industry. Each year, League members bring Broadway to nearly 30 million people in New York and on tour across the U.S. and Canada. Visit www.BroadwayLeague.com, follow The Broadway League on Twitter [@TheBwayLeague](https://twitter.com/TheBwayLeague) or on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/BroadwayLeague>

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