



2168 S. Atlantic Blvd. PMB #378
Monterey Park, CA 91754
(323) 981-1710
(323) 981-1714 Fax

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Cynthia Votara
Coordinator of Marketing & Publicity

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CONGRESSWOMAN ROYBAL-ALLARD SECURES LEADERSHIP FUNDING FOR EAST L.A. CLASSIC THEATRE

LOS ANGELES, CA – East L.A. Classic Theatre (ECT) is proud and honored to announce new Federal funding for its **Beyond Borders: Literacy Through Performing Arts** program, secured by **Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard**. The \$50,000 award will support literacy activities and cultural events for over 25,000 at-risk Latino youth and their teachers during 2002.

“This funding will allow us to increase our programming by nearly 20%, as well as to offer steep discounts to our schools and kids with the greatest needs,” said **Tony Plana**, founder and executive artistic director of the company. “Over the past five seasons, our programs have flourished far beyond their original goals. **Congresswoman Roybal-Allard’s** successful advocacy on our behalf is a tremendous step forward for ECT and our young patrons.”

“I am excited to see these types of educational and cultural programs underway for our youth and for our families,” said Roybal-Allard. “Too often, art is inaccessible to working families. Programs like **Beyond Borders** bring cultural opportunities to our young people. These programs enrich our lives and ignite our imaginations – they are critically important to the cultural life of our community.”

ECT’s five-year-old literacy outreach, **Beyond Borders: Literacy Through Performing Arts**, has presented adaptations of Shakespeare at over a hundred Southland schools and at the Ford Amphitheatre, in addition to providing academic and playwriting residencies to middle schools throughout Los Angeles. Recognized for its innovative approach to the classics through musical adaptations created for minority audiences with little or no theatregoing experience, the company has served over 85,000 students, teachers, and families since 1995.

“We’re focused on kids at the most vulnerable time in their childhoods, working to integrate the arts into cross-curriculum studies and teacher training. Our mission has a unique bicultural/bilingual twist as well,” adds **Plana**. “Every new school means a new community of children learns to think of great dramatic literature as something they too can ‘own’. This is a task imaginable only as a shared enterprise between arts organizations and supporters like **Congresswoman Roybal-Allard**.”

The funds awarded to ECT are part of the 2002 Appropriations Bill for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, expected to be signed by the President in upcoming months.

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