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MetLife Foundation and Theatre Communications Group Announce Fifth Round Recipients of the A-ha! Program

New York, NY – MetLife Foundation and Theatre Communications Group (TCG) announce the fifth round of recipients for the **MetLife/TCG A-ha! Program: Think It, Do It**, which supports the creative thinking and action of TCG Member Theatres with the goal of impacting the larger theatre community. Five theatres were awarded grants totaling \$225,000 to either research and develop new ideas or experiment and implement innovative concepts.

The **A-ha! Program** has two components: **Think It** grants (\$25,000), which give theatre professionals the time and space for research and development and **Do It** grants (\$50,000), which support the implementation and testing of new ideas. The projects supported by the **A-ha! Program** will go on to impact more than just the recipient theatres. Successful initiatives will serve as models for theatre and arts professionals across the country.

“Theatres are filled with creative and entrepreneurial minds that rarely have access to the risk capital needed to conceive and test out new ideas,” said Teresa Eyring, executive director of TCG. “This round of the **A-ha! Program** will empower innovative idea development and action in areas like artisan exchange, community engagement and arts education.”

“The recipients of the fifth round of the **A-ha! Program** exemplify MetLife Foundation’s commitment to building livable communities through access to the arts,” said Dennis White, president and CEO, MetLife Foundation. “We are proud to continue our partnership with TCG and serve as a catalyst for the creativity and risk-taking that are essential to the growth of the not-for-profit theatre field.”

The 2012 **MetLife/TCG A-ha! Program** recipients are:

THINK IT

- **California Shakespeare Theater**, Berkeley, CA
California Shakespeare Theater’s Artist as Investigator project will invite 10 artists to lead experiments in new methodologies in how theatre is made, with whom it is made, and to what end it is made.

DO IT

- **Atlantic Theater Company**, New York, NY
Atlantic Theater Company and Park Slope Collegiate, a public high school in Brooklyn, will partner on Staging Success, providing four years of in-school theatre classes to more than 300 students and an intensive afterschool mentorship for select seniors.
- **Cornerstone Theater Company**, Los Angeles, CA
Cornerstone Theatre Company will expand upon their existing community-engagement efforts by providing tools and resources to community participants for ongoing impact, thereby improving economic viability in the communities they serve.
- **Mixed Blood Theatre Company**, Minneapolis, MN
Mixed Blood will assemble a comprehensive national database of both artists with disabilities and English-language plays that explore worlds of disability in content, as central theme or via character.

- **Oregon Shakespeare Festival**, Ashland, OR

The Oregon Shakespeare Festival will develop an Artisan Exchange of production skills and resources with three to five other theatres. Three to five OSF craftspeople will work eight to twelve weeks at those theatres, and will in turn host three to five artisans to assume parallel jobs at OSF.

For more information about the program and previous recipients, visit:
http://www.tcg.org/grants/aha/aha_recipients.cfm.

The grant applications were reviewed by an independent national panel of theatre professionals comprised of **Stephen Albert**, Executive Director, Court Theatre, Chicago, IL; **Carol Bixler**, Producing Director, CalArts Center for New Performance, Valencia, CA; **Lana Lesley**, Co-Producing Artistic Director, Rude Mechs, Austin, TX; **Jacob Padrón**, Associate Producer, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Chicago, IL; and **Carlo Scandiuzzi**, Executive Director, ACT – A Contemporary Theatre, Seattle, WA.

MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 to carry on MetLife's longstanding tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. The Foundation is committed to building a secure future for individuals and communities worldwide. Through programs focusing on empowering older adults, preparing young people and building livable communities, MetLife Foundation increases access and opportunities for people of all ages. Since it was established, MetLife Foundation has made more than \$500 million in grants and \$75 million in program related investments. For more information, visit www.metlife.org.

For over 50 years, **Theatre Communications Group** (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre, has existed to strengthen, nurture and promote the professional not-for-profit American theatre. TCG's constituency has grown from a handful of groundbreaking theatres to nearly 700 member theatres and affiliate organizations and more than 12,000 individuals nationwide. TCG offers its members networking and knowledge-building opportunities through conferences, events, research and communications; awards grants, approximately \$2 million per year, to theatre companies and individual artists; advocates on the federal level; and serves as the U.S. Center of the International Theatre Institute, connecting its constituents to the global theatre community. TCG is North America's largest independent publisher of dramatic literature, with 11 Pulitzer Prizes for Best Play on the TCG booklist. It also publishes the award-winning AMERICAN THEATRE magazine and ARTSEARCH®, the essential source for a career in the arts. In all of its endeavors, TCG seeks to increase the organizational efficiency of its member theatres, cultivate and celebrate the artistic talent and achievements of the field and promote a larger public understanding of, and appreciation for, the theatre. For more information, visit www.tcg.org.

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