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Children's Theatre and Playwrights' Center each receive grants for technology innovation

(Minneapolis, MN—August 26, 2013)— The MetLife Foundation and Theatre Communications Group (TCG) recently announced the sixth round recipients of the *MetLife/TCG A-ha! Program: Think It, Do It*, which empowers TCG member theaters to take groundbreaking approaches to artistic, managerial, production and/or technological challenges and opportunities. Grant recipients are chosen from a national pool; the *Think It* grants give theaters time and space for research and development and *Do It* grants support the implementation and testing of new ideas. Grant recipients are chosen from a national pool, and two Twin Cities organizations are among the seven recipients: Children's Theatre Company received a *Think It* grant and the Playwrights' Center received a *Do It* grant.

Children's Theatre Company (CTC) will use their grant to research, develop and test radical new strategies for engaging artists and audiences in sustainable, collaborative community art-making. CTC seeks to explore using crowdsourcing models to create a community-wide dialogue that feeds the artistic process and results in startling new works of theater. Through deep conversation with artists, young people who have participated in CTC activities and experts in the field of crowdsourcing technology and software development, CTC will research web platforms and other technologies that support large-scale community conversation as well as ways to mitigate anticipated risks such as intellectual property and online safety for young people. This program will engage CTC in a dynamic, reciprocal relationship with their community; witness new energy, passion, and openness from their artists; and put surprising, wild, and brilliant new ideas onto their stages.

"This grant acknowledges and celebrates the work we have begun in finding new ways to have young people's ideas and creativity as a fundamental part of how we create theatrical work of excellence," says Children's Theatre Company Artistic Director Peter Brosius. "We are so thankful to Jamie Johansen and Julie Baker and the children of Highlands Elementary School for the profound inspiration they provided our artists in helping us develop both *Mulan* and *Alice in Wonderland*. We look forward to finding more ways to involve young people in partnership with artists to generate work of surprise, wonder and depth."

The Playwrights' Center will use their grant to reinvent the online experience and offerings for member playwrights. "Playwrights' Center members live in 47 different states, so a large portion of our members only interact with us from a distance," says Playwrights' Center Producing Artistic Director Jeremy B. Cohen. "We're so excited to be able to create new resources for all of our members."

A popular membership feature currently offered by the Playwrights' Center is an online database of submission opportunities where member playwrights can search for places to submit their scripts. This feature will be enhanced and integrated with a pioneering mobile application that will enable playwrights to track their submissions and build an online profile to help move their work from page to stage. The redeveloped website and corresponding mobile app will make it

easier for members at all stages of their playwriting careers to balance their time and take full advantage of all the available playwriting and production opportunities.

For more information about Children's Theatre Company, visit childrenstheatre.org.

For more information about Playwrights' Center membership, visit members.pwcenter.org.

For more information on the MetLife/TCG A-ha! Program, visit tcg.org/grants/aha/aha_index.cfm.

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