



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 1, 2019

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Final Settlements Reached in all 16 Children's Theatre Company Cases

Minneapolis, Minn.— Children's Theatre Company announced the settlement of all 16 lawsuits brought against Children's Theatre Company by individuals who were sexually abused by former employees in the 1970's and 1980's.

"We recognize and truly appreciate the tremendous courage of the survivors who came forward to tell their truth and end their silence about what happened to them as students at CTC over 35 years ago." said Kimberly Motes, managing director of Children's Theatre Company. "On behalf of absolutely everyone now at CTC, I want to say how deeply, deeply sorry we are that this abuse ever occurred and that it was not adequately punished at the time. It is our hope is that these settlements will provide some justice, healing, and reparation to these courageous individuals." The entirety of Ms. Motes' statement follows below.

Children's Theatre Company and some of the survivors will work together to find additional ways to bring wholeness and well-being to everyone who has been harmed by former CTC staff as well as the alumni and the community.

In addition to the 16 settlements, a series of actions were announced today.

As part of the next steps for ongoing healing, Children's Theatre Company's Board of Directors has approved a contribution to a newly created Survivors Fund in the amount of \$500,000 requested by the survivors. This fund will be designed and led by the survivors, and administered by a third-party administrator.

Additional efforts announced include a speakers series, healing conferences, and other events to support survivors and advocate for the prevention of child abuse. CTC's Board of Directors is adding to their recruitment goals board members who have experience as a sexual assault survivor and will continue to review its already rigorous child safety policies and practices to ensure they continue to reflect best practices. Other initiatives guided by the survivors will be created moving forward.

"CTC made important changes over 30 years ago to assure the safety of every child associated with the Theatre, and today child safety and well-being is our highest priority," Ms. Motes said. "Listening to survivors has reminded us that policies alone do not protect children; it is how they are practiced and lived each day. The survivors have also reinforced that a culture of ongoing awareness, openness, and vigilance is what keeps children safe. We wish to be an example to other organizations in the prevention of child abuse of all kinds, as well as share our work in this area more broadly with other theatres. We pledge to work with the survivors to find the best way to turn this reprehensible legacy into something that can foster healing, recovery, advocacy, and growth."

Statement of Children's Theatre Company

November 1, 2019

CTC Statement on Concluded Legal Process and Settlements by Kimberly Motes, Managing Director

Children's Theatre Company is grateful to be part of announcing the conclusion of the legal process and that we have reached settlement agreements with all 16 survivors who filed civil lawsuits against the theatre stemming from child sexual abuse by former employees in the 1970s and early 1980s.

I wish to acknowledge the deep and continuing pain that such trauma causes and our hope that these settlements will provide some justice, healing, and reparation. On behalf of absolutely everyone now at CTC, I want to say how appalled and deeply, deeply sorry we are that this abuse ever occurred. We are sorry it was not adequately punished at the time and so sorry that the pain of the survivors has not been recognized and that survivors had to suffer in silence for so long.

I want to recognize the tremendous courage of the survivors who came forward, most especially to Laura Stearns. Your leadership, strength, and perseverance throughout this legal process has been remarkable and I want to thank you for helping get us to this point and inviting me to join you today. Peter Brosius, our artistic director, and I look forward to working with you and Jina Penn-Tracy to move healing forward.

Going into this litigation process, the current leadership and board had no idea what pain had been silenced and how many lives had been harmed or lost from the trauma. From the moment these cases were filed against us, in December 2015, we have never challenged a survivor's account who has come forward and shared it with us. We believe them.

The legal process is very difficult for everyone, most especially for survivors of sexual abuse. We have tried, at times imperfectly, to be as respectful and compassionate as possible throughout this long, complex process. It was much more complicated and took far more time than any of us had ever wanted or expected. We realize this is only one moment in what we hope will be a longer healing process and partnership with the survivors for the whole of our community, past and present. Going forward, we wish to participate in a healing partnership with those survivors who were not able to speak until now.

We acknowledge that the acts of abuse by former staff members took childhoods away from these children, forever impacting their lives in painful, traumatic, and dangerous ways. The pain is deep and broad, and we recognize this pain extends to survivor's families, friends, and communities. The legacy left by these horrible abusers caused untold harm to innocent children and the abusers were not punished adequately by the court system of the day 35 years ago.

Children's Theatre Company acknowledges the larger community of Children's Theatre alumni from 1965-1985 who were impacted by the abusive behavior, sexual and otherwise, of former staff. No child should have ever been exposed to such horrific behavior and we are truly sorry that so many of you carry the scars from those wounds. Nothing we will do will ever undo the pain that has been endured by our former students. Today, we are committed to being a partner in finding ways where we can collaborate with the survivors in bringing wholeness and well-being to everyone who has been harmed by these former staff.

We believe in the power of storytelling and we encourage survivors to tell their stories, whenever they are ready—as painful as they are to hear for all of us at CTC today—because these experiences go against everything we stand for today. We understand that it is important for survivor's voices to be heard, for their truths to be known, and for us to honor them by listening deeply and acknowledging them.

While the legal process has forced us to be on opposite sides, we have wanted for the survivors what they have told us they want: acknowledgement, apology, resolution, restoration, affirmation, and ultimately, peace. We will work and participate with them as well as advocate for the prevention of child abuse. We have begun these conversations and they will be ongoing.

Through these conversations, we have agreed to additional actions beyond those announced previously as well as those you are hearing about this morning. Our Board of Directors will add board members who have survived sexual assault, so that we have their perspective on our governing board.

While we know our Adult Youth Engagement Policies and everyday practices today and for the past 30 years are rigorous—as we live this core principle every day in our interactions with young people—we also believe this is an area where we can always learn more and continually improve. We will be working with experts in child abuse prevention and trauma-informed practices to review our policies and practices, to make them even stronger than they are today, and to increase our trauma-informed training efforts. Listening to survivors has reminded us that policies alone do not protect children; it is how they are practiced and lived each day. The survivors have also reinforced that a culture of ongoing awareness, openness, and vigilance is what keeps children safe. We wish to be an example to other organizations in the prevention of child abuse of all kinds, as well as share our work in this area more broadly with other theatres.

Children’s Theatre Company today lives in the shadow of this legacy, yet we seek to overcome it every day. We will do that, not by ignoring our past, but instead by confronting it, listening, and apologizing sincerely and without reservation, seeking to make amends, and continuing the healing process in collaboration with the survivors. We pledge to work with the survivors to find the best way to turn this reprehensible legacy into something that can foster healing, recovery, advocacy, and growth.

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