

## Long-Time Village Theatre Youth Education Director Kati Nickerson To Retire

*Her leadership has impacted countless young people in the past 24 years.*

**ISSAQUAH & EVERETT, WA (October 27, 2022)** -- With respect and gratitude, Village Theatre's Artistic Director Adam Immerwahr and Managing Director Laura Lee announced that after 24 years as Director of Youth Education, **Kati Nickerson** is retiring from Village Theatre.

Kati began her leadership of the KIDSTAGE Youth Education program in October of 1998. At that time, the KIDSTAGE program in Issaquah consisted of a few classes a year and two productions, and it served about 150 students per year. Kati started the Everett KIDSTAGE program, serving as both director and teacher. Today, over 4,000 youth participate in 18 different education programs in both Issaquah and Everett. Kati started the free in-school workshop program and co-curated the theatre for young audiences series, Pied Piper. Kati was instrumental in developing the STEAM initiative, and the Institute program, and led the diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism efforts for KIDSTAGE.

**Of her retirement, Kati Nickerson said,** "The KIDSTAGE program is in great hands thanks to an incredible staff led by Suzie Bixler, associate director of youth education. Adam Immerwahr and Laura Lee both joined Village Theatre with great enthusiasm about the KIDSTAGE program. They refer to it as 'the heart and soul of Village Theatre.' This feels like the right time to begin writing my next chapter."

**Village Theatre Managing Director Laura Lee said,** "Kati is a leader and mentor that understands what it means to uplift the lives of our youth. It was a privilege for my own children to have benefited from the programs that Kati built, and for me now to see direct results of how KIDSTAGE impacted their lives as young adults. Kati has given an immeasurable gift to so many students and we, as a community, have benefited from these young people who are out in our world sharing their multiple theatre-honed talents. **Adam Immerwahr, Village Theatre's Artistic Director added,** "Kati's leadership, brilliance, tenacity, and skills have built Village Theatre's KIDSTAGE into a top-tier theater education program for youth, developing the imagination, leadership skills, empathy, and artistry of thousands of students a year. Through KIDSTAGE, generations of students continue to deepen and enrich their theater training, building confidence, collaboration, and generosity that will serve them for years to come. I am so grateful to Kati for her leadership and vision, and excited to watch the programs she has developed continue to blossom."

Kati crystallized the KIDSTAGE philosophy into six words- "Skills for Theatre... Skills for Life" and worked diligently with her staff and teaching artists to infuse that philosophy into all aspects of the program.

Village Theatre will celebrate Kati's impact and legacy at the Everett Sing it Forward Soiree on December 2.

**ABOUT VILLAGE THEATRE**

Based in Issaquah, WA, with operations in Everett, WA, Village Theatre is a leading producer of musical theatre in the Pacific Northwest. Producing entertaining, quality productions since 1979, Village Theatre has grown into one of the region's best-attended theatres. Through its Village Originals program, Village Theatre is nationally recognized for its contribution to the development of new musicals, having supported the creation of over 175 new works to date. Village Theatre also takes pride in nurturing tomorrow's audiences through its Youth Education programs, serving thousands of young people and their families annually.

#### **ABOUT KIDSTAGE**

KIDSTAGE, a creative youth development program, uses theater arts to build critical life skills in each participant and promote positive identity development. In KIDSTAGE classes and rehearsals, our techniques encourage youth voice and leadership, creativity, collaboration, problem solving, concentration, public speaking, and creating a community of belonging. While some students are on a path to Broadway, all students are improving their futures and increasing self-confidence through involvement in KIDSTAGE and our Technical Theatre Program (TTP).

Village Theatre's Youth Education programs serve thousands of young people throughout the Puget Sound. Available to all regardless of the ability to pay, the programs provide healthy out-of-school time activities and stimulate learning through the arts in schools. We work to address disparities that disproportionately affect specific youth populations through training, hiring and programming. Village Theatre KIDSTAGE is committed to creating a pro-equity environment to ensure a safe and brave space to explore and grow.

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#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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