

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Perseverance Theatre presents Beyond Heritage Festival 2007**

### **Acclaimed storytellers and Elders to host retreat and perform stories**

**April 6, 2007, Douglas, AK** – Acclaimed storytellers Bob Sam, Brett Dillingham, and Ishmael Hope, along with respected Tlingit Elder Marie Olson and other storytellers, will host a Youth and Elder retreat from June 2 – 3, 2007 at the University of Alaska Southeast’s Schiable House. The focus of the retreat is to train the next generation of leaders in the art of storytelling, while developing a dense network of youth leaders, storytellers, and Elders. While Native-focused, participation is open to all.

During the course of the workshop, Elders will tell stories and teach storytelling to 10 – 12 youths, ages 12 – 17. Each youth participant will choose one of the stories to learn and perform on their own, receiving cultural instruction from the Elders (including instruction in the Tlingit language) and performance training. The Association of Alaska School Board’s Alaska Initiative for Community Engagement, a co-sponsor of the event, will also present “Traditional Values and Helping Youth Succeed, Alaska Style.” Youth participation is free, and food will be provided.

The experience will culminate in both youth and Elders performing their stories for the general public during Perseverance Theatre’s *Beyond Heritage* festival in Juneau from June 15 – 16, 2007 at Perseverance Theatre. *Beyond Heritage* is a highly acclaimed annual festival which celebrates traditional and contemporary Alaska Native dance, storytelling, oratory, poetry, film, music, and theatre. Those interested in participating in *Beyond Heritage* should contact Ishmael Hope at 907-364-2421 ext. 226 or at [ishmael@perseverancetheatre.org](mailto:ishmael@perseverancetheatre.org).

## **Agenda for Youth and Elder Retreat:**

Friday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>:

Location: Schiable House

- 9:30am: Dry fish and seaweed breakfast
- 10:00am: Short story told by storyteller
- 10:20am: Introduction/Storytelling presentation: Elder Marie Olson
- 11:00am: Setting the agenda, goals, and objectives: Ishmael Hope
- 11:30am: "Who Am I?" Group introductions, name games
- 12:00pm: "What is Storytelling?" Storytelling activity: Brett Dillingham
- 12:30pm: Lunch
- 1:00pm: "What is Theatre?" Theatre activities: Ishmael Hope
- 2:00pm: "Listen to Your Elder, and Be Quiet!": Marie Olson
- 3:00pm: Debriefing Marie's storytelling: Ishmael Hope and Brett Dillingham
- 3:30pm: "YOU Tell Us a Story": Brett tells a story and then student groups tell it themselves
- 5:00pm: Final theatre games, homework assignment and day's wrap-up: Ishmael Hope

Saturday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>:

Location: Schiable House

- 9:30am: Dry fish and seaweed breakfast
- 10:00am: Guest storyteller
- 10:30am: Read/discuss stories
- 11:00am: Marie storytelling
- 11:30am: Read/discuss stories
- 12:00pm: Theatre games: Ishmael Hope
- 12:30pm: Lunch
- 1:00pm: Brett storytelling
- 1:30pm: Read/discuss stories
- 2:00pm: Ishmael storytelling
- 2:30pm: Shake loose, stretch, play silly games
- 3:00pm: YOU decide your story
- 3:30pm: Create visual portrait of a story, tell/retell stories in pairs, some tell to group
- 4:30pm: Students prepare their rehearsal schedule and begin planning their storytelling

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