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For Immediate Release
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Childsplay Theatre & Cultural Coalition
Announce FREE Event for Families:
El Puente Theatre Festival & Mask Procession



Tempe Center for the Arts, 700 W. Rio Salado Parkway
Sunday, November 12, 2017: 2p.m. – 6p.m.

(Tempe, Ariz.) Cultural Coalition and Childsplay Theatre announce the sixth El Puente Theatre Festival and Mask Procession happening at Tempe Center for the Arts (TCA) on Sunday, Nov. 12 2016 from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

This unique celebration, supported by a grant from the City of Tempe, features an afternoon of theater, music, games and cultural performances. **FREE ADMISSION to the festival includes dynamic performances by local artists, mask making and art activities.** Plus, the first 450 people in attendance will receive free admission to the 3p.m. and 4:30p.m. performances of Childsplay's *Tomás and the Library Lady*.

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The free performances will begin at 2 p.m. and will continue through the afternoon, featuring:

- [Desert Sounds Mariachi "Sones del Desierto"](#)
- [Zarco Guerrero and the Dancing Dragons](#)
- [DJ Sean Derek](#)
- [Ollin Yoliztli Ballet Folklorico](#)
- Desierto Teatro
- [Ballet Folklórico Quetzalli](#)
- ... and more!

To conclude the festival, the community can join a masked procession of kids, families, performers and the *Tomás and the Library Lady* cast on the beautiful pedestrian bridge crossing Tempe Town Lake. The procession will start around 5:30 p.m.

"The word 'Puente' literally means 'Bridge,'" explains local artist Zarco Guerrero, who played a major role in the creation of the El Puente Project. "In every language the word 'Bridge' conjures up universal metaphors of transformation, enlightenment, freedom and even our passing into the afterlife. Here in the southwest the metaphor has special significance, as it represents the crossing of the Arizona-Mexican border, migration and the hope of a better life. In our Valley, we are blessed with the perfect locale to create a unique site-specific festival utilizing the bridge to bring this metaphor to life."

Cultural Coalition and Childsplay are thrilled to be bringing back El Puente for its sixth event. The Tempe Community has the unique advantage to call this festival their own, bringing revitalization and enthusiasm for the arts.

The "El Puente Project" was originally supported by a grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, with a focus on building demand for the performing arts. Through a partnership with Arizona artist Zarco Guerrero and Cultural Coalition, Childsplay hosted five previous festivals at Tempe Center for the Arts. The City of Tempe has now continued funding of the festival through the fall of 2017, allowing Cultural Coalition, in partnership with Childsplay, to continue bringing cultural revitalization and enthusiasm for the arts into the City of Tempe.

For more information or story/interview coordination, please contact Samantha Johnstone at (480) 921-5703 or sjohnstone@childsplayaz.org. High resolution images of *Tomás and the Library Lady* and El Puente event photos are available from Childsplay's website, www.childsplayaz.org/press. B-Roll footage is also available for use.

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About Childsplay:

Childsplay, Inc. is a nonprofit theatre company of professional, adult artists who perform for and teach young audiences and their families. The mission of Childsplay is "to create theatre so strikingly original in form, content or both, that it instills in young people an enduring awe, love and respect for the medium, thus preserving imagination and wonder, the hallmarks of childhood which are keys to the future." For more information, visit www.childsplayaz.org.

About Cultural Coalition:

Cultural Coalition, Inc., provides unique cultural programs which foster community engagement and are dedicated to the education, promotion, and development of Indigenous arts and artists in Arizona. For more information, visit www.culturalcoalition.com.

About Zarco Guerrero:

Zarco Guerrero is a sculptor, mask maker and performance artist (b. Mesa, AZ). He has dedicated his artistic endeavors to create positive social change through the arts. He adopted Cesar Chavez's ideology of art as a social service. His art includes music, poetry and theatre. He is the founder of Xicanindio Artes (now Xico, Inc.), the Cultural Coalition, Inc., and has been instrumental in the development of Latino Arts statewide. He has exhibited and received international acclaim and many prestigious awards. In 1985, PBS broadcast a one hour documentary about his art entitled "The Mask of El Zarco". He received the Japan Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, The Arizona Governors Arts Award, the Artistic Excellence Award from American Hispanics in Higher Education and the Esperanza Teacher of the Year Award among many others. He also won the 2012 AriZoni Award for his ground breaking work as a mask maker in Childsplay's 2011 production of *The Sun Serpent*. He is the-recipient of the Doris Duke Foundation grant to present theatre to Latino communities in Arizona and the 2015 Master Fellow with the Southwest Folklife Alliance.

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