



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
**San Diego Public Library**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, July 31, 2007

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**“DEAR MISS BREED” PLAY SHEDS LIGHT ON JAPANESE AMERICAN  
INTERMENT IN WWII**

*Miss Breed Correspondence with Children the Basis for Inspiration*

**San Diego, CA...** The City of San Diego Public Library and the Asian Story Theater (AST) will present a stage adaptation of the book, “*Dear Miss Breed*” by Joanne Oppenheim. The play will be at the Lyceum Space Theater at Horton Plaza from Sunday, September 16- Sunday, September 30. It is based on correspondence that San Diego Public Librarian Clara Breed maintained with over two dozen young San Diegans of Japanese American descent, interned by the government during World War II. Miss Breed, as she was known, kept every letter written to her by her children ages 5 through 19 who were taken to the Santa Anita Processing station and Poston Relocation camp in Arizona.

Their letters captured the frustration, patriotism, and perseverance of these young Americans as they wrote to her about a range of subjects, from homesickness and the quality of the food in camp to worries about relocation and deeply patriotic hopes for a speedy American victory. It was not until late in her life that Miss Breed’s letters and much of the clippings that document her relationship with her friends in the San Diego Japanese American community were given to San Diego’s Liz Yamada, and subsequently donated to the Japanese American National Museum. It was there where they were eventually discovered and inspired Oppenheim’s book.

Oppenheim began writing the stage adaptation after the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLPEP) awarded a grant for over \$60K to San Diego Public Library on behalf of AST to oversee and produce the adaptation. The project is led by Andy Lowe, former Artistic Director and founder of the 11-year-old Asian American Repertory Theatre (AART). Despite performing in numerous productions with the Asian Story Theater company, this is Lowe’s directorial debut with AST, and his first major project since resigning from AART in 2005. A 1994 Young Playwrights Project finalist, Lowe is no stranger to the playwriting process and is assisting the New York-based Oppenheim in her adaptation, which carries with it a contemporary message that resonates in the current post-9/11, war-on-terror climate of modern America.

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The September 16 through 30 Lyceum Theater performances are Thursday-Friday mornings at 10:00 a.m., Thursday evenings at 7:00 p.m., Friday and Saturdays at 8:00 p.m. with matinees Saturday and Sunday at 2:00 p.m. The Sunday, September 16, performance at 7:00 p.m. is the opening night, which includes a reception with the author and special guests from the community. The opening night performance is by invitation only. The tickets for the youth performances can be obtained from Young Audiences at 619-282-8709 and are \$5.50. Tickets for the other performances are \$10 (seniors and youth) - \$15 and can be purchased from the Lyceum box office and online: <http://www.sandiegorep.com/pages/about/lyceumevents.html>

This program is supported in whole or in part by the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLPEP), a project of the California State Library in Sacramento, administered in California by the State Librarian; The San Diego Foundation; and the City of San Diego Commission for Arts & Culture.

*The City of San Diego Public Library – Your Link to the Past and Gateway to the Future*

[www.sandiegolibrary.org](http://www.sandiegolibrary.org)

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