

# **Asian Story Theater**

1250 Weaver Street, San Diego CA 92114 • 619/527-2816 • [www.asianstorytheater.org](http://www.asianstorytheater.org)

**Contact Andy Lowe: 619-504-0461**

**For Immediate Release:**

## ***Asian Story Theater teams with San Diego Public Library to develop new play***

The 17-year-old Asian Story Theater (AST) has begun work on a stage adaptation of “Dear Miss Breed” by Joanne Oppenheim. The book (released through Scholastic in February of 2006) is a non-fiction piece that documents the life and work of Clara Breed, a San Diego Public Librarian who maintained a correspondence with over two dozen young San Diegans of Japanese American descent, incarcerated by the government during world war two. Miss Breed, as she was known, kept every letter written to her by her “children” aged between 5 and 19, from both the Santa Anita Processing station, and the 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 during the summer of last year, after the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLPEP) had 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.

With the subsequent full production set for July of 2007, AST and Lowe will host a free staged reading workshop of the work-in-progress at the Actor’s Alliance Facility at the NTC in Point Loma, on Wednesday January 31, 2007 at 7:30 P.M. Playwright Oppenheim will be in attendance.

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**WHO** Asian Story Theater

**WHAT** **Dear Miss Breed**  
**by Joanne Oppenheim**  
**Directed by Andy Lowe**

A recovering cancer patient finds new strength and hope when she stumbles upon some unlikely allies in letters written by Japanese American children relocated during World War two. As she seeks out the story of Clara Breed, the Librarian who reached out to these young Americans, she learns the value of heroes, and the difference one person can make.

**WHERE** Actors Alliance  
Actors Alliance of San Diego  
2650 Truxtun Road, Suite 203  
San Diego, CA 92106

**WHEN** Wednesday, January 31, 2007, 7:30 P.M.

**TICKETS** For information, call **(619) 527-2816**.