

For immediate release.

**BROADWAY LEAGUE AWARDS THE 2011 “APPLE AWARD” TO
TEACHER OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS
First Time a Los Angeles Teacher Has Been Honored**

Los Angeles, CA – Based on the recommendation of Center Theatre Group’s Education and Community Partnerships Department, The Broadway League has selected Lisa Okikawa, teacher of visually impaired students in Pasadena Unified School District, as the first teacher to receive a “League Educator Apple Award” in the Los Angeles area. The “Apple Awards” acknowledge the efforts of local schools and community groups that support programs relating to Broadway or touring Broadway shows, promoting further development of theatre education.

Ms. Okikawa began her ongoing collaboration with Center Theatre Group in 2009 bringing students who are visually impaired to a performance of *Ain’t Misbehavin’*. She supplemented the student performance of *Mary Poppins* with a specially designed “touch tour” to provide various mediums for her students to experience the show.

Each year, 15,000 students and educators attend theatre performances with Center Theatre Group’s Target Young Audiences Program. For many students, this is their first opportunity to see a live performance. The Target Young Audiences Program is just one way the Education and Community Partnerships Department is making quality theatre experiences part of what it means to grow up and live in Los Angeles.

Ms. Okikawa is a speaker/presenter in the field of visual impairments and utilizes performing arts education to develop literacy for visually impaired students. She worked in tandem with the American Printing House for the Blind in an efficacy study of the Wilson Reading System, a reading intervention program for students who read Braille.

Ms. Okikawa will receive the "League Educator Apple Award" at the opening night of *Les Misérables* at the Ahmanson Theatre on July 17, 2011. She and her students will attend the Target Young Audiences Program performance of *Les Misérables* on July 22, 2011. Audio Description services will be provided.

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