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The Unusual Suspects Return to Star View Adolescent Center

September 2, 2010, Los Angeles, CA- After a two year hiatus, The Unusual Suspects Theatre Company—with the support of L.A. County Supervisor Don Knabe—returns to Star View Adolescent Center with its award-winning arts mentoring program. A team of teaching artists and volunteer mentors have been working with emotionally disturbed youth at the facility, guiding them through an intensive ensemble playwriting process. Professional actors will present two original short plays written by Star View youth during a staged reading performance on Saturday, September 18th at Star View Adolescent Center in Torrance, CA.

“I am so amazed with the talent they have. They have shown me a side of themselves that I did not see in the school classrooms.” ~Rita Farabaugh, MS – Principal, South Bay High School, Star View Adolescent Center

Star View Adolescent Center serves severely emotionally disturbed youngsters between the ages of 12 and 17 years. Developed in 1996 in conjunction with Los Angeles County, the facility offers a multilevel program combining psychiatric crisis intervention, high-quality residential care, educational services, mental health treatment, and rehabilitation.

The Unusual Suspects theatre program uses improvisation and ensemble building exercises to help Star View youth express themselves and create two short plays together. Within the safety and stability of the ensemble, these youth have been able to break down emotional barriers and explore issues affecting their lives through theatre.

Play One: Arnaz is a young father who tries to help his best friend Josh escape gang life by inviting him to live with his family. However, his good intentions turn sour as he succumbs to the harmful street influences of Josh. Arnaz’s partying lifestyle leads him to neglect his wife and daughter, and eventually to jail, where he ends up on the brink of losing his family.

Play Two: Gwen and her asthmatic sister Jessie have run away from home to escape their neglectful mother and abusive boyfriend. With the help of a shelter they receive housing, medical care, and public school placement. They struggle to adapt to their new high school, but they find common ground with another pair of sisters, Yvette and Mariah, who are having their own issues with a difficult basketball coach. Together they learn how family, respect, and self esteem shape their lives.

The staged reading performance will be presented by professional actors on Saturday, September 18, 2010 at 2:00pm at Star View Adolescent Center, 4025 West 226 Street, Torrance, CA 90505. Admission is free. Reservations are encouraged. To make a reservation or for more information please call 213-488-8488, x201 or email RSVP@theunusualsuspects.org.

*Born out of the ashes of the 1992 L.A. Riots, **The Unusual Suspects Theatre Company** has grown into an award winning, model mentoring program using theatre arts to reach youth in underserved and at-risk environments, including kids in foster care, violence-plagued neighborhoods, gangs and juvenile corrections facilities. The Unusual Suspects offers two consecutive 10-week (60-80 hours each) playwriting and performance workshops where youth develop self-esteem, tolerance, and the communication and coping skills needed to make positive life choices. For more information, visit The Unusual Suspects website at www.TheUnusualSuspects.org.*

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