



DUCKIE SEES THE WORLD

By Emily Cicchini

*presents a Teacher
& Parent Guide
to . . .*



ABOUT OUR PLAY

You never know where or when the idea for a play will present itself. Our Resident Playwright, Emily Cicchini was reading a news report on the internet when the idea for DUCKIE SEES THE WORLD was born.

Emily cares deeply about our environment and searches for ways to conserve the Earth's resources. She was especially interested to read about how plastic in our oceans is affecting life all over the planet. One report she was reading was about a shipment of plastic bathtub toys that was lost at sea. And the idea for DUCKIE SEES THE WORLD began to swim around in her imagination.

In 1992 a large shipment of plastic toys made by The First Years, a company that makes toys and baby safety items, left a Hong Kong port headed to the United States. Along the way, the ship ran into a massive storm. The wind and waves were so strong that one of the huge shipping containers was washed overboard. The container was filled with small plastic ducks, beavers, turtles, and frogs. All of these items are designed to float in a child's bathtub, giving joy and bath time fun. Emily began to ask herself what it would look like to see thousands of these toys lost at sea. What would they do out there? What would become of them?

And what might happen to the children who never received one of these toys?

Writing new plays is a journey. And DUCKIE SEES THE WORLD has had a long and winding path of development. At first, Pollyanna's creative team believed that the story should include details about who made the ducks. Should it include information about a woman from the toy factory and her family? Should it include a child that woman had to give up for adoption? Two drafts of the play were created that included several different subplots. Ultimately, the creative team realized that this play is the story of a young girl and a very special yellow rubber duck and the subplots became more focused. Now the play follows the story of a young girl in Maine and her father who is a scientist who studies the ocean's water. It is also the story of a yellow rubber duck from Hong Kong in search of a child to love. The playwright's passion for the environment and the interconnected way our global environment operates is at the heart of the story. The Earth's environment is both science and magic and both of those forces are hard at work in our production of DUCKIE SEES THE WORLD.

OUR PLAYWRIGHT

Emily Cicchini is resident playwright at The Pollyanna Theatre Company and has written numerous plays for Pollyanna's managing director, Judy Matetzschk-Campbell. These include "Rumpelstiltskin's Daughter," adapted from the picture book by Diane Stanley, and "Edward, the Owl, and the Calico Cat," inspired by the life and work of Edward Lear, published by Dramatic Publishing. Another Pollyanna production, "A Dragon's Happy Day," about a dragon with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, is being optioned for an animated feature film.



Ms. Cicchini has worked on and/or offstage with Austin Script Works, BoarsHead: Michigan Public Theatre, Capitol City Playhouse, the Cleveland Play House,

Frontera @ Hyde Park Theatre, Live Oak Theatre, the Michigan and Texas Young Playwright's Festivals, Salvage Vanguard Theatre, Turner House Shakespeare Festival, the University of Texas Performing Arts Center, and Zachary Scott Theatre Center. Her play, "Mays & Terese," about a fictional meeting of Madelyn Murray O'Hair and Mother Teresa, was developed through the New Harmony Project and produced by Bloomington Playwright's Project. Much of her writing focuses on strong women from the past, most notably "Becoming Bronte," about the early lives of literature's most famous three sisters. It was selected for the National Play Networks' Hothouse at Kitchen Dog Theatre, Richard and Betty Burdick National Playwright's Festival at Florida Studio Theatre and won the Austin Critics' Table Award for Best Original New Script.

Ms. Cicchini works in the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Texas and holds an MFA from the University of Texas (where she was a James A. Michener Fellow) and a BFA in acting from DePaul/Goodman School of Drama. You can visit her website at www.emilycicchini.com.

We are thrilled that Ms. Cicchini will be with us for part of the run of DUCKIE SEES THE WORLD. We hope that you will get to meet her while you are at the theatre. We only wish she could be with us for the entire process, but we promise to introduce her on the days she is present.

ABOUT SEEING A PLAY

Grade Level: Kindergarten
Subject: Theatre/Language Arts
Strand: Response and Evaluation
Learning Objective: K.5 The student responds to and evaluates theatre and theatrical performances.
Student Expectations: (A) The student is expected to identify appropriate audience behavior.
 And
 (D) Observe the performance of artists

We urge you to take this opportunity to tell your students about the very special event that they will attend: DUCKIE SEES THE WORLD by Emily Cicchini. Tell the young audience members that this production is a live theatre event and is not like watching television, or a DVD, or going to see a movie. While this difference may seem very obvious to adults, remember that many young people have never seen a play before. This may be some young audience members' first experience at the theatre. Please do not assume that someone has taught them how to sit and watch a live performing arts event. The youngest of our audience members need to be

coached on how to best enjoy their audience experiences and older youth can always benefit from a reminder.

Begin by asking the students who might know the difference between seeing a live play and watching a DVD or a video. Some of their answers might be that a video or DVD can be stopped and started when the audience wishes. It can be rewound if they miss part of it, the actors cannot hear the audience in a DVD, the actors in a DVD cannot hear the audience, but the audience can hear the actors, etc. Stress to the students that a live event is very different from those experiences that they are familiar with at home.

Explain to the students that when theatre is doing a good job, it makes you think. And as soon as you form a thought, your first instinct is often to turn to your friend next to you and start to talk. But audiences at a play cannot talk while the play is going on because nothing can be rewound! And the company members of Pollyanna Theatre do not want them to miss a single word or movement.

Stress to the students that audience etiquette calls for them to remain in their seats during the performance, not to talk while the play is in progress, and to closely watch the actors who are presenting the play. You can also tell them that applause is a very appropriate way for the students to show their appreciation at the end of the play. And because this play is a comedy, the company members at Pollyanna Theatre encourage them to laugh when laughter is appropriate.

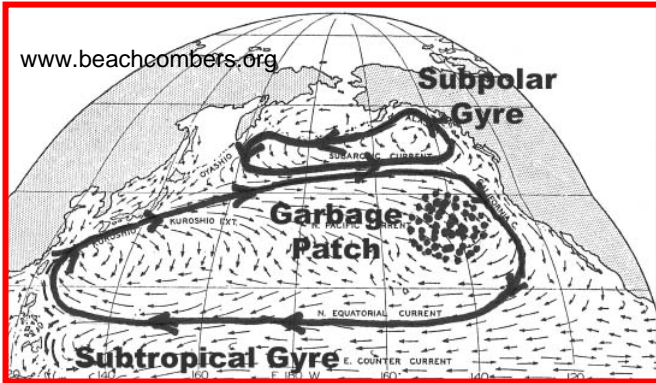
With a little coaching, you can have a big impact on how much young people enjoy and understand this production.

ABOUT SOME OF OUR CHARACTERS

Grade Level: First Grade
Subject: Science
Strand: Perception
Learning Objective: (9) Science concepts. The student knows that living organisms have basic needs
Student Expectations: (A) The student is expected to identify characteristics of living organisms that allow their basic needs to be met
 And
 (B) compare and give examples of ways living organisms depend on each other for their basic needs.

North Pacific Gyre

One of the play's characters is the North Pacific Gyre. A gyre (rhymes with "tire") is a strong circular current found in the ocean. This massive force of nature found at sea is very real and very frightening. Gyres are found in both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.



But humans have changed the nature of Gyres by polluting the seas. The North Pacific Gyre, with its strong circular movement, is rather like a whirlpool but much larger. Items that float into the gyre's reach very seldom can get out. So the gyre is the perfect place for plastics and other floating objects to end up.

The North Pacific Gyre is now a huge floating garbage heap full of plastic bags, plastic bottles, and other random and ragged plastic materials that have been dumped into the ocean either on purpose or by accident. Many of the plastic toys that were lost at sea in 1992 are now in the North Pacific Gyre, floating around in endless circles.

This might not seem like such a big problem until one realizes that the North Pacific Gyre is twice the size of the state of Texas. This huge mound of rotating, plastic waste is so large it takes over *four years* for a floating item to circle it! That is a huge amount of trash!

The other major problem with the gyre's plastic is that the fish and birds that have been used to eating the plankton (tiny, often microscopic, natural fish food) usually found in the gyre's circular current cannot tell the difference between their usual food and the deadly plastic now floating in the sea.

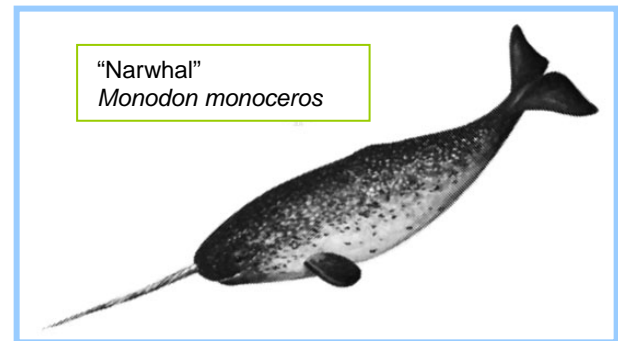
Scientists estimate that there is now twice as much plastic in the North Pacific Gyre as there is food for the fish and birds.



This means that many marine animals are eating the plastic, becoming sick and are no longer able to live. The plastic in the ocean is interfering with the fishes' and birds' basic needs. This disruption of the earth's natural food chain has major implications for people, who also depend upon marine life for food and other resources. The plastic waste found at sea is poisoning the sea, its creatures, and, ultimately, us.

Narwhal

Another character you will meet in DUCKIE SEES THE WORLD is the narwhal. This large sea creature is related to the beluga whale but has a very unique feature. The narwhal grows one, single tusk straight out of the top of their heads. This has given them the nickname "The Unicorn of the Sea." This tusk can sometimes grow longer than the narwhal's body. Scientists are not sure what the tusk is used for, but some speculate that it is a tool that they can use to break up the ice in the Arctic waters where they live. Others believe it is used for smelling the water around them and helping them find food.



This unusual marine animal may not be familiar to the students you are bringing to see the play, so please take a moment to show them the photo of the narwhal provided in this guide and tell them about this unique character they will meet when they come to the theatre.

ABOUT THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

It is summer! Why think about school and learning objectives before school starts? Because with the increasing amount of teaching objectives for the school day, summer has become a very important time to take advantage of a more relaxed schedule and explore the arts. The Pollyanna Theatre is working to extend arts education into the summer months when more students have time and energy to explore theatre and all it has to teach us about life and personal growth. We urge you to

take this opportunity to expand the trip to the theatre into a time to review basic skills during the summer and keep the learning going year round.

Pollyanna's production of DUCKIE SEES THE WORLD will be enjoyed by audiences of all ages, but is designed for children ages 5 - 12. This is a timeless story about searching for a home and place to belong. It is also a story about searching for security and love and our very human need for these affirming forces in our lives. And the learning needs of a 5-year-old are completely different from the challenges needed by a 12-year-old. This means that creating grade-level appropriate activities for this printed guide is a bit of a challenge. But, because the school curriculum is a spiral curriculum, basic skills learned in lower grades are revisited and enriched each school year. Likewise, an activity written for a higher grade level can easily be adjusted down the basic learning spiral for younger children who are addressing those basic skills for the first time. We encourage caregivers and parents of all grade levels to use these basic activities as a starting point for adapting learning opportunities for the children you bring to the theatre. The following activities are based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for grades 2 and 3, but can easily be adapted for the ages of your young audience members.

Our goal is to provide students with opportunities to practice good grammar and improve student use of English in both writing and speaking.

VOCABULARY BUILDING

Vocabulary Building Activity:

Learning Objectives Taken from TEKS for Grade 3

5) Reading/word identification. The student uses a variety of word identification strategies. The student is expected to:

(D) use root words and other structural cues such as prefixes, suffixes, and derivational endings to recognize words (3);

(E) use knowledge of word order (syntax) and context to support word identification and confirm word meaning (1-3);

8) Reading/vocabulary development. The student develops an extensive vocabulary. The student is expected to:

(C) use resources and references such as beginners' dictionaries, glossaries, available technology, and context to build word meanings and to confirm pronunciations of words (2-3) .

Begin by reminding the students that when they are reading something new that there are always ways to detect an unfamiliar word's meaning by looking for clues given by other words in the sentence or surrounding sentences. Give the students the following words and their usages from DUCKIE SEES THE WORLD and ask them to write down what they think those words might mean. Urge them to base their definitions on what they might know of the word's root as well as the context of the sentence.

You can easily adjust this activity for use after seeing the play and substituting words you heard while watching DUCKIE SEES THE WORLD to provide students with simpler concepts used in the play.



- **Biodegradable** "And plastic is not, generally, biodegradable. It breaks down into ever smaller pieces, to the size of confetti, and finally, dust."
- **Oceanographer** "...my father, who is a scientist. He's a physical oceanographer..."
- **Gyre (rhymes with "tire")** "within just a few months, many of the ducks spun free from the powerful gyre, and washed up on the shores of Sitka, Alaska Catalogue."
- **Circulate** "The ocean currents circulate all over the world."
- **Persistence** "I'm tired of coming out here every day." Dad - "Ah, the life of a scientist. Persistence, my dear. Persistence."
- **Media Frenzy & Flotilla** "As if I didn't have enough real problems to worry about, there is this media frenzy over a flotilla of yellow rubber duckies."
- **Oceanographer** "...my father, who is a scientist. He's a physical oceanographer..."

For additional information about the duckies and other interesting facts, go to www.beachcombers.org



POST-PRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Learning Objective:

Subject: Social Studies

Grade Level: 2

Strand: Geography

Objective: (2.6) The student understands the locations and characteristics of places and regions.

The student is expected to (A) identify major landforms and bodies of water, including continents, and oceans, on maps and globes; (B) locate the community, Texas, the United States, and selected countries on maps and globes: and (C) Compare information from different sources about places and regions.

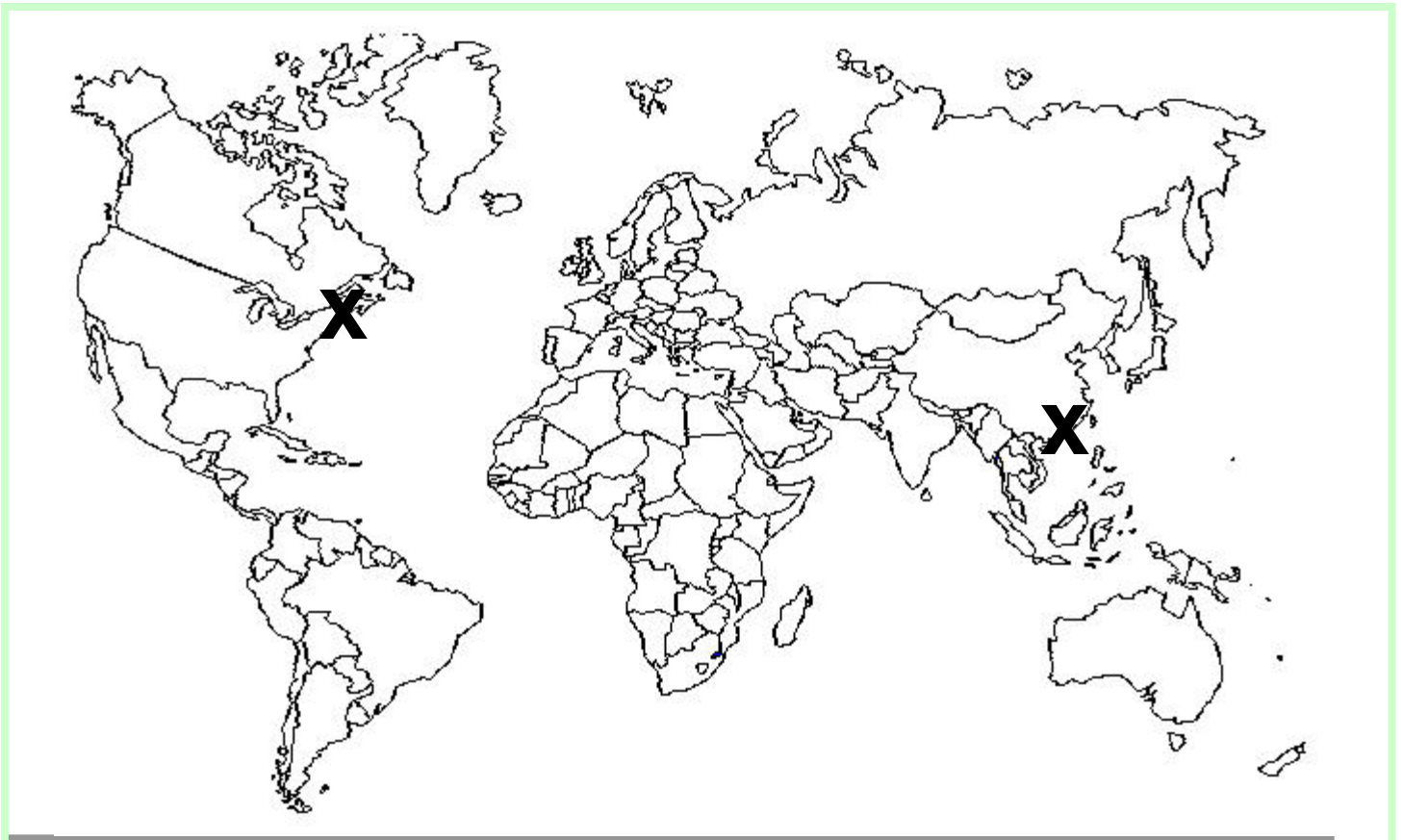
journey to explore some basic geography with your students. Challenge the students to find alternate routes that Duckie might have traveled. For this activity, you will need a variety of maps of the globe as well as a globe itself so that students can track Duckie's journey.

Begin by pointing out Hong Kong on the map. Explain that Hong Kong is now part of China, but that when Duckie was made, back in 1992, Hong Kong was under the control of Great Britain. Point out the Northern Pacific Ocean and the Bering Straights as well as the Arctic Ocean. Then point out the location of the coastline of Maine. Challenge the students to remember clues from the play that help them map out Duckie's journey from the play. Tell them to remember how cold and icy the journey was for Duckie.

MAPPING DUCKIE'S JOURNEY

In our play, Duckie starts her journey in Hong Kong and ends up living with Jewel on the coast of Maine in the United States. During the play, Jewel points out that all of the world's oceans are connected. That means that there are many different paths that Duckie might have taken to reach Maine's coastline. In the play, our playwright chose to take Duckie through the Arctic Ocean, through the ice and then south. Use Duckie's

Next, divide the group into smaller groups of four students each and ask them to map out an alternative route that Duckie might have chosen that also would take her to the Maine coastline. After giving each group a few minutes with the globe and/or map, ask them to share their route with the rest of the class. As Jewel said in the play, "Remember, we can think of it as one big ocean. It is all connected."



WE'D LIKE TO THANK OUR SPONSORS

This production is sponsored in part by



Pollyanna Theatre is the proud recipient of a grant from The Children's Theatre Foundation of America. Each year, CTFA awards grants to some of the nation's leading Children's Theatre Companies to help in the development of new dramatic literature for young audiences. This year's grant marks Pollyanna Theatre's first grant from this outstanding organization. CTFA funds have made it possible to develop DUCKIE SEES THE WORLD.



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We would love to hear from you! Use the back of this guide and drop us a line.

Our email address is judy@pollytheatre.org

Our website is
www.pollytheatre.org