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NEWS RELEASE

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MainStreet Theatre Company Opens 5th Season with “Lilly’s Purple Plastic Purse” October 2nd at the Lewis Family Playhouse

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rancho Cucamonga, California – The MainStreet Theatre Company begins its 5th season of high-quality, professional theatre for young audiences with *Lilly’s Purple Plastic Purse*, a stage adaptation of the popular books by Kevin Henkes. The production opens October 2nd and runs through October 17th at Rancho Cucamonga’s Lewis Family Playhouse located at 12505 Cultural Center Drive.

Lilly’s Purple Plastic Purse brings Kevin Henkes’ exuberant mouse Lilly to the stage. Lilly loves everything, including her red boots, her best friends, and especially her new purse which plays music whenever it is opened. The play, for ages 5 and up follows the story lines of three of Henke’s much loved books, *Chester’s Way*, *Julius*, *Baby of the World*, and *Lilly’s Purple Plastic Purse*. The MainStreet Theatre Company production will bring Lilly’s world to life in a unique and colorful production, including several larger than life dream sequences and a musical score written specifically for this production.

MainStreet Theatre Company producer Mireya “Murry” Hepner shared, “Children can relate to the ups and downs of Lilly’s life. Even though Lilly and her friends are mice, they have the same problems and emotions as human children. They will relate to her jealousy of her new baby brother, to her arsenal of disguises that make her feel brave, and to the joy of sharing her secret language with her best friends. The adaptation is great because it really captures childhood in a funny and yet sincere way. Our team is having a blast creating this wonderful world.”

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The six-person cast will play multiple roles in this whimsical, funny, and sweet production. Cast members include MainStreet Theatre Company mainstays Emily Eiden (last seen as the “nice” stepsister in *Cinderella*) as Lilly and Reggie De Leon (*Cinderella, A Year With Frog & Toad*) as Chester. Max Grodenchik, a veteran of stage and screen, will portray both Lilly’s father and teacher Mr. Slinger. MainStreet Theatre Company newcomers Robin Becker, Amanda Pajer, and Max Lawrence round out the cast.

This production’s creative team includes Director Abigail Deser who was named “Best New Director 2001” by Chicago Magazine. Credits in Chicago include two After Dark awards for “Best Director” and numerous Joseph Jefferson nominations for “Best Director” and “Best Ensemble.” Los Angeles area credits include productions at The Echo Theatre Company, University of Southern California, and five years as Associate Artistic Director of the Ojai Playwrights Conference. Scenic Designer Dwight Richard Odle has created scenery, costumes, and pageantry for a wide variety of live entertainment and special events, has been honored for “Lifetime Achievement” by the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle, and was presented the 2006 “Cultural Legacy Award for Career Achievement by Arts Orange County.” He also designed the popular *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* for MainStreet Theatre Company in the 2009/2010 Season. Costume Designer Tina Haatainen-Jones recently designed the costumes for *Nightmare Alley* at the Geffen Playhouse, and has designed four previous productions for MainStreet Theatre Company. Veteran Sound Designer and Composer Michael Hooker will be creating special music to come out of Lilly’s Purse in addition to designing sound effects for the production. Lighting is by Tom Ontiveros, a recent transplant to Southern California.

Book Author and Illustrator Kevin Henkes is the creator of many books for children, including several picture books featuring his mouse characters. They include the #1 *New York Times* bestsellers *Lilly's Big Day* and *Wemberly Worried*, the Caldecott Honor Book *Owen*, as well as the beloved *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*.

Adaptor Kevin Kling is a playwright and performer, best known nationally for his regular storytelling contributions to National Public Radio’s *All Things Considered*. His adaptation of the much-loved children's book *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse* continues to be produced in theaters across the United States and abroad. Other plays include *Lloyd's Prayer*, *Mississippi Panorama*, *Gulliver: A Swift Journey*, *The 7 Dwarfs* and *The Education of Walter Kauffmann.*, and his one-person play *21A*, which he has performed around the world.

Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse, appropriate for ages five years and up, runs October 2nd-17th on Saturday at 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m., and Sunday at 1:00 p.m. (no performance on Oct. 3rd). The matinee on October 10th will be interpreted in American Sign Language. The Playhouse also runs special weekday matinees for school children. Tickets are \$17 for General Admission, \$15 for Seniors, and \$14 for Youth up to age 12. Subscriptions are available for all three shows in MainStreet’s season at a 20% discount.

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An intimate, 536-seat venue, the Lewis Family Playhouse is the crown jewel of the three-acre, 89,000-square foot Victoria Gardens Cultural Center. The complex at 12505 Cultural Center Drive is conveniently located off the I-15 at Foothill Boulevard, as a major anchor of Victoria Gardens. The Box Office is open Monday through Thursday from noon to 6:00 p.m., and Friday and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., with free parking available.

The MainStreet Theatre Company's season also includes *The Gingerbread Man*, January 29th – February 13th, and *Anne of Green Gables*, May 7th – 22nd.

For More Information – For additional information or to purchase tickets, please visit www.lewisfamilyplayhouse.com or call the Lewis Family Playhouse Box Office at (909) 477-2752 or (877) 858-8422. For reservations to the Press Opening, Saturday, October 2nd, 1:00 p.m. or 4:00 p.m., contact Marketing Coordinator Annette Mumolo at (909) 477-2775, extension 2205 or via e-mail at annette.mumolo@cityofrc.us.

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