



November 17, 2010

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Dear Friend of Boxtales,

*"I believe programs like Boxtales' are absolutely essential. My experience with Boxtales has further enforced my belief that sometimes the greatest gifts and most powerful lessons we can offer our children do NOT live in the pages of textbooks. Through this program, my students learned self-motivation, discipline, perseverance, cooperation, and mutual respect. I believe that, for perhaps the first time, these kids had the grand experience of being an absolutely essential part of something far greater than themselves. Now THESE are some powerful lessons to share with such young people!"*

—Christina Mavaro, McKinley Elementary

Knowing the incredible impact that Boxtales Theatre Company has had on thousands of children—like the ones described above—makes it all the more difficult to share with you some difficult news about our organization. Due to a significant loss of funding, Boxtales is in trouble.

Over the last two years, we have lost over \$126,000 from grants—more than half our annual operating budget. And, due to cuts in arts funding, schools can no longer afford to pay for our programs the way they once did. This loss of income has left us unable to pay our staff and has put us at risk of closing our doors permanently. And we are not alone in this. According to some estimates, up to 50 percent of Santa Barbara arts organizations are at risk of folding, a symptom of a nationwide trend in funding for the arts:

*Nonprofit arts organizations have felt the sting of the recession with state and local government arts funding dropping as much as 16 percent, and private charitable gifts to the arts declining \$1.2 billion in just two years. Additionally, individual artists have been experiencing unemployment at twice the rate of other educated, professional workers.*

—Robert Lynch, Americans for the Arts

Many funders are focusing on safety net services such as food and shelter programs. While these issues are, *of course*, of the utmost importance, we feel that it is urgent to not allow arts programs such as Boxtales' to disappear, especially when the work we do is so valuable both educationally and emotionally to our youth. These two quotes from parents of Boxtales' students illustrate this quite well:

*“Many of the skills taught by Boxtales require intense concentration. I am able to see vast improvement in (my son’s) reading. I believe that this progress is directly related to his use of concentration at Circus Camp.”*

*“Thank you to Michael and his crew for instilling in (my daughter) and helping her bring forth her love of dancing, silliness, balancing, mime, and I could go on and on but most of all for helping her establish a sense of self-worth!”*

Like most Americans, you deeply value the arts as a part of the educational experience for children. This sentiment is summarized well by a librarian at an elementary school that Boxtales performed at last year:

*“Since I get to coordinate our schedule, I get all the feedback--and I have never, never gotten the kind of overwhelmingly enthusiastic and appreciative and shining-faced responses you elicited from our entire community. You really ignited a spark! Thank you so much for giving us an experience that only Art can provide.”*

Boxtales' newest and upcoming projects are the return of “The Ages” project at McKinley Elementary School that was so successful two years ago and the build of a new show based on the *Quiche Maya Popol Vuh* ready for touring in September 2011. Will you help us continue to bring these powerful arts experiences to the youth of our community, with a donation today? Any amount you can give—be it \$1,000, \$100, or \$10—can truly make it possible for us to keep our mission alive. Thank you for your generosity and support.

Sincerely,



Jeff Metcalfe  
Board President



Michael Andrews  
Executive Artistic Director