

# Diversions . . .

## Choir, drama students team up with Goodwill to help the needy

Goodwill of Arizona and Marcos de Niza High School's Choir and Drama Program have teamed up for the second year in a row, providing an opportunity to empty those overstuffed closets and garages while helping underprivileged families at the same time.

The event is scheduled 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 13. Goodwill collection trucks, along with choir and drama students, will point the way to the sale location on the Marcos campus.

Marcos de Niza High School is at 6000 S. Lakeshore Drive, Tempe.

Becky Ottinger, president of the school's choir and drama parents support group, said last year's effort brought in 25,000 pounds of cast-offs—four truckloads—and was the biggest drive to date, resulting in Goodwill bumping up to \$3,000 its payoff to the school.

According to Ottinger, Marcos de Niza boasts an award-winning choir and drama program, emphasized by its A cappella choir singing in Times Square and at the U.S.S. Intrepid Museum in New York City over Spring Break last year.

Although it was a costly trip for many Marcos musicians and thespians, the Goodwill funds helped offset a portion of the cost for every student making the trip, according to Ottinger.

The money raised at this year's drive is aimed at supporting the spring musical "Footloose" and helping create enhanced décor for the lobby in the school's auditorium.

Said Ottinger:

"Fine arts in public schools struggles with reduced funding and support. Yet student involvement in the arts has been shown to be crucial for a successful life after high school."

In 2009, she said, Americans for the Arts presented a report that showed students who participated in the arts in high school were more likely to complete a college degree, get a job and be a community volunteer than those who did not.

Additional studies find that arts instruction enhances cognitive reading skills, writing and math learning and retention, Ottinger noted.

Marcos de Niza Choir and Drama Parents is a 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

## MCC play a family holiday treat

Mesa Community College's Theatre & Film Arts Department is presenting Susan Zeder's signature play, *Mother Hicks*, directed by Debra K. Stevens, this holiday season.

The award-winning play performs at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 5, 6, 11 and 12, with matinees on Dec. 6 and 13 at 2 p.m., in the MCC Theatre located on the south side of MCC's Southern and Dobson campus in Mesa.

Tickets are available by calling the Box Office at 480-461-7172; online at [www.purplepass.com/#u20576/Mesa\\_Community\\_College.html](http://www.purplepass.com/#u20576/Mesa_Community_College.html); or at the door.

Interpreters for the hearing impaired will be present at all performances.

MCC is promoting the play as an alternative to more traditional holiday fare due to the rich family-oriented themes surrounding

the play, and the importance of finding a place of belonging in a complex world. The story takes place in Ware, Ill., during the Great Depression. *Mother Hicks*, whom the townspeople blame for all of their misfortune, takes in a young, orphaned deaf man named Tuc, and an orphan girl simply named Girl.

Each of these three is an outsider. Girl yearns to have her own name; the deaf boy is eloquent in the language of his silence; and the eccentric recluse, *Mother Hicks*, is something far more benevolent.

Told through poetry and sign language, *Mother Hicks* chronicles the journey of these three characters as they find themselves, and each other, in a troubled time.

**Box office & ticket information** — Marisa Estrada at 480-461-7172 or [marisa.estrada@mesacc.edu](mailto:marisa.estrada@mesacc.edu)