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**ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE WINS 2013 WEDU BE MORE AWARD FOR SECOND YEAR IN A ROW**

**(SARASOTA, February 28, 2013)** —Asolo Repertory Theatre was named the 2013 recipient of the WEDU Be More Enriched Award in the category of arts and culture for the second year in a row, this time winning for its educational program *Kaleidoscope*. Recognized for contributing to “the spirit of adventure and exploration through the performing arts,” *Kaleidoscope* engages adults and youth with disabilities in interactive games and storytelling, culminating in an annual live theatrical performance for the general public. The program is credited for bringing rich experiences to its participants, whose disabilities range from Autism to Down Syndrome, and helping them develop positive changes in self-esteem, social skills, communication, and creative accomplishments.

“We work with people that are often overlooked and underserved. By encouraging expression in a safe and supportive place, each individual becomes more confident and independent while still being part of a larger ensemble,” said Brian Hersh, Asolo Rep’s Director of Education and Outreach. “It’s wonderful to receive recognition for this vital program, which helps build essential life skills using the arts.”

*Kaleidoscope* was co-founded by Ann Morrison, an actress and philanthropist well known for her role of Mary Flynn in the Broadway production of *Merrily We Roll Along*. The organizations partnering with Asolo Rep this season are Community Haven for Adults and Children with Disabilities, Bayshore High School, Easter Seals of Southwest Florida, and Oak Park School. *Kaleidoscope* is made possible, in part, with support from BMO Harris Bank, the Virginia White Clark Fund of the Bank of America Client Foundation, and the Jerome and Mildred Paddock Foundation.

“This tremendously effective program encourages each artist to bring his or her own distinct voice and talents to the stage,” said Michael Donald Edwards, Producing Artistic Director for Asolo Rep. “This recognition is much deserved and it’s always great when it comes from another respected cultural organization such as WEDU.”

Asolo Rep was also honored this year as a finalist for the Be More Unstoppable Award, a recognition given to the nonprofit organization of the year for overall excellence, service, community impact, and embodiment of goodwill. WEDU is West Central Florida’s leading PBS station and public media source. The WEDU Be More Awards have been honoring Tampa Bay’s outstanding nonprofit organizations and individuals for the past eight years. Regarded as the Oscars of local non-profit awards, the eighth annual awards ceremony was held February 21, 2013 in Tampa.

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