

Caregiving Takes Centre Stage

HEAL THYSELF

A National Project

“I have seen the light... Painful, heartbreaking and finally
uplifting.... It is really about all of us.”

– *Rick McConnell, The Edmonton Journal*

IMAGISCAPE THEATRE

A National Need

Caregiving is expensive, life altering, emotionally trying, and far more common than most people imagine.

As baby boomers and their parents age, the need for supporting family caregiving is skyrocketing – for sons and daughters, husbands and wives, mothers and fathers – for your neighbours and probably someday for you.

Over one million Canadians provide care at home for the chronically ill, equivalent to the work of 276,000 full time employees, saving the health care system over 5 billion dollars annually.¹ Employees juggling work and family cost Canadian employers at least \$2.7 billion a year in lost time, and employees miss 19.8 million days of work each year due to work-family problems.² 36% of informal caregivers are over the age of 70. 31% have a household income of less than \$25,000. An estimated 46% are clinically depressed.³

The stories are all around us. Caregivers *themselves* need care: training, resources, and the opportunity to share their stories with others.

A National Project

Heal Thyself powerfully addresses the real needs of family caregivers through three creative elements:

1. **A stage show** to tour in 2009 and beyond.
2. **A documentary** for broadcast and DVD distribution.
3. **A DVD of the stage show** for mass distribution.

These elements will be available through public media, through caregiving organizations, and through the workplace.

“Among the bravest stage projects I’ve ever seen.... This is life at its most naked...the actors escape gravity ...”

- Michael Evans, *SEE Magazine*

¹Stephenson, M., Sawyer, E., (2002). Continuing the Care: The Issues and Challenges of Long Term Care. CHA Press Ottawa, ON

²Duxbury, Linda, PhD, Chris Higgins, PhD, & Karen Johnson, PhD. “An Examination of the implications & Costs of Work-Life Conflict in Canada.”

³American Association of Geriatric Psychiatry, www.aagppa.org; “Geriatrics and Mental Health - The Facts”

The Three Elements of *Heal Thyself*

1. The Touring Stage Show

In real life, author-performer Carlynn Reed's adult son is bedridden with a mysterious chronic pain condition. Her artistic partner, Jonathon Neville, cares at home for a mother entering the middle stages of Alzheimer's. Heeding the title of the project, and using drama and dance, the artists explore their deepest fears as they weave their personal stories together into a strange but stunning tapestry of hope. Critics agree they have succeeded in translating their lives into a poignant, funny, and absorbing look at transforming caregiving into healing for the caregiver. Each touring performance will include a talk-back with the audience, resource materials, and in most venues, a screening of the documentary.

2. The Documentary

Filmmaker Danny Wilson has been following the research and development of the project, including the artists' and other caregivers' home lives for a year. The raw footage already shown to audiences indicates that the documentary is going to be every bit as absorbing as the stage show. It observes the creative process of turning life into art, and the transforming power of creative caregiving. Both the quality and content of this documentary make it a natural choice for a variety of TV networks starting in 2009.

3. The DVD Version of the Stage Show

The live stage show can reach only a fraction of the caregivers in Canada. The DVD version will be distributed nationally through caregiver organizations, websites, and at show venues. DVD features will include the documentary.

"It's heavy subject matter, but they keep it light and entertaining while delivering a powerful message at the same time."

- Phil Dupperon, *VUE Weekly*

The Process

This show was born out of a year-long journey, in which the co-authors invaded each other's family lives, to rigorously examine and play with the care-giver-receiver relationship. It has been a journey of vulnerability and transparency. Through this process, their homes have been dramatically changed. Despite his immobile and mute state, Reed's son, Kirk, composed 2 songs for the stage show and is composing songs for the documentary. Neville's mother, Christine, is more vibrant and at peace with herself and her Alzheimer's. Workshop performances were held earlier in Toronto, London, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver. The full history of the project will be seen in the *Heal Thyself* documentary by Danny Wilson, in 2009. More at www.imagiscape.ca.

Project Team

Project Chairman	Ralph Phillips
Imago Executive Director	John Franklin, PhD.
Imago Auditor	PFK Hill, Inc.
Artistic Directors, Imagiscape	Carlynn Reed & Jonathon Neville
Stage Director	Dennis Hassell
Authors & Performers	Jonathon Neville & Carlynn Reed
Documentary Producer	Danny Wilson
Script Consultant	Dennis Hassell
Music	Peter Jarvis
Movement Coach	Tom Brouillette
Additional Choreography	Jack Langenhuizen, Motus O
Set Design	Cheryl Martin

The Artists

Carlynn Reed (co-author, performer)

performs, teaches acting, leads contact improvisation dance workshops, and integrates her work into both spiritual and business conferences. In the business world, Reed has helped facilitate leadership training programs, using dramatic techniques and simulations to develop effective communication skills. She has taught diverse courses at schools and colleges, now teaching Drama in Ministry at U of T's Wycliffe College. With well over three dozen scripts and a national Episcopal Drama award to her credit, her work is seen across Canada, the U.S., New Zealand, the Sudan, and S.E. Asia.

Jonathon Neville (co-author, performer)

develops Inspired Economies through Pragmatic Poetry, Intelligible Ecosystems, and Management Accounting. He leads workshops in personal theatre, helping people and organizations change the stories they enact; and is developing *The Creative Workout* – work the imagination, the spirit, the body and the voice, while participating in Creation – gardening, assembly line operation....

Dennis Hassell (director/dramaturge)

has produced over 50 plays, and written twelve produced scripts. He was the founding Artistic Director of Brookstone Performing Arts for 15 years (14 Dora Mavor Moore Award nominations). Scriptwriting is his primary focus now. His latest commissioned script, THE GLORY PLACE (about the start of *Habitat For Humanity*), was featured last month at Art Within's international Showcase & Symposium in Atlanta. *The Glory Place* is being workshopped in Toronto in February: www.dennishassell.com.

Peter Jarvis (composer/musician)

enjoys writing music for theatre, film, video, CD-ROM, and circus. Peter is the founding member of the *Subtonic Monks* and Improvisational World Beat Ensemble, now in their tenth year of playing. His most recent scores are for the Stratford presentation *Be'reazed of Light* and MOTUS O's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Peter also performed for a Cirque du Soleil television special. www.silverelvis.com

Danny Wilson (videographer)

is a Director/Digital Cinematographer who has been freelancing in Toronto since arriving in 1998. His work has taken him as far away as the magical stone circles of Avebury (in the U.K.). Danny now finds himself on the frontlines of the digital revolution. His diverse body of work includes short films, documentaries, music videos, commercials, dance films, a TV pilot, promotional videos and live event documentation. Danny is a staunch advocate for today's digital technology and is a highly active indie producer.

“Probes the nature of caregiving and creativity... a few minutes later they were being interviewed live by a television reporter”

Edmonton Journal, Entertainment, Aug.23

Thursday, August 25, 2005

EDMONTON JOURNAL

Experimental Gamble Pays Off

Tale zeroes in on the simple fears that haunt us all

HEAL THYSELF

Rating 

"But I don't like experimental theatre."

I can't think how many times I've muttered that under my breath (two or three, at least), though I'm willing to admit it says more about me than it does about theatre.

Well... I shall mutter no more, because I have seen the light, or at the very least I've had the pleasure of watching two smart and very talented people use a stage and a few simple props to lay open their hearts and share their secrets, their deepest fears, their most fervent hopes. I've seen them dance on crutches and writhe on the floor like snakes. I've listened to their stories, and learned something about my own.

I did not expect this. What Jonathon Neville and Carlynn Reed have written is certainly experimental. It's a performance piece about their own lives, but it is really about all of us. The Toronto actors use dance and dialogue to tell two linked stories, alternating roles.

In some scenes, she plays his mother, who suffers from Alzheimer's disease. In others, he plays her son, who has a strange pain disorder doctors have been unable to diagnose.

"Will I forget my son?" "Will I come to hate my mother?" "What could I have done differently?"

Watching them work through these life-altering problems, watching them explore such raw emotions, is painful, heartbreaking and finally uplifting.

"Maybe if I'd let him have chocolate milk in Grade 3 at school," Reed says at one point, voicing a mother's regrets, her might-have-beens. Such simple fears haunt us all. In the final scene, the two afflicted patients meet, and find small ways to help each other.

The hope they discover allows the rest of us to think, 'yes, isn't that what we're all capable of?'

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From the Caregiving Community

**"Brilliant - I was totally enthralled - you have a very important play here.
I can't wait to see it again."**

- Joan Barrington, **Hospital for Sick Children**, Director, Therapeutic Arts Program

**"Profound is an over-used word. But this was profound. You saw it in the
response of the audience. And you felt it in yourself."**

- Keitha Lamey, Special Needs Educator, TDSB

**"We look forward to being able to use it to educate professionals and support
caregivers in our communities across Canada."**

- Jane McCarthy, Director of Services and Education, The **ALS Society of Canada**

**"Excellent - very intelligently written, produced and brilliantly performed ...
future AGMs/conferences."**

- Barbara Perry, Regional Coordinator, **Alberta Association of Registered Nurses**

**"You have embraced the issues every caregiver faces in such an
uplifting manner. ... You give everyone new hope."**

- Barb Beecroft, Leisureworld, Director of Nursing

**"Heal Thyself inspires and enables people to talk about issues most of
us avoid. The dialogue and action are emblazoned on my mind."**

- **Tashana Thomas, CANES Home Support Services**

"both shockingly honest and shockingly encouraging"

- Kim Bowman, Smiths Medical

"like nothing I've ever seen before" - Lynn Lau, Edmonton

"plants seeds on so many levels." - Beth Ander

**"Never have I experienced such rich learning -
multiple levels, multiple intelligences."** - Annita Maat, caregiver

"I left the theatre with a lightness I have not felt for a long time."

- Linda Thornton, caregiver

"I saw it on a whim and will be ever grateful that I did."

- Melinha Denholme, social worker, BC Forensic Psychiatric Service

The Project's Need

Imagiscape Theatre needs to raise \$500,000:

- to tour nationally
- to cover R&D costs
- to complete and distribute the film documentary
- to complete and distribute the DVD version of the stage show.
- to develop workshops and a training documentary

Businessman Ralph Phillips has volunteered to take the lead role in this fundraising.

The project is administered by Imagiscape Theatre through IMAGO, a charitable arts organization, #11896 6530 RR0001. Financial reports and other information are available upon request.

We look forward to talking with you about participating (individually or corporately) in this national project.

Please contact the Project Chair, **Ralph Phillips** 905-471-8168

or Carlynn Reed: 905-513-6122 carlynn@imagiscape.ca

HEAL THYSELF

Budget in Brief

IMAGISCAPE THEATRE

20-Nov-08

EXPENSES:

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Research	\$20,000
Development:	
Writing & Choreography	\$25,000
Film Documentary	\$76,000
Theatre Production	\$64,000
Fundraising	\$6,000
Workshop Development	\$10,000
Training Documentary	\$90,000
R&D TOTAL:	\$291,000

NATIONAL TOURING, YEAR ONE

Direct Touring Costs, Imagiscape	\$150,000
Capital Touring Equipment	\$65,000
Travel, Meals, Accommodation	\$24,000
Local Marketing & Venue	\$-
TOURING TOTAL	\$239,000

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$530,000

REVENUES:

Direct Revenue	\$10,000
Government Grants	\$20,000
Individual Donations	\$60,000
Private Foundations	\$60,000
Corporate Sponsorships	\$380,000

TOTAL REVENUES: \$530,000

WHEN YOU SEE THAT LATE LIGHT
NIGHT AFTER NIGHT
'TIS LIKELY A CAREGIVER
FIGHTS THE GOOD FIGHT

HEAL THYSELF

Print quality photos available at

www.imagiscape.ca