

Contact: Jeanne Wun (408) 489.6787 cellular
jwun@hospicevalley.org

**CAST AND CREW OF LOS GATOS HIGH SCHOOL'S PRODUCTION OF "WIT"
EXPLORE END-OF-LIFE ISSUES**

*Collaborates with Hospice of the Valley to give voice and understanding to seldom discussed issue—
life and death*

San Jose CA - October 15, 2007 – Los Gatos High School (LGHS) Performing Arts, in collaboration with Hospice of the Valley, proudly presents “Wit” (also W;t), directed by Steven Wong. “Wit,” by Margaret Edson, is the story of Vivian Bearing, an English professor who specialized in the 17th century poetry of John Donne. The play takes the audience through Vivian’s battle with ovarian cancer. Throughout her endeavor, Vivian struggles to use Donne’s metaphysical poetry and her intelligence to find acceptance of her situation.

To inspire the cast and crew of “Wit,” Wong challenged the over 25 students involved with the play to write an essay about a family member or a person in their lives who had cancer or a significant medical issue. Wong arranged for the cast and crew to tour Hospice of the Valley, where end-of-life care experts shared their professional and personal insights to help the student actors give a poignant and understanding voice to a seldom discussed issue—life and death.

Wong wanted students to fully connect with Vivian Bearing’s situation at all levels: intellectually, physically, and emotionally. Some students were intimately acquainted with life and death issues. Others learned about end-of-life issues and came away with a better understanding and appreciation for life and death by embracing compassion, dignity and hope. Wong and his students invite the audience to do the same and encourage reaching out and supporting end-of-life care providers.

“It was remarkable to see how thoughtful and engaged the students were during their orientation, interviews, and tour,” commented Sally Adelus, CEO of Hospice of the Valley. “I applaud Steve’s courage, artistic vision, and inspiration for bringing “Wit” to LGHS and to the community-at-large.”

“I strive for high production values so that the play is interesting on different levels,” said Steven “Spike” Wong, “Wit” director. “There will be original music composed for the production. The sets will be modern and minimal, and to keep the pace and momentum of the story at its height, there will be no intermission,” added Wong.

Winner of the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, “Wit” is a challenging play for both actors and audience. It focuses primarily on a single character, and it is unflinching in its portrayal of Vivian’s life as she undergoes treatment. The audience is invited to not only accept and understand Vivian’s soaring intellect, but also to share the emotional journey as Vivian finds a more complete humanity through her illness.

“Wit” plays at the Prentiss Brown Theatre, Los Gatos High School. Performance dates: October 25 and 27, and November 1, 2, and 3. Performance dates coincide with California’s Health Care Decisions Week, National Make a Difference Day (Oct. 27) and November National Hospice Month. All shows begin at 7 p.m. Ticket are \$4.00 Students/Seniors and \$8.00 Adults/General, with advance Adult tickets receiving reserved seats. Advance tickets can be ordered through Lisa McAdams at 408-358-4247 or at wit.ticket.questions@gmail.com

Photographs and artwork are courtesy of Hospice of the Valley of San Jose. The medical supplies and medical equipment are provided courtesy of Hospice of the Valley and Brannons Medical of San Jose.

About Hospice of the Valley

Hospice of the Valley (HOV), the first community-based hospice in Santa Clara County, has provided compassionate end-of-life care and grief support to over 23,000 people since 1979. Affirming life and embracing comfort, dignity, hope and quality of life, HOV provides patients and families an interdisciplinary team approach to palliative end-of-life care, which includes medical, social, psychological, spiritual, volunteer, and grief support. HOV's Community Grief Support Center provides individual and group grief support and is available to anyone experiencing a loss. A Children's Grief Support program specializes in age-appropriate counseling for children and teenagers from ages 4 through 18. *Transitions*, a volunteer-based community service program designed to enhance the quality of life for individuals and their families facing life-limiting illness, provides clients with emotional support, education, and practical assistance, is sponsored by Hospice of the Valley and funded by community grants and donations. HOV is a member of the California Hospice and Palliative Care Association and the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. Call Hospice of the Valley at 408.559.5600 and, for *Transitions*, call 408.559.5610 or visit www.hospicevalley.org.

###

FACT SHEET

WHO

Cast and crew of Los Gatos High School's production of "Wit" explore end-of-life issues—
*Collaborates with Hospice of the Valley to give voice and understanding to seldom discussed issue—
life and death*

WHAT

Los Gatos High School (LGHS) Performing Arts, in collaboration with Hospice of the Valley of San Jose, proudly presents "Wit" (also W;t), directed by Steven Wong. "Wit," by Margaret Edson, is the story of Vivian Bearing, an English professor who specialized in the 17th century poetry of John Donne. The play takes the audience through Vivian's battle with ovarian cancer. Throughout her endeavor, Vivian struggles to use Donne's metaphysical poetry and her intelligence to find acceptance of her situation.

WHY

Los Gatos High School's production of "Wit" in collaboration with Hospice of the Valley coincides with California's Health Care Decisions Week, National Make a Difference Day (Oct. 27) and November National Hospice Month.

Steven Wong and his students invite the audience to fully connect with Vivian Bearing's situation at all levels: intellectually, physically, and emotionally. They want the audience to come away with a better understanding and appreciation for life and death by embracing compassion, dignity and hope and encourage reaching out and supporting end-of-life care providers.

WHEN

"Wit" performance dates: Thursday and Saturday, October 25 and 27, and Thursday, Friday and Saturday, November 1, 2, and 3. Performance dates coincide with California's Health Care Decisions Week, National Make a Difference Day (Oct. 27) and November National Hospice Month. All shows begin at 7 p.m. Ticket are \$4.00 Students/Seniors and \$8.00 Adults/General, with advance Adult tickets receiving reserved seats. Advance tickets can be ordered through Lisa McAdams at 408-358-4247 or at wit.ticket.questions@gmail.com

WHERE

"Wit" plays at the Prentiss Brown Theatre, Los Gatos High School, Los Gatos CA

HOW

Ticket prices are \$4.00 Students/Seniors and \$8.00 Adults/General, with advance Adult tickets receiving reserved seats. Advance tickets can be ordered through Lisa McAdams at 408-358-4247 or at wit.ticket.questions@gmail.com

###