



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 24, 2017

PLEASE CONTACT:
Mali Anderson, Communications Manager
502-472-1797 • mali@erasingthedistance.org

Erasing the Distance presents SPARKfest 2017

THREE WORLD PREMIERE THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES!
September 7-24, 2017

Filament Theatre, 4041 N Milwaukee Ave, Chicago, IL.

CHICAGO - Erasing the Distance is proud to announce SPARKfest 2017. The inaugural festival includes three world premieres; *Walk A Mile*, *Breathe With Me*, and *The Lies We Tell*. The performances address mental health issues like addiction, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and conditions related to aging.

SPARKfest is meant to expand audience's knowledge about issues in the productions. Patrons, therefore, are encouraged to take advantage of the exhibits, panels, and workshops happening alongside the productions. For example, there will be a discussion after each Saturday night performance and a workshop before each Sunday matinee.

"By implementing a festival format, Erasing the Distance artists are able to explore topics that resonate with their own communities. We are growing our work to cultivate more conversations with our audiences," says Artistic Director Amy Sarno.

SPARKfest 2017

September 7-24, 2017

Filament Theatre, 4041 N Milwaukee Ave, Chicago, IL.

TICKETS:

General Admission: \$15

At the Door: \$20

Student: \$13

Triple Play: See all 3 SPARKfest shows on a Saturday for \$33

The above options can be purchased via Brown Paper Tickets:

sparkfest2017.brownpapertickets.com

To purchase a SPARKpass and see 6 shows for \$72, see our website:
www.erasingthedistance.org

Descriptions of SPARKfest performances follow. *Breathe With Me* focuses on end-of-life caregivers, *Walk A Mile* focuses on depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, and *The Lies We Tell* focuses on addiction.

Breathe With Me

Devised by Millie Hurley and Maura Kidwell

43.5 million Americans are currently caring for an ill or elderly family member, according to the latest research on caregiving done by the AARP and the National Alliance for Caregiving. While we speak of caregiving as both a gift and a burden, we never really consider how hard it is on the actual person who is having to balance work, family, and the needs of the ailing family member. How does the caregiver get taken care of? How does the person taking care get emotional support? This work explores the quiet and complex emotional world of the end-of-life caregiver and those who choose to care for others.

Project Leads: Millie Hurley* and Maura Kidwell*

Directed by: Heather Bodie

Performed by: Dave Belden, Susie Griffith, Shariba Rivers

Stage Manager: Mariana Green*

Walk A Mile

Devised by Stacy Stoltz

How do you reconnect or strengthen your ties to your family? How does your connection to them affect the way you move through the world? With all the chaos and confusion in the world, in our country, why is family important? *Walk a Mile* is about a woman uncovering her family's stories, personalizing those stories and re-telling them as though they are her own. While attempting to grow her empathy for the people who made her who she is, she hopes to inspire others to consider their own family connections.

Project Leads: Stacy Stoltz*

Directed by: Matt Hawkins

Performed by: Stacy Stoltz*

Stage Manager: Gianna Petrosino

The Lies We Tell

Devised by Charlotte Drover, Mariana Green, and Adam Poss

The story of one man's struggle with addiction, starting in high school, continuing through college, graduate school, and in the workforce. As a high functioning addict, he told lies to friends, family, coworkers, and girlfriends to protect the addiction. Along with the lies he tells, the work explores the lies others chose to believe. How does an addiction impact relationships? What truths are impossible to share when you are an addict, or someone involved with an addict?

Project Leads: Mariana Green* and Adam Poss*

Directed by: Charlotte Drover
Performed by: Josh Odor, Adelina Feldman-Schultz
Stage Manager: Kit Ryan

**Erasing the Distance Company Member*

Thank you to our sponsors who make SPARKfest possible:

Aspire Health
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois
Jellyvision
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois
Thresholds
Urban Balance
Aetna Better Health of Illinois
Gladden Home Care
Graphic Purchasing Solutions, LLC
Byrne, Byrne and Company

About Erasing the Distance

Founded in 2005, Erasing the Distance uses the power of performance to disarm stigma, spark dialogue, educate, and promote healing surrounding issues of mental health. Erasing the Distance collects true stories from people whose lives have been impacted by mental health issues. We sculpt the stories into theatrical pieces for the stage, which are then performed by professional actors. Every performance is followed by a moderated, interactive dialogue with the audience that addresses the themes they have just seen.

Erasing the Distance is artistically led by Amy Sarno, a theatre artist engaged in social action through oral history, archival research, and interactive community workshops. Sarno joined Erasing the Distance in 2016. Since the organization was founded in 2005 by Brighid O'Shaughnessy, Erasing the Distance has reached over 60,000 audience members through public performances, custom programs and training and education programs. For more information about us, please visit www.erasingthedistance.org.

###