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DIVE INTO THE HORNETS' NEST AT GEVA THEATRE CENTER

Geva's nationally recognized program of thought-provoking theatre continues on January 29 with *Just Like Us* by Karen Zacarías.

Rochester, N.Y., January 9, 2018 - Few experiences can ignite a great conversation like a thrilling night in the theatre. **The Hornets' Nest** series has theatre-goers itching for that conversation.

The Hornets' Nest series of script-in-hand readings with professional actors and directors investigates the most challenging and controversial ethical dilemmas of our time. Following the reading, audience members will have the opportunity to engage in open discussion with key figures from the Rochester community. Since its inception in 2007, the Hornets' Nest series of readings has become nationally recognized and lauded as one of the most innovative theatrical initiatives in the country.

The 2017-2018 series continues on **January 29** with ***Just Like Us* by Karen Zacarías**. This documentary-style play follows four Latina teenage girls in Denver—two of whom are documented and two who are not—through young adulthood. Their close-knit friendships begin to unravel when immigration status dictates the girls' opportunities, or lack thereof. When a political firestorm arises, each girl's future becomes increasingly complicated. As Congress debates the future of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), how do young people envision a future? What makes one person "American" and another person "illegal"?

Karen Zacarías is one of the most produced playwrights of the 2017-2018 Season according to *American Theatre Magazine*. Her award winning plays include *The Book Club Play*, which was produced at Geva in 2013; *Legacy of Light*; *Mariela in the Desert*; *The Sins of Sor Juana* and the adaptation of Julia Alvarez's *How the Garcia Girls Lost their Accents*. With composer Debbie Wicks la Puma, she has writing musicals for young Audiences including *Jane of the Jungle*, *Einstein is a Dummy*, *Looking for Roberto Clemente*, *Cinderella Eats Rice and Beans*, *Ferdinand the Bull* and *Frida Libre*. Her musical, *Chasing George Washington*, premiered at the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts and went on National Tour. Her script was then adapted into a book by Scholastic with a foreword by Michelle Obama. Her plays have been produced at The John F. Kennedy Center

for Performing Arts, Arena Stage, The Goodman Theatre, Round House Theater, The Denver Center, Alliance Theatre, Imagination Stage, GALA Hispanic Theater, Berkshire Theater Festival, South Coast Rep, La Jolla Playhouse, Cleveland Play House, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Horizon's Theater, People's Light and Theatre, Walnut Street Theatre, Arden Theatre, Milagro Theatre, Teatro Vista, Aurora Theater, and many more. She is the recipient of numerous awards and commissions including the 2010 Steinberg Citation Winner for Best New Play, the Francesca Primus Award for an emerging female playwright, Paul Aneillo Award New Voices Award, National Latino Play Award, Finalist Susan Blackburn, Helen Hayes for Outstanding New Play. Karen is the first playwright-in-residence at Arena Stage in Washington, DC and has taught playwriting at Georgetown University. She is the founder of Young Playwrights' Theater (YPT), an award-winning theatre company that teaches playwriting in local public schools in Washington, DC. YPT won the 2010 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award from the White House as one of the most innovative arts programs in the nation. The YPT curriculum is currently being used in public schools in DC, VA, MD, New Orleans, Detroit, and Texas and is published on Amazon as "Write to Dream." Based on Helen Thorpe's best-selling book, *Just Like Us* premiered at Denver Center for the Performing Arts in October 2016.

Following the reading of *Just Like Us*, audience members will have the opportunity to discuss the questions that the play poses with a panel of members of the community brought together specifically for this event.

The play reading is at 7:00pm in the Fielding Stage. Tickets are free and, due to the popularity of this series, are limited to two per person. Reservations are recommended. Due to anticipated demand, all unclaimed tickets will be released at 6:45pm on the day of performance. Patron discretion is advised: *Just Like Us* deals with adult subject matter. To reserve tickets phone the Box Office: (585) 232-Geva (4382) or reserve online at www.gevatheatre.org.

The Hornets Nest series continues on April 9, 2018 with *Buyer Beware* by Michael Weller

The Fielding Stage is supported in part by the Gouvernet Arts Fund at The Rochester Area Community Foundation. Leadership support for the Hornet's Nest is provided by The Mary S. Mulligan Charitable Trust, and New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

GEVA THEATRE CENTER

Founded in 1972, Geva Theatre Center is a not-for-profit, professional theatre company dedicated to creating and producing professional theatre productions, programs and services of a national standard. As Rochester's leading professional theatre, Geva Theatre Center is the most attended regional theatre in New York State, and one of the 25 most subscribed in the country, serving up to 160,000 patrons annually, including more than 16,000 students.

The 522-seat Elaine P. Wilson Stage is home to a wide variety of performances, from musicals to American and world classics. The 180-seat Ron & Donna Fielding Stage is home to Geva's own series of contemporary drama, comedy and musical theatre; Geva Comedy Improv; Geva's New Play Reading Series and the Hornets' Nest - an innovative play-reading series facilitating community-wide discussion on controversial topics. In addition, the Nextstage hosts visiting companies of both local and international renown.

Geva Theatre Center offers a wide variety of educational, outreach and literary programs, nurturing audiences and artists alike. Since 1995, the organization has been under the artistic direction of Mark Cuddy.

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