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LISTEN MY CHILDREN AND YOU SHALL HEAR...

CHRISTOPHER BING IS VISITING CALDWELL THIS YEAR!

Caldwell, NJ, 3/2/10 – As part of Caldwell's celebration of The Big Read of the poetry of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow this spring, Christopher Bing, acclaimed illustrator of *The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere*, is coming to Caldwell area schools the week of March 22, 2010, including a free public presentation at

Mount St. Dominic Academy's new Doris M. Byrne Performing Arts Center on March 23, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Bing will be visiting public and parochial schools in the Caldwell's and The Children's Institute in Verona, visits made possible through funding from The Big Read, a program of the National Endowment for the Arts; matching funds provided by the Kiwanis Club of Caldwell/West Essex and The Rotary Club of the Caldwell's; and a \$2,400 donation from the Caldwell/West Caldwell Education Foundation. Because of this generosity, thousands of children will participate in The Big Read of the Poetry of Longfellow.

So that all members of the community can "Listen...and hear", Mr. Bing will offer a program, free to the public, on Tuesday evening, March 23, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the new Doris M. Byrne Performing Arts Center at Mount Saint Dominic Academy, 3 Ryerson Avenue, Caldwell, New Jersey. This special evening is the third in the successful speaker series offered by the Library, Mount Saint Dominic Academy and Caldwell College to the community at large. Previous speakers, authors John Wefing and Brad Parks, spoke at Caldwell College's Werner Hall, where Joy Rodino will close out the series in April.

Mount St. Dominic Academy's Head of School, Sister Frances Sullivan, O.P., expressed her delight that The Mount is hosting this special evening, "For artist Christopher Bing to be sharing his talents with the Caldwell community is a gift for us all. We are grateful to our longstanding friends -- Caldwell College, the Caldwell Public Library and the Township of Caldwell, and we are so pleased to be able to show our appreciation by opening the doors of our spectacular new Performing Arts Center to present a program brought to us through The Big Read."

The school, along with James Caldwell High School, has participated in the library's two prior Big Reads, Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* and Cynthia Ozick's *The Shawl*. "Through these experiences, our young women and our faculty, along with the students, faculty and administrators of James Caldwell

High School, were able to express their multitude of talents and to learn from speakers, performers, Supreme Court Justices, and three generations of women whose lives were changed through the Holocaust. Now, with The Big Read of the Poetry of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, we are once again being given opportunities to share with our school and community.”

A renowned illustrator and political cartoonist, Christopher Bing’s first book for children, *Casey at the Bat*, was a 2001 Caldecott Honor Book. His second, *The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere*, was named 2002 School Library Journal Best Book of the Year and an American Library Association Notable Children’s Book. *Lincoln Shot: A President’s Life Remembered* (2008) is also a grand work of Bing’s. In addition to these books, Bing’s political cartoons have appeared in the Boston Globe, Wall Street Journal and other publications. Mr. Bing lives with his wife and three children in Lexington, Massachusetts, in a house directly on the Freedom Trail, the route Paul Revere rode on that fateful night.

Bing’s work has been praised for meticulous research that informs his finely detailed drawings. His dramatic illustrations are rich with historical detail. The book also includes historic materials – cards, maps and coins – that bring the story alive. Bing admires Longfellow and his poetry but is not shy about pointing out the historical inaccuracies: "Longfellow got it wrong," says Bing, "but he was a writer dramatizing events and taking artistic license. The challenge was how to balance that artistic license with the historic reality of the events.”

Caldwell is one of only three communities in the nation to have chosen The Poetry of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow – out of 267 communities nationwide who were awarded grants for The Big Read during 2009-2010. The communities of Sudbury, Massachusetts and Omaha, Nebraska are also reading, reciting, and programming around Longfellow, and it was through our friends in Sudbury that Caldwell came to know of Mr. Bing’s fame and renown.

For more information on this event, and The Big Read of Longfellow, please contact the Caldwell Public Library at (973) 226-2837 and stay tuned to www.caldwellpl.org.

The Big Read is an initiative to restore reading to the center of American culture. Launched nationally in 2006, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) presents *The Big Read* in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and in cooperation with Arts Midwest to encourage literary reading by asking communities to come together to read and discuss a single book. Organizations selected to participate in *The Big Read* receive grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000 to promote and carry out community-based programs.

The **National Endowment for the Arts** is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts—both new and established—bringing the arts to all Americans, and providing leadership in arts education. Established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government, the Arts Endowment is the nation's largest annual funder of the arts, bringing great art to all 50 states, including rural areas, inner cities, and military bases. For more information, please visit www.arts.gov.

The **Caldwell Public Library**, an Andrew Carnegie Library dedicated in 1917, celebrated its 90th birthday in October 2007. Its mission is to provide its diverse community with a wide array of literary, cultural, historical, educational and social resources through personal service and innovative programs utilizing a range of learning technologies in a welcoming environment. For more information visit www.caldwellpl.org.

Mount Saint Dominic Academy, established by the Sisters of Saint Dominic of Caldwell, is a Catholic, college preparatory school for young women. We are dedicated to the education of young women from a variety of ethnic, religious and economic backgrounds. The Mount community is committed to seeking the Truth in all aspects of life. The students are able to realize their individual gifts and talents in an atmosphere that fosters academic excellence, respect for diversity, appreciation for the gifts of creation, moral integrity and a heritage rich in Christ-centered values. For further information visit www.msdacademy.org.

Founded in 1939 by the Sisters of Saint Dominic, **Caldwell College** is a Catholic, co-ed, four year liberal arts institution offering 28 undergraduate degrees, 20 graduate programs and one doctoral program. The College is located on a beautiful 70-acre campus in suburban Caldwell, NJ. Caldwell College provides students with a supportive community, a student/faculty ratio of 13 to 1, excellence in teaching and innovative learning environments. For further information about Caldwell College visit www.caldwell.edu.

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