



Did you ever wonder how your son or daughter could become an actor in a play? It happens many different ways, with lots of ambition, hard work and a little luck. This is how it happened for Sonia Manzano, who's play will now appear at Actor's Playhouse at the Miracle Theater in Coral Gables: "I studied at the High School Of Performing Arts (yes, the "Fame" school) in New York City, went to Carnegie-Mellon University, where I was lucky enough to be in the student production of "Godspell." One of my first auditions in New York City was for the role of "Maria" on Sesame Street. (Who says show business is so difficult?)" She was one of the lucky ones. When she went to audition, the cast was all Afro-American, and they wanted to introduce other ethnic characters. Being of Puerto Rican descent, she got a break. Anyway, she's been on Sesame Street for 32 years.

Two years ago she wrote a book about a childhood family experience. The book, *No Dogs Allowed!*, was published by Simon and Schuster and recently she was encouraged by a friend in Miami, Bob Holtzman, and the owner-director of Actor's Playhouse, Barbara Stein to turn the book into a play.

Last month the play had its world premiere right here in Coral Gables at the Actors' Playhouse. Sponsored by Baptist Children's Hospital, directed and choreographed by Earl Maulding, the opening show was a big hit with the audience, young and old alike. At a luncheon prior to the play, I overheard a mother, Lulu Weinberg of Surfside tell Sonia, "I used to watch you when I was growing up, now everyone watches you." (as she pointed to her three children). She and her children had just seen "Elmo and the Firehouse" on DVD. The next day Lulu took her children to a fire station, too.

No Dogs Allowed! will run through July at the Actor's Playhouse, 280 Miracle Mile. 305-444-9293



**World Premiere of
*No Dogs Allowed!***

Saturdays, through July 29

When Iris' family, and her dog head out on a road trip, it seems like it will be a perfect day, then the car breaks down, they get lost, and when they finally arrive at a lake, they observe a sign that reads NO DOGS ALLOWED! What on earth will they do now? Written by Sonia Manzano, known to many as "Maria" of Sesame Street, the show is based on her award-winning children's book. 2pm. \$12. Actors Playhouse at the Miracle Theatre, 280 Miracle Mile, Coral Gables. 305/444-9293. www.actorsplayhouse.org

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Sonia Manzano, playwright, left and Barbara Stein, Executive Producing director on stage at the World Premiere at the Actors' Playhouse in Coral Gables.

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