



Transforming Lives Through Theater

Office address: 325 W. Walnut Street • Milwaukee, WI 53212

Main office phone: (414) 267-2929 • Fax: (414) 267-2930

www.FirstStage.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Erica Davis (414) 267-2931 or edavis@firststage.org

First Stage's Theater in Education programs serving over 10,000 students this school year in year-round programming alone

Milwaukee, WI – First Stage reports a 210% increase in the number of classrooms served in its year-round Theater in Education programs since the 2009-2010 school year.

Through its Connections Program, Partnership Program, Harley-Davidson Foundation's Stages Program and its Literacy Residencies, First Stage will serve approximately 10,500 students among 406 classrooms throughout 35 schools.

“Exceptional arts education can be transformational for a child by instilling them with self-esteem and leadership skills, and no organization inspires kids to imagine and grow the way that First Stage does,” said Deanna Tillisch, incoming president of the United Performing Arts Fund. “Their exceptional outreach helps ensure that schools can incorporate the arts into the classroom, even at times when school budgets are tight.”

The Connections Program – supported by the Burke Foundation as well as the Northwestern Mutual Foundation, Harley-Davidson Foundation, Herzfeld Foundation, and individual contributions as part of First Stage's Community Partnership Program – is a subsidized program for City of Milwaukee students that includes tickets to a school matinee of a First Stage production; pre- and post-show workshops that explore themes

-more-

First Stage reports 210% increase in the number of classrooms served in Theater in Education programs /add one

and curricular ties to the play; and Teaching Through Theater workshops, which are weeklong lessons designed to enhance students' understanding and comprehension of curricular topics through dramatic learning techniques. The Connections Program will serve approximately 3,900 students in 156 classrooms in the 2011-2012 school year; a 160% increase from the 2009-2010 school year.

The Partnership Program – also subsidized but open to classrooms outside of the City of Milwaukee with offerings similar to the Connections Program – will serve approximately 2,350 students in 94 classrooms in the 2011-2012 school year. The number of classrooms served through the Partnership Program has nearly doubled from the 2009-2010 school year.

Harley-Davidson Foundation's Stages Program is a subsidized program for Milwaukee Public School students that include tickets to a school matinee of a First Stage production, free bussing to and from the theater, and pre- and post-show workshops. In its second year, First Stage will serve approximately 3,200 students among 128 classrooms, doubling the number served last school year.

The Literacy (serving grades 2 – 6) and the Early Residency (serving grades K4 – 1), are supported under First Stage's Community Partnership Program as well as with support by PNC. The Literacy and Early Literacy programs are year-long arts integration lessons designed to develop critical English literacy skills and improve state standardized test scores. Created in 2006, these programs have increased the number of students reached by over 500% since its initial year. In the 2011-2012 school year, First Stage will provide the Literacy and Early Literacy Residencies to approximately 700 students, doubled the number of students served since the 2009-2010 school year.

-more-

First Stage reports 210% increase in the number of classrooms served in Theater in Education programs /add two

The Connections, Partnership, Harley-Davidson's Stages, and Literacy and Early Literacy Residency Programs comprise half of the arts-integration programs in schools offered by First Stage's Theater in Education programs. These programs – in addition to school group attendance at weekday matinee performances, pre- and post-show workshops, Teaching Through Theater arts-integrated lessons, Bully Ban workshops, and after-school programs, First Stage's Theater in Education department serves nearly 20,000 students each school year.

First Stage's Theater in Education Teaching Artists are in schools on average of 20 times per week throughout the school year. Members of the media are invited to observe a variety of First Stage's Theater in Education programming in schools by appointment. Contact Erica Davis at (414) 267-2931 or edavis@firststage.org for more information.

About First Stage: Celebrating its 25th anniversary in the 2011-12 season, First Stage touches hearts, engages minds, and transforms lives by creating extraordinary theater experiences for young people and families through professional theater productions that inspire, enlighten, and entertain; unparalleled Theater Academy training that fosters life skills through stage skills; and dynamic Theater in Education programs that promote active learning in our schools and community. First Stage is a member of TYA/USA, the American Alliance for Theatre and Education, the Wisconsin Alliance for Arts Education and Americans for the Arts, as well as Theatre Wisconsin and Milwaukee Arts Partners, and is a cornerstone member of the United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF).

###