



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **FIRST STAGE'S SUMMER THEATER ACADEMY – classes begin Monday, June 13, 2022**

*-Registration for Summer 2022 Academy is open and classes are filling up quickly-*

**Milwaukee, WI – June 1, 2022** – First Stage Theater Academy, the nation's leading high-impact theater training program for young people, is offering its Summer Academy programs in-person this summer with classes beginning **Monday, June 13, 2022**. One of Milwaukee's longest-running summer theater training programs, First Stage's Summer Academy will celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> year of offering theater classes to Milwaukee area youth. Classes will run **June 13 – August 5, 2022** at the newly-renovated Milwaukee Youth Art Center and will follow First Stage's curriculum in Acting, Musical Theater, Improvisation and more, fostering life skills through stage skills. The classes will be led by First Stage Academy staff as well as by professional theater artists including Milwaukee dancer/choreographer **Christopher Gilbert** (Director of STEP KIDS), actor **Brandite Reed** (Co-Director of THE WATSONS GO TO BIRMINGHAM) and **Chris Flieller** (UW-Oshkosh Theatre Department/former Artistic Director for In Tandem Theatre), among many others.

Classes are available for students entering grades K4 – 12 this fall. One week or multi-week sessions are available at Milwaukee Youth Arts Center. Classes for students entering grades K4 – 5 will also be held at Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts in Brookfield **July 5 – 15, 2022**.

New this summer, from **July 25 – August 5, 2022** classes will be held at UW – Parkside in Kenosha, offering weeklong classes for students entering grades 5 – 12, spending each day rotating through classes in Musical Theater, Acting, Clowning and Shakespeare,

building a foundation of theatrical performance skills through a variety of lessons led by theater professionals.

Summer Academy classes for young people on the autism spectrum – part of First Stage’s Next Steps program – will be held **August 8 – 12, 2022** at the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center.

**JT Backes**, will begin his first summer as Theater Academy director. JT is a Milwaukee theater artist, longtime teaching artist and Theater Academy alum. “Acquiring life skills through stage skills at the early age of 7 through the Theater Academy has helped shape me into the person I am today. It’s interesting to look back to when I first started to where I am now. I am now in a position that once inspired me during the Summer Academy and now, with the help of an incredible staff, we can inspire others through theater.

We are super excited to get back to what we do best in the Academy, full-day rotation classes with artists who are extremely passionate about the work they teach. Students in grades 3 – 4 get to experience musical theater, creative drama, scene study and voice and movement. Students in grades 5 – 12 go through a full day of Musical Theater, Improvisation, Shakespeare and Acting Theory. We have been waiting for this moment for over two years and finally are able to get back to those classes this summer! Now, alongside all those rotational classes, I am psyched for our K4 – 1 grade friends and the adventures they will go on in our a.m. and p.m. classes of Story Drama. In those classes that is where the magic of theater begins, really harnessing the actor tools of body, voice and imagination. We have so many incredible opportunities for your young person and a top-notch staff that can’t wait to get started. We look forward to seeing you this summer!”

**Locations:** Milwaukee Youth Arts Center, 325 West Walnut Street, Milwaukee, WI 53212; Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts, 3270 Mitchell Park Drive, Brookfield, WI 53045 (July 5 – 15, 2022 only) and UW – Parkside, 900 Wood Road, Kenosha, WI 53144 (July 25 – August 5, 2022 only)

**Cost:** \$150 – \$635 depending upon the length of classes. Payment plans are available. Families that enroll in multiple classes for one student or enroll siblings will receive \$10 off per class. Financial assistance is also available. Many classes are already full, so advance registration is recommended.

**Website:** To view the list of summer classes and to register, please visit: [firststage.org/theater-academy/summer-academy/](https://firststage.org/theater-academy/summer-academy/)

**Course Catalog:** To view the full Theater Academy Course Catalog, please visit: [firststage.org/theater-academy/register-for-classes/](https://firststage.org/theater-academy/register-for-classes/)

**COVID Protocols:** In accordance with the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center guidelines and the CDC recommended guidelines, masks are now optional within all Academy classes. As First Stage Summer Academy moves ahead, it will be equally supportive and respectful of those who are ready to remove masks, and those who prefer to continue to wear them. First Stage Theater Academy will continue to follow the CDC recommendations and adjust when necessary. First Stage COVID safety protocols and updates can be viewed here: [firststage.org/plan-your-visit/safety-security/-performances](https://www.firststage.org/plan-your-visit/safety-security/-performances)

For additional questions, please call: **(414) 267-2970**.

To learn more about First Stage's 2022/23 season, please visit [firststage.org](https://www.firststage.org) or call (414) 267-2961.

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### **About First Stage Theater Academy**

First Stage Theater Academy is the nation's largest high-impact theater training program for young people. The region's finest professional theater artists share their expertise, skills and passion for their art with over 2,000 young people this summer. Students will develop skills in musical theater, scene study, Shakespeare, improvisation and much more, while simultaneously building life skills, such as confidence, focus and teamwork. Young people are encouraged to take risks and conquer their fears, and First Stage is proud to be building the next generation of artists and leaders.

### **About First Stage**

First Stage is one of the nation's leading theaters for young people and families. First Stage touches hearts, engages minds and transforms lives by creating extraordinary theater experiences through professional theater productions that inspire, enlighten and entertain. Its Theater Academy, the nation's largest high-impact theater training program for young people, fosters life skills through stage skills and serves nearly 2,000 students each year. As Wisconsin's leader in arts-integrated education in schools, First Stage's dynamic Theater in Education programs promote literacy, character building and experiential learning throughout the curriculum, serving over 20,000 students each year. First Stage was selected to participate in the Partners in Education program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (2012) and was the recipient of the Milwaukee Business Journal's Eureka Award, recognizing creativity and innovation in business, education and the arts for its Next Steps program for students on the autism spectrum (2013, 2015). First Stage is a member of TYA/USA, the American Alliance for Theatre and Education, the Wisconsin Alliance for Arts Education, Milwaukee Arts Partners and is a cornerstone member of the United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF). [www.firststage.org](https://www.firststage.org).