



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The Broadway League Announces
2011 National Education Grant Recipients**

Programs Support Arts-in-Education and Audience Development

New York, NY – October 6, 2011 - The Broadway League announced today the recipients of its sixteenth annual National Education Grants. These grants support innovative programs that enable students from coast to coast to experience touring Broadway as a form of artistic expression and as an educational tool.

The 2011 National Education Grants program bestows \$5,000 to ten presenters of touring Broadway shows across the U.S. for the development or support of education programs associated with touring productions.

A significant number of touring Broadway shows are featured in the various programs: *Billy Elliot*, *Blue Man Group*, *Les Misérables*, *Mary Poppins*, *Memphis*, *Peter Pan*, *The Lion King* and *West Side Story*.

This year, grant recipients are from the following cities: Atlanta, GA; Baltimore, MD; Des Moines, IA; East Lansing, MI; Greenville, SC; Memphis, TN; Nashville, TN; Tampa, FL; Waterbury, CT; and West Palm Beach, FL.

The Palace Theatre in Waterbury, CT is a first-time grant recipient.

Since it was founded in 1996, the League's National Education Grants program has awarded \$800,000 in grants to support the education efforts of Broadway presenting organizations. The League administers this program with generous additional financial support from Theatre Development Fund.

During the past year, theatre education professionals at organizations that present touring Broadway productions have worked closely with local teachers and community organizations to create activities that engage young people with theatre and enhance their academic experiences.

"We salute our member organizations' dedication to teaching impressionable young minds tolerance, social justice, cultural identity, and more through the magic of Broadway," commented Charlotte St. Martin, Executive Director of The Broadway League. "Lessons learned through theatre not only educate students

about the world at large, but an introduction to live theatre creates a lifelong habit of theatre-going."

This year, the ten programs that were awarded grants of \$5,000 each are as follows: (*Please note that contact telephone numbers and emails are for reporter follow-up use only and should not be included in any publication. Thank you.)

The Fox Theatre – Atlanta, GA

Following their 2010-2011 project on tolerance and violence, the Fox Theatre aims to help 140 students – aged 13-17 – better relate to musical theatre by juxtaposing themes within specific musicals with their own thoughts and current events. This is accomplished through discussions and workshops, where students will dissect the themes in *Billy Elliot* and *Les Misérables*, and reconstruct them in light of contemporary times and issues. They will then write poetry, essays, or create their own shortened versions of the musicals. The program starts in February 2012, and will culminate in readings of their work in April. The students will also attend both productions at the Fox Theatre during their residency. Entitled "I Dreamed a Dream," this project endeavors to inspire students to always strive for their dreams and what they believe in.

Contact Sarah duBignon, 404-881-2087 or outreach@foxtheatre.org.

Hippodrome Foundation – Baltimore, MD

The Hippodrome Foundation's (HFI) "*The Lion King: Lessons from the Pride Lands*" will introduce 365 local at-risk fourth grade school students to the wonders of live theatre. This three-part program will include bringing students to see a matinee performance of *The Lion King* at the Hippodrome Theatre on December 8, 2011. HFI staff will provide in-school sessions with the students before and after the matinee. The first in-school session will focus on life lessons showcased in the show and engage students to write a story; the second session will explore the art of puppetry. This project aims to enhance learning and classroom discussion, especially through the use of puppetry, to help improve communication skills, overcome language barriers and allow children to be more open when expressing feelings.

Contact Barb Wirsing, 410-727-7787 ext. 118 or barbw@hippodromefoundation.org.

Civic Center of Greater Des Moines – Des Moines, IA

The themes of love, youth, and prejudice that run through *West Side Story* are as relevant today as when the show debuted in the 1950s. The Civic Center of Greater Des Moines embarks on a project called "A Place for Us: Love, Youth & Prejudice in *West Side Story* and Today," inviting 90 at-risk students from all five Des Moines public high schools to explore these themes as part of a multi-

curricular, district-wide learning opportunity in Spring 2012. Via workshops in-class and at the Civic Center, the students will explore the era of *West Side Story* and its central themes. Understanding these themes from historical, social and artistic viewpoints, the students will apply them in a modern context and discuss their relevance to their own lives.

Contact Todd Fogdall, 515-246-2351 or tfogdall@civiccenter.org.

Wharton Center for Performing Arts – East Lansing, MI

The Wharton Center for Performing Arts – together with Bingham Elementary, the Lansing Visitors Bureau, Dr. Gillespie of MSU College of Music, and the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History – will help some 60 fourth and fifth grade students explore the Civil Rights Movement and current injustices in society. Under the “*Memphis – Change Don’t Come Easy*” Civic Engagement Initiative, these students will present their findings, then research and collectively identify one current injustice within our society and create a way to advocate for change. Giving the students the opportunity to be part of the planning empowers them to take ownership of the project. The project concludes with a trip to Wharton Center to attend a pre-show activity and an opening night performance of *Memphis* in March 2012.

Contact Dana Brazil, 517-884-3140 or brazilda@msu.edu.

Peace Center Foundation – Greenville, SC

The Peace Center will partner with AJ Whittenberg Elementary School of Engineering to present “Fairydust or Physics? The *Peter Pan* Project.” This program will benefit some 40 students from AJ Whittenberg – South Carolina’s first elementary school dedicated to a curriculum of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. Students will be introduced to the *Peter Pan* story in class, and learning the music in their music classes. They will then learn basic engineering principles that demonstrate how engineering elements like pulleys, counterweights and levers, are used in theatre. The project culminates in November 2011, with participants attending a *Peter Pan* performance, followed by a guided backstage tour with a technical director and Q&A with cast members for the show.

Contact Staci Dillard, 864-679-9207 or sdillard@peacecenter.org.

The Orpheum Theatre – Memphis, TN

The “*Memphis Lives In Me*” project is a collaboration between the Orpheum Theatre and Facing History and Ourselves – an education organization that aims to engage students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice and anti-Semitism in order to promote a more human and informed

citizenry. From October to November 2011, some 60 to 80 students will attend the nationally acclaimed exhibit *Choosing to Participate* at the Benjamin L. Hooks Library, and work with company members from *Memphis: The Musical* on an improvisation exercise. Their learning journey – exploring the connections between the exhibit and musical – will culminate in the creation of a radio show on the history of the Civil Rights Movement in Memphis during the 1950s and 60s, and its relevance in today's society.

Contact Alice Roberts, 901-525-7800 ext 243 or Roberts@orpheum-memphis.com.

Tennessee Performing Arts Center – Nashville, TN

The Tennessee Performing Arts Center (TPAC) will partner with Nashville's "Art2STEM" (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) Program to help 40 young women in middle school connect their creativity and interests in the arts to STEM concepts and career opportunities. Beginning this fall, the program includes workshops about set design, the physics and application behind the fly system, and other aspects of work behind the scenes on *Mary Poppins* – a perfect production to explore the technical aspects of the theatre due to its inventive set design and extensive use of "theatre magic." Students will then attend a performance of the musical at TPAC's Jackson Hall in March, where they will interact with members of the company and crew backstage. They will then write reviews of the show's production design and the technical aspects of the performance, as well as compare their scene designs with that of the production.

Contact Rebecca Robbins, 615-687-4304 or rrobbins@tpac.org.

Straz Center for the Performing Arts – Tampa, FL

In a region where schools have been forced to drastically cut arts activities in response to budget shortfalls, the Straz Center for the Performing Arts will provide some 70 underserved children with an experience that infuses theatre into literacy studies. This fall, using *Peter Pan* as a model, these middle school students will go through a 9-week theatrical exploration of the musical, and examine the evolution of the story – from book to film to musical theatre or vice versa. Participants will attend the Broadway touring performance of *Peter Pan* at the Straz Center, and be involved in a post-show audience talkback with cast members. The project will culminate in a classroom sharing of original student-designed character performances and *Peter Pan* portfolios, which will help students keep track of their work and act as a template for future creative endeavors.

Contact Donna McBride, 813-222-1034 or donna.mcbride@strazcenter.org.

The Palace Theater – Waterbury, CT

The Palace Theater's "*Blue Man Group: Find Yourself, Be Yourself, Reveal Yourself*" project will provide a performing, visual and language arts integrated experience for 35 high school students. Starting in May 2012, the month-long program will help participating students and teachers gain a deeper understanding of human nature, while addressing core curriculum standards in language arts and various arts standards often missing in today's classrooms. The project culminates with the students sharing their learning process – including revealing their social projects, and original masks, poetry and artwork they created in class – with an audience comprised of parents, educators, peers and community members. The program aims to increase art appreciation while cultivating a youth voice regarding relevant social issues.

Contact Frank Tavera, 203-346-2007 or [tavaera@palacetheaterct.org](mailto:tavera@palacetheaterct.org).

The Raymond F. Kravis Center for the Performing Arts – West Palm Beach, FL

As part of a year-long program that started in May, the Raymond F. Kravis Center for the Performing Arts will help 30 students from the Santaluces High School fulfill their desires to work with professional artists and perform at a professional venue. Under the "Examining Poverty and Oppression Through Literature and Theatre" program, students enrolled in the Musical Theatre class will create and produce an original musical theatre showcase exploring the themes of poverty and oppression in *Les Misérables*. Students will also experience a live performance of *Les Misérables* followed by a post-performance discussion mid-way through the project period, thereby allowing for inspiration from the production and cast to inform their performances in the showcase both at their school theatre and at the Kravis Center.

Contact Tracy Butler, 561-651-4243 or butler@kravis.org.

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In addition to the National Education Grants program, the League also administers similar grants for education programs affiliated with Broadway productions in New York City each year.

The Broadway League, founded in 1930, is the national trade association for the Broadway industry. The League's 700-plus members include theatre owners and operators, producers, presenters, and general managers in over 200 North American cities, as well as suppliers of goods and services to the theatre industry. Each year, League members bring Broadway to nearly 30 million people in New York and on tour across the U.S. and Canada.

www.BroadwayLeague.com, www.ilovenytheater.com, www.ibdb.com

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For more information on The Broadway League's education programs, call Rachel Reiner at (212) 703-0215.

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