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CENTER THEATRE GROUP ANNOUNCES FIVE NEW SCHOOLS SELECTED FOR DISNEY MUSICALS IN SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Los Angeles-Area Public Elementary Schools to Produce a Disney Musical at No Cost

Center Theatre Group is pleased to announce the five new schools that have been selected to participate in the 2018-2019 **Disney Musicals in Schools** program. The program is an initiative developed by Disney Theatrical Productions to create sustainable theatre programs in under-resourced elementary schools. The five schools are a part of Los Angeles County. The five schools include: Breed Street Elementary (LAUSD), Cantara Street School (LAUSD), Saturn Street Elementary (LAUSD), Tulsa Street Elementary (LAUSD) and Wild Rose School of Creative Arts (Monrovia Unified School District).

The selected schools will begin a 17-week musical theatre residency in the winter of 2018. Each school will receive performance rights, education support materials and guidance from two teaching artists. The program features a professional development focus, through which participating school teachers partner with Center Theatre Group teaching artists to learn how to produce, direct, choreograph and music direct, culminating in their first 30-minute Disney KIDS musical at their school. As a capstone to the experience, Center Theatre Group will host a Student Share Celebration in which each school performs one number from their show on the Ahmanson Theatre stage for an audience of students, teachers, family and community members.

On being selected, the principals from each school had the following to say:

“Breed [Street Elementary] is thrilled and honored at being one of the schools selected to be part of the Disney Musicals in Schools. Our partnership allows Breed students to be actively engaged in their own learning as they experience the world of theatre, both in front and behind the curtain. Students will experience the various arts as they help develop the theater production known as ‘a musical.’ Our school community looks forward to learning and working with Center Theatre Group teaching artists as we participate in a positive endeavor to bring the magic of musical theatre to Breed Street Elementary School!” –Patricia Romero, Breed Street Elementary

“We are thrilled to partner with Center Theatre Group and DMIS to foster student creativity, inspire self-expression and promote self-esteem as students create an engaging performance for the benefit of the whole community.” –Melanie Karabedian, Cantara Street School

“When we started our journey for building our Arts Integration program, we made the conscious decision to believe that everything we needed would come our way. Because we use a star as a symbol for positivity, we smiled and sang out, ‘When you wish upon a star...’ as we continued to make connections and request. So, when the Disney Musicals in Schools application was received, we knew this was for us. Then, when the notification was made that we were selected, our staff first cheered and then said, ‘Okay, here we go, it’s happening and it’s now!’” –Tracie Bryant, Saturn Street Elementary & Arts and Media Magnet

“Tulsa School for Advanced Studies is so excited to be selected to be part of the Disney Musicals in Schools program. I know this will be the experience of a lifetime for our entire school community. With the excellence Disney is known for along with the expertise of the teaching artists from the Center Theater Group, our teachers and students will acquire so many valuable skills while creating lasting memories.” –Lester Powell, Tulsa Street Elementary

“Being accepted into the DMIS Program opens so many vistas for our school. You never know who will be inspired to want to be the next Tony Award winner. This collaboration gives our teachers, parents and students the chance to experience the joy of creativity, movement, poise and being part of a collaborative process to bring together a musical performance. I am so thrilled to begin our journey with Center Theatre Group.” –Leslie Miller, Ed.D., Wild Rose School of Creative Arts

Last year, five Los Angeles public schools successfully participated in the program, with 280 students and 28 educators working together to create a culture of musical theatre at their schools. Center Theatre Group is pleased to announce that all schools are continuing to produce musicals at their schools. They include Harrison Elementary (LAUSD), Hope Street Elementary (LAUSD), Humphreys Avenue Elementary (LAUSD), La Ballona Elementary (Culver City Unified School District) and Ritter Elementary (LAUSD).

Using the unique world of musical theatre, **Disney Musicals in Schools** helps to foster positive relationships between students, faculty, staff, parents and the community. Students and teachers work in teams, developing the wide spectrum of skills needed when producing a piece of musical theatre, including critical thinking, problem solving, ensemble building, communication, self-confidence and interpersonal skills.

Disney Musicals in Schools was launched in 2010 in response to Disney Theatrical Production's concern that under-resourced public elementary schools were not afforded equitable access to the arts. After successfully offering the program in New York City schools, Disney Theatrical Productions began partnering with organizations in other communities across the United States.

Disney KIDS musicals, created in partnership with Music Theater International (MTI), are 30-minute musicals designed for elementary school performers and have been adapted from the classic Disney films "101 Dalmatians," "Aladdin," "The Aristocats," "Cinderella," "The Jungle Book," "The Lion King" and "Winnie the Pooh."

Center Theatre Group, one of the nation's preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles' leading nonprofit theatre company, which, under Artistic Director Michael Ritchie, programs seasons at the 736-seat Mark Taper Forum and 1600 to 2000-seat Ahmanson Theatre at The Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles, and the 317-seat Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City. In addition to presenting and producing the broadest range of theatrical entertainment in the country, Center Theatre Group is one of the nation's leading producers of ambitious new works through commissions and world premiere productions and a leader in interactive community engagement and education programs that reach across generations, demographics and circumstance to serve Los Angeles.

Disney Theatrical Productions (DTP) operates under the direction of Thomas Schumacher and is among the world's most successful commercial theatre enterprises, bringing live entertainment events to a global annual audience of more than 20 million people in more than 50 countries. Under the Disney Theatrical Productions banner, the group produces and licenses Broadway productions around the world, including "Beauty and the Beast," "The Lion King," Elton John & Tim Rice's "Aida," "TARZAN®," "Mary Poppins," a co-production with Cameron Mackintosh, "The Little Mermaid," "Peter and the Starcatcher," "Newsies," "Aladdin" and "Frozen." Other successful stage musical ventures have included the Olivier-nominated London hit "Shakespeare in Love," stage productions of Disney's "High School Musical," "Der Glöckner Von Notre Dame" in Berlin and "King David" in concert. DTP has collaborated with the country's leading regional theatres to develop new stage titles including "The Jungle Book," "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" and "Freaky Friday."

Disney Theatrical Productions also delivers live shows globally through its license to Feld Entertainment, producer of "Disney on Ice" and "Marvel Universe Live!," bringing beloved Disney stories and characters annually to over 12 million guests in nearly 50 countries worldwide. In addition, DTP licenses musical titles for local, school and community theatre productions through Music Theatre International, including "The Lion King Experience," a unique holistic arts education program wherein accredited elementary and middle schools produce condensed, age-appropriate JR. and KIDS adaptations of "The Lion King."

Music Theatre International (MTI) is one of the world's leading theatrical licensing agencies, granting theatres from around the world the rights to perform the greatest selection of musicals from Broadway and beyond. Founded in 1952 by composer Frank Loesser and orchestrator Don Walker, MTI is a driving force in advancing musical theatre as a vibrant and engaging art form.

MTI works directly with the composers, lyricists and book writers of these musicals to provide official scripts, musical materials and dynamic theatrical resources to over 70,000 professional, community and school theatres in the US and in over 60 countries worldwide.

MTI is particularly dedicated to educational theatre, and has created special collections to meet the needs of various types of performers and audiences. MTI's Broadway Junior™ shows are 30- and 60-minute musicals for performance by elementary and middle school-aged performers, while MTI's School Editions are musicals annotated for performance by high school students.

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