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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Baltimore Center Stage Announces Virtual 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Young Playwrights Festival

*The 36<sup>th</sup> Young Playwrights Festival includes free residencies for schools and a collaboration with DewMore Baltimore*

**Baltimore, MD, December 23, 2020**---- Baltimore Center Stage announced today its 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Young Playwrights Festival will be taking place this year, virtually. The Young Playwrights Festival is Baltimore Center Stage's longest running learning program that encourages expression and creativity in students across the state. This year's program also includes free virtual residencies for multiple classrooms, an online residency that students across Maryland can join, and an expansion of the types of work in the festival, in collaboration with DewMore Baltimore.

"The Young Playwrights Festival and our residency programs are just one of the many ways that BCS is staying open for storytelling this year," said Director of Artistic Partnerships and Innovation, Annalisa Dias. "I'm so excited we'll be working with students and teachers to foster storytelling and creativity, especially now when they both feel so needed. I'm looking forward to our virtual YPF this spring, and can't wait to read all the inspiring work that I know young people will create and share with us!"

Thanks to the generosity of the Maryland State Department of Education and VSA/The John F. Kennedy Center, Baltimore Center Stage is able to offer both free and discounted virtual residencies of the Young Playwrights Festival curriculum for multiple schools. For the free residencies, they are prioritizing Title 1 schools in Baltimore City and serving students with disabilities. The schools receiving residencies are Baltimore Lab School, City Springs Elementary/Middle School, Deep Creek Middle School, Forth Worthington Elementary/Middle School, Garrett Heights Elementary/Middle School, Graceland Park O'Donnell Heights Elementary, Maryland School for the Blind, National Academy Foundation, and the Academy of Fine Arts. Many schools are being forced to sacrifice arts education as they pivot to virtual learning. With these free and discounted residencies,

students will get to participate in the YPF curriculum led by Baltimore Center Stage teaching artists.

Additionally, due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, Baltimore Center Stage has adapted their curriculum and are offering it for download online as well. It is available for teachers or enterprising students across Maryland to download and complete. These students have the option to participate in an online residency in February led by Baltimore Center Stage teaching artists, where they will receive guidance and complete their work in a group environment.

The theme for this year's festival is "Eyes on the Horizon." Any K-12 student enrolled or homeschooled in the state of Maryland is eligible to apply. This year, the open call has expanded to accept spoken word poetry as well as plays. For this reason, Baltimore Center Stage is collaborating with DewMore Baltimore, a community based organization dedicated to using art and community organizing as tools to increase community engagement in the Baltimore community. DewMore Baltimore will be assisting in reviewing the work shared by students to help Baltimore Center Stage's artistic teams in judging the spoken word poetry.

Of the collaboration, DewMore Baltimore representatives said, "one of the most important things for art and storytelling to undertake in this time is the creation of platforms for youth voice to be celebrated and amplified. Our recent collaboration with Center Stage for the Butterfly Session Series was a prime example of how important that mission is now more than ever, why initiatives like YPF are so needed, and why the microphone should stay turned on, for everyone!"

Young Playwrights Festival open call is now open. Interested students should visit <https://www.centerstage.org/learning/young-playwrights-festival/>.

For more information and other media related inquiries or interview requests please contact the Communications office. For general information, visit [www.centerstage.org](http://www.centerstage.org) or call the box office at 410.332.0033.

### **About Baltimore Center Stage**

Designated the State Theater of Maryland in 1978, Baltimore Center Stage provides the highest quality theater and programming for all members of our communities, including youth and families, under the leadership of Artistic Director Stephanie Ybarra and Executive Director Michael Ross. Baltimore Center Stage ignites conversations and imaginations by producing an eclectic season of professional productions across two mainstages and an intimate 99-seat theater, through engaging community programs, and with inspiring education programs. Everything we do at Center Stage is led by our core values—chief among them being Access For All. Our mission is heavily rooted in

providing active and open accessibility for everyone, regardless of any and all barriers, to our Mainstage performances, education initiatives, and community programming.

