



Richard Hopkins
Producing Artistic Director

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**THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF SARASOTA AWARDS
FST \$5,000 GRANT TO SUPPORT
WRITE A PLAY AT WILKINSON ELEMENTARY**

(Sarasota, FL) — **Florida Studio Theatre** (FST) is delighted to announce that the nonprofit theater received a \$5,000 Community Grant from **The Junior League of Sarasota**, a key supporter of FST's efforts to bring its **WRITE A PLAY** program, an arts-in-education initiative, to Wilkinson Elementary, a Title I school, at no cost. The Junior League's support will fully subsidize Wilkinson's participation in WRITE A PLAY, giving its students the example, inspiration, and the skills to write their own original plays. Since its inception in 1991, FST's WRITE A PLAY program has impacted over 1 million young people around the world, inspiring the next generation of playwrights. Teachers interested in bringing WRITE A PLAY to their own schools are invited to contact FST's Director of Children's Theatre, **Caroline Kaiser**, at ckaiser@floridastudiotheatre.org or call 941-366-9797.

"Wilkinson Elementary has been involved with WRITE A PLAY for 14 years," said **Caroline Kaiser**, FST's Director of Children's Theatre, "and we did not want financial challenges to exclude the school from participating again this year—particularly after Ms. Guiterrez's 4th grade class wrote a winning play last year! The Junior League's backing ensures that hundreds of students will have the chance to express their feelings and free their imaginations through the art of playwriting."

During an unprecedented year where schools have focused their resources on PPE equipment and online learning technology, there is limited funding for experiential learning programs like WRITE A PLAY, particularly for Title I schools like Wilkinson Elementary. With the Junior League's support, up to 250 students at Wilkinson Elementary will not miss out on the FST's award-winning enrichment program this school year, during a time when having access to a creative outlet for self-expression is more critical than ever before.

"The Junior League of Sarasota is proud to support FST's WRITE A PLAY Program," said **Vickie Brill**, Co-Chair of the League's Grants committee. "This grant stood out among a record number of applicants in a year in which children *must* have the ability to express, create, and unlock their potential using their imaginations. The Junior League's relationship with Florida Studio Theatre and Wilkinson Elementary is invaluable as the next generation of students learns to appreciate the arts in a fun, innovative way."

For over 60 years, Sarasota's Junior League has supported community initiatives, with a particular focus on projects benefitting women and children. This year, the group gave special consideration to organizations and programs that have been deeply impacted by COVID-19, giving out over \$45,000 in grants to non-profits like FST. With the League's financial assistance, FST will continue in growth and impact at Wilkinson Elementary.

For more information on this Community Grant from The Junior League of Sarasota, please contact Lydia Baxter, FST's Public Relations Associate, at (941) 366-9017 x338 or at Lbaxter@floridastudiotheatre.org.

ABOUT FLORIDA STUDIO THEATRE

Florida Studio Theatre (FST) is Sarasota's contemporary theatre. Founded in 1973, FST has grown to a village of five theatres located in the heart of Downtown, Sarasota. Each theatre is small in size and large in impact— providing intimate and engaging settings for high-quality, professional performances.

Today, FST has established itself as a major force in American Theatre. FST is the largest subscription theatre in the state of Florida and among the largest in the country, serving more than 230,000 live attendees each year across its six core programs: Mainstage, Cabaret, Stage III, Children's Theatre, Education, and New Play Development.

Even with its growth, Florida Studio Theatre remains firmly committed to making the arts accessible and affordable to as many people as possible. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Richard Hopkins, FST develops theatre that speaks to our living, evolving, and dynamically changing world. Hip and historical, entertaining and challenging, we are the theatre where the street meets the elite — where everyone is welcome to engage in the art of theatre.

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