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## **Middle Grades Partnership presents first student led Story Slam with Baltimore Center Stage**

*“Stories Make the World” debuts May 12, Features area middle school  
students*

**Baltimore – April 26, 2018** Baltimore Center Stage is pleased to present, in collaboration with Middle Grades Partnership, Stories Make the World. This student led storytelling presentation is the first of its kind at Center Stage. Middle Grades Partnership students from 17 public and private schools across Baltimore will tell stories from their life on stage this May.

“Stories Make the World is the first time we have developed an arts integrated program in partnership with classroom teachers, the people who are actually charged with doing the hard work of helping children learn how to read and write.” says Michael Wiggins, Director of Education Programs at Baltimore Center Stage. “This curriculum focuses on personal storytelling, a process which helps children build self-confidence and empathy. It’s not just about who you are, but who you will become.”

Over the last six months teaching artists from Baltimore Center Stage have worked with students in Middle Grades Partnership’s nine programs. Together, students experienced first hand the creative process of developing a story. They focused on listening to other’s stories, giving and receiving constructive feedback, organizing their thoughts and presenting an engaging story to their peers. In May, all 270 students from the public and private schools will come together for a day of story slam workshops at Baltimore Center Stage – ending in live performances by select students.

“In 13 years of Middle Grades Partnership we’ve served over 3,000 students. But, we’ve never brought them all together, from every corner of the city, to work



constructively on a joint project or shared experience. For many, this will be their first time meeting students from a different part of the city, visiting Center Stage or performing publically,” says Wendy Samet, Executive Director. “We partnered with Center Stage on storytelling because we know that this kind of public speaking encourages creativity, broadens horizons, sharpens memory and helps them learn about other cultures and communities.”

The program will take place on May 12, at 2:30 p.m. in the Head Theater. More information on *Stories Make the World* can be found at <https://www.centerstage.org/education/stories-make-the-world>

#### **About Middle Grades Partnership**

Middle Grades Partnership is a three-year program for Baltimore’s middle school students providing educational opportunities, enriching experience and access across social boundaries through public and private school partnerships. For over 12 years, Middle Grades Partnership has been changing the trajectory of the lives of Baltimore middle school students.

Our nine public and private school partnerships provide exceptional programming that halts summer learning loss, balances enrichment with skill development and brings communities together to address silos of race, class, and opportunity.

Our partnerships: Afya Charter / Park • City Springs / Boys' Latin • City Springs / Garrison Forest • Cross Country / Bryn Mawr • Hamilton / Calvert • Hampstead Hill / Friends • Lillie May Carroll Jackson / Roland Park Country • Mount Royal / McDonogh • Southwest Baltimore Charter / Gilman

#### **About Baltimore Center Stage**

Baltimore Center Stage is a professional, nonprofit institution committed to entertaining, engaging and enriching audiences through bold, innovative and thought-provoking classical and contemporary theater. Named the State Theater of Maryland in 1978, Baltimore Center Stage has steadily grown as a leader in the national regional theater scene. Under the leadership of Executive Director Michael Ross, Baltimore Center Stage is committed to creating and presenting a diverse array of world premieres and exhilarating interpretations of established works. Baltimore Center Stage believes in access for all—creating a welcoming environment for everyone who enters its theater doors and, at the same time, striving to meet audiences where they are. In addition to its Mainstage and Off Center productions in the historic Mount Vernon neighborhood, Baltimore Center Stage ignites conversations among a global audience through digital initiatives, which explore how technology and the arts intersect. The theater also nurtures the next generation of artists and theater-goers through the Young Playwrights Festival, Student Matinee Series and many other educational programs for students, families and educators.

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