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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 1, 2019

STUDENTS RECEIVE HANDS ON TECHNICAL TRAINING BACKSTAGE AT THE KAUFFMAN CENTER

First Hand grant enables Kauffman Center's Open Doors program to incentivize high school students to attend class and learn about the impact of technology in the arts.

Kansas City, Mo. — Through a grant provided by First Hand, the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts will develop a new program giving professional opportunities to young people. Through the Center's Open Doors *Spotlight on Youth* initiative which provides access to youth artists and future arts professionals through a variety of performing arts experiences, the Kauffman Center's new Backstage Intensive program will be offered to high school students interested in theater, technology, and business. Students from area high schools with strong attendance records will experience behind-the-scenes technical operations at Kansas City's premier performing arts facility.

First Hand believes that hands-on experiences and exposure to the business of operating a performing arts center will incentivize high school students to attend school, graduate and explore career options in the arts, business and technology sectors. Through First Hand's support, the Backstage Intensive program will focus on the Center's use of technology throughout various departments including theater operations, marketing and patron services. Invited high school participants will take part in activities ranging from hanging and focusing stage lighting equipment and operating a sound board, to selling tickets and developing a promotional social media campaign. All activities planned will integrate technology as a key part of bringing the performing arts to audiences.

"First Hand is committed to building healthy generations in school, work and life. This year we will invest over \$2.2 million in our K-12 school health programming," states Melissa B. Frerking, vice president and executive director, First Hand. "We are thrilled to partner with the Kauffman Center on this exciting initiative that aligns with First Hand's health programming. We support the great work of area schools to reduce absenteeism and create experiences to develop the student."

Kauffman Center is passionate about providing opportunities for youth artists and future arts professionals to use its wide array of resources. Through the Kauffman Center's Open Doors *Spotlight on Youth* initiative, young people are able to be a part of a diverse set of engagements and programs that connect tomorrow's artists, arts patrons, and arts administrators with the Kauffman Center's staff and stages.

"We deeply appreciate First Hand's support which will further enrich the Kauffman Center's Open Doors *Spotlight on Youth* Program to provide an immersive behind-the-scenes experience for students that highlights the intersections between business, technology, and the arts," said Paul Schofer, president & CEO, Kauffman Center. "We are confident this unique program can help students explore a wide range of career possibilities while building connections with the Kauffman Center's staff of working arts professionals."

With First Hand's support, the newly-expanded Backstage Intensive program will engage more than 150 youth throughout the 2019 and 2020 school years. Initial engagements during the spring 2019 semester are beginning with students from Hickman Mills Freshman Center and Ruskin High School in the Hickman Mills School District.

ABOUT FIRST HAND

Founded in 1995, First Hand is dedicated to helping children, families and communities achieve their full health potential. First Hand has developed and delivers community programs that empower youth to take charge of their overall health and well-being.

By building innovative models for healthier tomorrows and replicating those models globally, First Hand's donors have changed the lives of more than 400,000 individuals in 93 countries. Whether providing funding for children to receive care when financial constraints make it impossible to cover medical expenses, conducting free wellness screenings in schools or creating an engaging health curriculum, First Hand is committed to changing lives and creating healthier communities for tomorrow.

ABOUT THE OPEN DOORS PROGRAM

The Kauffman Center Open Doors program connects young people to the arts through three major components:

- The Open Doors [Spotlight on Youth](#) initiative offers year-round programs and engagement opportunities that connect young people with the Kauffman Center.
- The Open Doors [Community Tickets](#) program offers free and reduced price performance tickets to underserved audiences through local social service agencies and schools.
- The Open Doors [Transportation Fund](#) helps schools offer high quality performing arts experiences to students by eliminating or defraying the costs of bus transportation.

More information about Open Doors programs is available at: kauffmancenter.org/open-doors.

ABOUT THE KAUFFMAN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts – a major not-for-profit center for music, opera, theater and dance designed by Moshe Safdie – opened in 2011. Serving as a cultural cornerstone for Kansas City and the region, the Kauffman Center delivers extraordinary and diverse performing arts experiences. Honored as one of the World's 15 Most Beautiful Concert Halls, the Kauffman Center attracts some of the world's most renowned performers and entertainers.

Through educational outreach programs and community enrichment, the Kauffman Center supports Kansas City as a cultural destination. More information on the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts is available at kauffmancenter.org.

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