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**For Immediate Release:**

**CITY THEATRE ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS**

***Under contract in 2014-2015 season for VSA Playwright Discovery Program,  
partners with the Watson Institute's Friendship Academy***

PITTSBURGH, PA (December 4, 2014)

**City Theatre** is proud to announce a contract with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to implement the VSA Playwright Discovery Program in Pittsburgh classrooms.

Playwright Discovery gives students the skills to create original scripts, to tell stories that address the disability experience via theatre or other media arts. There is a secondary focus on writing, literacy and communication skills. VSA Playwright Discovery programs are conducted at the local, regional and national level and provide students with a rich curriculum exploring the disability experience by focusing on playwriting, writing for film/video, or writing for audio storytelling.

"City Theatre has long been committed to fostering student voices through playwriting in the Pittsburgh region and beyond," said Kristen Link, Director of Education and Accessibility at City Theatre. "Additionally, we are passionate about access and inclusion within our education initiatives. We are thrilled to become a contractor of the John F. Kennedy's Center for Performing Arts' VSA Playwright Discovery Program, and look forward to the meaningful connection we will make with the students and faculty at Friendship Academy this year."

During the 2014-15 season, City Theatre has partnered with the Watson Institute's Friendship Academy, located in Pittsburgh's Friendship neighborhood. As both an approved private school (APS) and a school-based partial hospital component (PHP), Friendship Academy serves 155 students from first to twelfth grade, specializing in meeting their individual educational and mental health challenges.

"The VSA Playwright Discovery Program provides our students with an opportunity to work with talented and inspiring teaching artists," stated Lauri Kragness, M.Ed., Education Director/Co-Program Director for Friendship Academy. "The artists' inspiration and creativity is contagious! The Friendship Academy teachers enjoy collaborating with the artists, as well. The students look forward to weekly writing workshops. This is a wonderful program and we are thankful to have the opportunity to participate."

The VSA Playwright Discovery Program serves all students with and without disabilities in Middle School and High School. Scripts created by students participating in the program are submitted to the VSA Playwright

Discovery competition, which culminates in a workshop and staged reading of select scripts that takes place in Washington D.C. every fall.

**City Theatre** is currently in its 40th anniversary season begins this fall. Located on Pittsburgh's historic South Side, City Theatre specializes in new plays, commissioning and producing work by playwrights including Daniel Beaty, Jessica Dickey, Christopher Durang, Michael Hollinger, Willy Holtzman, Tarell McCraney, and Theresa Rebeck. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Tracy Brigden and a 45-member Board of Directors, City Theatre's mission is to provide an artistic home for the development and production of contemporary plays of substance and ideas that engage and challenge a diverse audience.

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