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***BILLY ELLIOT THE MUSICAL* AND FIDELITY FUTURESTAGE®
INVITE NEW YORK CITY METRO AREA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FIDELITY FUTURESTAGE PLAYWRITING CONTEST**

Winning Play to be Produced on Broadway

NEW YORK CITY, March 19, 2009 – Fidelity FutureStage®, the producers of *Billy Elliot the Musical* and Elton John today announced the first ever **Fidelity FutureStage® Playwriting Contest** – a unique opportunity for area high school students to become Broadway’s youngest playwrights.

Students are invited to write a 10-minute, one-act play reflecting one of the themes from the story of *Billy Elliot*: fulfilling a dream, discovering a special talent or overcoming adversity. One grand prize winner will have the opportunity to work directly with the *Billy Elliot the Musical* creative team to develop and produce their play. That play will be performed live at the Fidelity FutureStage finale gala event on June 15, 2009 at the Imperial Theater.

The **Fidelity FutureStage Playwriting Contest** is a joint initiative of Fidelity Investments and *Billy Elliot the Musical* to encourage young people to use their creativity, participate in the theater arts and perhaps become Broadway’s next rising star.

“What Fidelity FutureStage is doing is encouraging young people to use their imagination,” said Elton John, Fidelity FutureStage Honorary Chairperson. “I’m saying to all of you young people out there – use your creative spirit. If you feel that you have something special to offer – go for it.”

The contest is an extension of the Fidelity FutureStage theater education program, now in its third year providing playwriting and production curricula and theater experiences for 10 inner-city schools.

“Fidelity FutureStage has touched nearly 2,000 students since its start in 2006, bringing professional theater into New York City classrooms,” said Jennifer K. Brown, Executive Vice President at Fidelity Investments. “Adding the **Fidelity FutureStage Playwriting Contest** this year opens the program to even more students throughout the city and surrounding counties, and gives them an opportunity to tell their stories and possibly fulfill a Broadway dream.”

The contest is open to full-time students in grades 9-12 attending school in New York City and the following New York and New Jersey counties: (New York) Bronx, Kings, Nassau, New York, Queens, Richmond, Rockland, Suffolk and Westchester; (New Jersey) Bergen, Essex and Hudson. All plays must be submitted by 11:50pm ET on April 30, 2009. Complete contest rules and directions for submission can be found at www.FutureStage.com/playwriting.

Designed to help area teachers engage their classes, and individual students to get started, www.FutureStage.com provides numerous playwriting resources including tips on crafting a story and developing characters, theater terminology, formatting guidelines, and video messages from Elton John and other members of the *Billy Elliot* creative team. Teachers can download a full curriculum guide from the site, offering class-by-class lesson plans and suggested assignments.

To reach out to teachers throughout the metro area and help them better understand the program, Fidelity FutureStage has worked closely with Camp Broadway®, a leader in theater arts programming and curriculum development, and educational partner and contest manager for the **Fidelity FutureStage Playwriting Contest**.

Following the April 30, 2009 deadline, all eligible plays will be reviewed and evaluated by a panel of Broadway professionals who will narrow the field to five finalists. Plays will be evaluated in the following categories: originality/creativity of the play; character development; structure of dialogue and plot; and appropriateness of the play to the *Billy Elliot* themes. The **Fidelity FutureStage Playwriting Contest** grand prize winner will be chosen from among the five finalists by a panel of judges, set to include *Billy Elliot the Musical* writer, Lee Hall. The winner will be announced in late May.

About Fidelity FutureStage

Fidelity FutureStage, now in its third year, is designed to bring theater to life for 600+ NYC students, representing 10 inner-city schools. The year-long theater education curriculum affords students the opportunity to learn from leading playwrights, directors, designers and actors, and ultimately experience the thrill of bringing their own creativity to life on a professional stage.

More than 1,000 hours of classroom work over the course of the school year includes instruction in theater arts disciplines ranging from playwriting and editing to casting, auditioning, set and costume design, directing and final stage production. To date, some of the Broadway artists lending their time and support to the Fidelity FutureStage program have included: Kathleen Marshall (*GREASE!*), William Ivey Long (*Grey Gardens, Hairspray*), Charles Strauss (*Annie, Bye Bye Birdie*), Alan Menken (*Little Shop of Horrors, The Little Mermaid*), Jerry Zaks (*Caine Mutiny Court-Martial, Little Shop of Horrors*), Raul Esparza (*Company, Speed the Plow*), Lin-Manuel Miranda (*In the Heights*), Charles Dutton (*The Piano Lesson*) and Chazz Palmintari (*A Bronx Tale*).

The **Fidelity FutureStage Playwriting Contest** is a new extension of the program this year, created to give additional students throughout the NYC metro area encouragement and opportunity to participate in the theater arts.

The Fidelity FutureStage Finale gala event on June 15th will showcase a total of six student-written 10-minute plays from the program – five selected from the program's 10 FutureStage schools, and the sixth from this year's **Fidelity FutureStage Playwriting Contest**. All of the plays featured in the June 15th finale will be published by Samuel French, the premier play and musical publishing and licensing company serving the Broadway community.

For more information, visit www.FutureStage.com.

About Fidelity Investments

Fidelity Investments is one of the world's largest providers of financial services, with custodied assets of over \$2.5 trillion, including managed assets of over \$1.2 trillion as of January 31, 2009. Fidelity offers investment management, retirement planning, brokerage, and human resources and benefits outsourcing services to 24 million individuals and institutions as well as through 5,500 financial intermediary firms. The firm is the largest mutual fund company in the United States, the No. 1 provider of workplace retirement savings plans, the largest mutual fund supermarket and a leading online brokerage firm. For more information about Fidelity Investments, visit www.fidelity.com.

About *Billy Elliot the Musical*

The multi-award winning *Billy Elliot the Musical* opened to rave reviews at Broadway's Imperial Theater in November 2008. Based on the critically acclaimed film of 2000, *Billy Elliot* is the funny, heart-warming tale of a young boy with a dream, and a celebration of his triumph against the odds. Set against the historic British miners' strike of the 1980s, the story follows Billy's journey as a boy in a small mining town who, after stumbling across a ballet class while on his way to a boxing lesson, realizes that his future lays not in the boxing ring but on stage as a dancer. *Billy Elliot* is brought to life by the film's original creative team - director Stephen Daldry, choreographer Peter Darling, and writer Lee Hall - joined by music legend Elton John who wrote the score. The show has played to over 3 million people worldwide since its London premiere in 2005. *Billy Elliot the Musical* is presented by Universal Pictures Stage productions, Working Title Films and Old Vic Productions in association with Weinstein Live Entertainment, based on the Universal Pictures/Studio Canal film. In support of the Fidelity FutureStage Playwriting Contest, *Billy Elliot the Musical* is offering a special discount ticket rate for students, starting at \$40. Group rates for classes are also available. For more information, visit www.billyelliottbroadway.com.

About Camp Broadway

Founded in 1995, Camp Broadway is a leader in theatre arts programming, special events administration, and curriculum development as publisher of StageNOTES®: A Field Guide for Teachers. The company serves as a vital link between Broadway's many theatrical productions, estates and libraries to families, schools and social organizations. Now in its 14th year, Camp Broadway has hosted almost 10,000 kids from every state and over 40 countries at its annual summer camps in New York and around America, and has provided first-time Broadway show experiences to over 200,000 students through its workshops and community outreach programs. For more information, visit www.CampBroadway.com.

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