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ACTORS’ PLAYHOUSE AT THE MIRACLE THEATRE AND THE CHILDREN’S TRUST ANNOUNCE THE WINNERS OF 2019 YOUNG TALENT BIG DREAMS COMPETITION

CORAL GABLES, FL – May 9, 2019 – Actors’ Playhouse at the Miracle Theatre, together with presenting sponsor The Children’s Trust, is proud to announce the 2019 winners of Young Talent Big Dreams, the most widespread local youth talent contest in Miami-Dade history. A marathon of semifinal competitions for student performers ages 8-17 culminated in the finals held this past Saturday, May 4, at the Miracle Theatre. Prizes ranged from master classes, public performance opportunities and cash awards to free tickets to local attractions and shows. This year, courtesy of WSVN CH7, the grand prize winner also received a free trip – including airfare and hotel – to attend the Teen Choice Awards in Los Angeles.

Hundreds of hopeful contestants attended seven preliminary auditions held over the past two months in distinct geographic neighborhoods, including the Miracle Theatre in Coral Gables, the South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center in Cutler Bay, Miami Arts Studio 6-12 @ Zelda Glazer in Kendale Lakes and the City of Miami Little Haiti Cultural Complex in Little Haiti. Participation was free and limited to residents of Miami-Dade County. The competition featured a total of six individual categories: pop/rock/rap vocals, musical theatre/jazz standards/classical vocals, dance, musical instrument, original spoken word and original vocal and/or instrumental composition. Group categories (six or fewer members) included dance, musical instrument/bands and vocal groups.

Semifinals and finals were held before live audiences; up to five acts in each individual category and up to three acts in each group category advanced to the finals, where judges selected a winner in each category as well as a grand prize honoree.

“Actors’ Playhouse is proud of our Young Talent Big Dreams talent contest, which engages children to develop their individual skills and future performing arts careers,” says Barbara S. Stein, executive producing director of Actors’ Playhouse at the Miracle Theatre. “We are grateful for the ongoing support and partnership of presenting sponsor The Children’s Trust, and Wells Fargo Bank, sponsor of the finals.”
Young Talent Big Dreams follows the popular TV talent show model; judges have included a host of industry professionals from the performing arts community. Judging the May 4 finals were David Arisco, artistic director, Actors’ Playhouse at the Miracle Theatre; Rodester Brandon, conductor and artistic director, Miami Wind Symphony; Howard Cohen, features writer, the Miami Herald; Natalie Lewis-Schere, co-founder and executive director, PATH; and Andrea Solis, professional dancer and founder of Thrive Dance Enrichment Program.

"Every year I come to the finals and I am so impressed by what I see on stage," says James R. Haj, president and CEO of The Children's Trust. "Then I come back the following year and it's even better. The amount of talent, determination and confidence these kids show is phenomenal, and it's very gratifying to know that The Children's Trust plays a part in nurturing and supporting that."

2019 YOUNG TALENT BIG DREAMS CONTEST WINNERS:

**Individual Musical Instrument and Overall Grand Prize Winner**
Samuel Cruz, 13, Southwood Middle School

**Individual Dance Winner**
Zachary Roy, 10, Sunset Elementary School

**Individual Original Composition Winner**
Lisa Finck, 17, Coral Reef Senior High School

**Individual Vocal – Broadway/Jazz/Classical Winner**
Jaylin Gargurevich, 14, Miami Arts Studio 6-12 @ Zelda Glazer

**Individual Vocal – Pop/Rock/Rap Winner**
Massiel Garcia, 14, International Studies Charter Middle & High School

**Individual Original Spoken Word Winner**
Jasmine Martinez, 13, Hialeah Middle Community School

**Group Musical Instrument Winner**
The SharkPAC Band
Kairick Montet, 15; Ashton Taft, 17; Jackeline Fierro, 17; Nicole Doctura, 16; Gabriel Pittman, 15; all students at Cutler Bay Senior High School

**Vocal Groups Winner**
Killer Queens
Fabiana Montenegro, 15, Coral Reef Senior High School; Alaia Mendoza, 15, Doral Academy Preparatory High School; Andrea Godoy, 16, José Martí MAST 6-12 Academy; Diane Li, 13, George Washington Carver Middle School

**Group Dance Winners**
Andi & EB
Andrea Rosell, 8, Somerset Academy; EB Keime, 16, Coral Reef Senior High School
About Actors’ Playhouse at the Miracle Theatre
Founded by Dr. Lawrence E. Stein, and under the leadership of Executive Producing Director Barbara S. Stein and Artistic Director David Arisco, Actors’ Playhouse is an award-winning nonprofit regional professional theatre company celebrating 31 years of excellence. Located in the historic Miracle Theatre on Miracle Mile in downtown Coral Gables, Actors’ Playhouse is a Florida Presenting Cultural Organization and one of 14 major cultural institutions in Miami-Dade County. The company produces five Mainstage and five professional Children’s Theatre productions annually, a year-round Theatre Conservatory and Summer Camp Program, educational arts outreach programs, and the Young Talent Big Dreams countywide youth talent contest in partnership with The Children’s Trust. www.actorsplayhouse.org

About The Children’s Trust
The Children’s Trust is a dedicated source of revenue established by voter referendum to improve the lives of children and families in Miami-Dade County. www.thechildrenstrust.org