



PLAYHOUSE  
SQUARE  
CENTER  
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## MEDIA ADVISORY

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### **IDEA CENTER WILL SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCE EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES OF PLAYHOUSE SQUARE AND IDEASTREAM, ADDRESSING PUBLIC NEED IN KEY AREAS**

Cleveland, OH – When the Idea Center at Playhouse Square opens to the public later this year, Northeast Ohio residents of all ages will have a powerful new resource for education. The Idea Center has been designed to significantly increase the educational services provided by ideastream and Playhouse Square, allowing the two organizations to extend the educational resources of the private and public education systems while fostering the development of new and exciting learning initiatives.

There is no doubt that current economic conditions are producing dramatic, detrimental effects in the education system locally, regionally and nationally. Continual budget cuts have shortchanged America's youth by limiting access to information and decreasing exposure to the arts. While statistics routinely show that children whose education includes arts and creative pursuits perform at higher levels in other academic areas, funding to engage students in arts activities is being reduced or eliminated. The partnership between Playhouse Square and ideastream means that children, adult students and their educators in Northeast Ohio will all have enhanced programming and facilities at their disposal.

Playhouse Square has a proud history of delivering arts and cultural opportunities for all ages including arts-related professional development seminars for educators, theater performances for youth, lifelong learning opportunities, and classes and workshops for any and all who wish to expand their performing arts experience.

The ideastream Educational Services group presents dozens of workshops each school year for Early Childhood Educators and parents. Television series including "What's your Math Problem" and "NewsDepth" targeted at elementary and secondary students, and a schedule of instructional television programs that support college credit courses support formal and informal lifelong learning. Interactive Distance Learning opportunities presented by ideastream enrich and enhance educational experiences for students through virtual field trips, online high school courses, post-secondary option courses, career exploration opportunities and collaborative activities between schools.

"The Idea Center represents a leap forward in our ability to design and deliver high quality courses and workshops that are needed in the community", commented Colleen Porter, director for arts education at Playhouse Square. "Working with ideastream to develop a shared space, delivering complementary courses and services means that we're able to dream bigger and provide better arts and other educational opportunities for Northeast Ohio", Porter concluded.

"As with other aspects of the Idea Center project, the savings to our funding organizations and members is significant, as compared to the two organizations attempting this in separate undertakings", Roy Norris, senior director for educational services at ideastream stated. "We know there is growing demand for our separate and combined educational services, and we're excited to be able to provide additional capacity with greater efficiency. The entire Northeast Ohio community will benefit through our collaboration in educational programs, and though access to the Idea Center facility.

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The Idea Center at Playhouse Square has been designed to maximize the educational services offered by ideastream and Playhouse Square, leveraging existing synergies in the organizations' current programs, and laying the groundwork to create innovative, new offerings to local and regional students, teachers and school boards. An overview of the Center's education-specific facilities, features and benefits includes:

- The Idea Center will be a comprehensively wired environment where every location within the building is a potential production environment. This flexibility will allow the seamless integration of production with live educational programs, presentations, workshops and distance learning events.
- A dedicated space with added distance learning capabilities will dramatically increase interactive video opportunities for students, teachers and others. It will expand the public's access to performers via master classes, Q&A sessions, and similar activities.
- A flexible studio/theater increases the ability to develop and present intimate performance offerings, particularly enhancing Playhouse Square's arts education programming for children and teenagers.
- Two classrooms have been specially-configured as technology workshops, expanding ideastream's ability to instruct educators in emerging technology to better serve students. Small businesses, community organizations and senior citizens will also benefit through expanded outreach and education offerings designed specifically for them.
- The Idea Center communications network will provide instant access to all multimedia resources for use in the production and development of educational products, allowing educators and funding agents to more effectively partner in the development of technology for learning.
- The coordination of technical, production and educational staffs will promote collaboration, increase creativity and improve quality in the development of multiple media products and services for lifelong learning.
- The broadened educational offerings made possible through the Idea Center programming, state of the art technology and other facilities will provide enhanced opportunities for internships and other collaborations. Enhanced partnerships with local universities to co-develop curriculum in the areas of arts administration, media arts and technical instruction will all be possible, as will greater collaboration with community arts organizations, school districts, businesses and other non-profits.

#### **Other Idea Center facility and education program highlights**

The facilities, physical space and technology being designed and implemented at Idea Center will make it an invaluable community resource for arts, technology and other educational purposes, capable of providing new and different programming as the needs of the community are identified.

- Idea Center will make it possible to expand professional development for educators beyond the physical and time limitations of potential attendees. Workshops and seminars conducted at Idea Center can be recorded and archived for later viewing, broadcast to other locations, and may be made accessible on the Internet. Master classes, held in conjunction with productions at Playhouse Square, will be taped for retrieval or broadcast to other sites, allowing more students and educators to participate with reduced cost. Local artists can be dispatched to satellite locations to facilitate workshops.
- Funding provided by KeyCorp will enable Idea Center to host a financial literacy program. Non-profit organizations in the community will be able to attend workshops or view tapes through the reference library on grant writing, fiscal planning and business plan writing.

- After school arts education programs will provide opportunities for students from across Northeast Ohio to experience the arts on a regular basis. This program was designed to augment what has been lost through budget cuts in the area school districts.
- National/international arts education conferences, festivals and artist showcases can also be hosted at Idea Center. In January 2005, Playhouse Square hosted the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual International Showcase of Performing Arts for Young People, bringing over 300 arts professionals to Cleveland. Idea Center will attract similar events in the future.
- Performing arts groups in Northeast Ohio struggle to find rehearsal space. Idea Center was designed with these groups in mind. Performing arts companies will be able to use space in the Center and in return will offer classes and workshops for the community.
- Idea Center can become a home for lunchtime classes for professionals. Current plans include classes in public speaking, presentations, and production, with numerous other subjects and topics being considered.

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ideastream is a multiple-media public service organization with a mission to strengthen our communities by providing distinctive, thought-provoking programs and services that enlighten, inspire, educate and entertain. The organization was formed by the merger of public broadcasting stations WVIZ/PBS and 90.3 WCPN in July of 2001. The organization operates public television and radio stations in Cleveland with an audience of some 2.8 million viewers and listeners, an Educational Service group serving schools with nearly one half million students and manages the Ohio Public Television and Radio Statehouse News Bureau and Ohio Government Telecommunications in Columbus.

#### Playhouse Square Foundation

Playhouse Square Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit, which restored and operates Playhouse Square Center, the nation's second largest performing arts center. The Foundation's top mission is to provide high quality performing arts and entertainment programs to the citizen of Greater Cleveland and Northeast Ohio, and to support on-stage productions with leading-edge educational programs for people of all ages. It also strengthens the economic development of the region by making the downtown Cleveland Theater District a superior location for the arts, learning, business and living.