

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse Presents “Junie B. Jones” as Part of Its Family Festivities Series

Westport Country Playhouse will present the musical “Junie B. Jones,” based on the popular book by Barbara Park, as part of its Family Festivities Series on Sunday, February 11, at 1 and 4 p.m. Produced by TheatreWorks USA, the one-hour production is appropriate for grades K through 5. Tickets are \$20.

The musical tells the tale of outspoken, precocious, lovable Junie B. Jones as she deals with new friends, new glasses, sugar cookies, the annual kickball tournament, and other various first-grade, angst-ridden situations. Follow her adventures as she writes down the story of her life in her “Top-Secret Personal Beeswax Journal.”

This new musical is based on four volumes in Barbara Park’s “Junie B. Jones” series of books, illustrated by Denise Brunkus and published by Random House: “Junie B., First Grader (at Last!),” “Junie B., Boss of Lunch,” “Junie B., One-Man Band,” and “Top-Secret Personal Beeswax: A Journal by Junie B. (and Me!).”

Since 1961, Theatreworks USA has enlightened, entertained, and instructed over 72 million people in the U.S. and Canada, now performing for about four million people annually. It is the only children's theater to receive both a Drama Desk and a Lucille Lortel award. In addition, Theatreworks USA was the recipient of a Jonathan Larson Performing Arts Foundation Award, and The Actors Fund of America bestowed its Medal of Honor upon its founders Jay Harnick and Charles Hull.

The Playhouse’s six-show Family Festivities Series is presented on selected Sundays from December through May, featuring musical productions based on classic and contemporary children’s stories. Upcoming Family Festivities musicals include “Pinkalicious, the Musical,” on Sunday, March 11, Vital Theatre Company’s production based on the bestselling book from Victoria and Elizabeth Kann about Pinkalicious who can't stop eating pink cupcakes despite warnings from her parents, appropriate for ages 2 through 7; “How I Became a Pirate,” on Sunday, April 15, Dallas Children’s Theatre’s rollicking musical adventure about young Jeremy Jacob who joins Captain Braid Beard’s band of comical pirates, based on the bestselling book by Melinda Long, recommended for grades K through 5; and “Harry and the Dirty Dog,” on Sunday May 6, ArtsPower’s charming musical about a dog named Harry, who hates taking baths, based on the book by Gene Zion, illustrated by Margaret Bloy Graham, appropriate for grades K through 2.

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On Saturday, February 3, at 2:30 p.m., one week before the Playhouse presentation of "Junie B. Jones," The Westport Library will offer "Story Explorers," a free-of-charge program featuring an interactive book reading of "Junie B. Jones" and activities surrounding the book's theme led by instructors from Broadway Method Academy, the Playhouse's resident conservatory. The hour-long program promotes childhood literacy while also enhancing children's experiences of attending the Playhouse's Family Festivities shows. Presenting partners for "Story Explorers" are Westport Country Playhouse, The Westport Library, and Westport Young Woman's League. "Story Explorers" Corporate Sponsor is KPMG.

In conjunction with the Family Festivities Series, the Playhouse will once again host a book collection for Read to Grow, Inc., a statewide nonprofit organization that provides free children's books to families with limited access and to community resources that serve them. At each Family Festivities performance, bins will be located in the Playhouse lobby for donations of gently used and new children's books which will be given to families and programs in the greater Fairfield County area through Read to Grow. During last season's Family Festivities series, the Playhouse collected nearly 300 books.

Family Festivities Series Corporate Sponsor is Pitney Bowes. The Family Festivities Series is also supported by the Westport Young Woman's League.

Everyone in the audience requires a ticket. For more information or tickets, call the box office at (203) 227-4177, or toll-free at 1-888-927-7529, or visit Westport Country Playhouse, 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport. Tickets are available online 24/7 at www.westportplayhouse.org. Stay connected to the Playhouse on Facebook (Westport Country Playhouse), follow on Twitter (@WCPlayhouse), or view Playhouse videos on YouTube (WestportPlayhouse).

About Westport Country Playhouse

The mission of Westport Country Playhouse is to enrich, enlighten, and engage the community through the power of professionally produced *theater worth talking about* and the welcoming experience of the Playhouse campus. The Playhouse provides this experience in multiple ways by offering: Live theater experiences of the highest quality, under the artistic direction of Mark Lamos; educational and community engagement events to further explore the work on stage; programs for students and teachers with extensive curriculum support material; Script in Hand play readings to deepen relationships with audiences and artists; the renowned Woodward Internship Program during the summer months for aspiring theater professionals; Family Festivities presentations to delight young and old alike and to promote reading through live theater; youth performance training and performance opportunities through Broadway Method Academy, WCP's resident conservatory; and the beautiful and historic Playhouse campus open for enjoyment and community events year-round.

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