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US Airways Gives Wings to Theatre for Young Audiences

With new 3-city festival, theatre “angel” airline sponsors 3 new plays with 3 timely messages

TEMPE, AZ (March 11, 2008) --- In a “first” for theatre for young people, US Airways is sponsoring a three-city festival, “Imagination Begins with US”, which debuts three original plays in the airline’s hub cities of Charlotte, Philadelphia and Phoenix.

“There is a long tradition of new theatrical productions being made possible by individual “angels” and foundations. The idea that a corporation, especially an airline, is serving that function for young audiences is truly innovative,” said Jenny Millinger, Director of Strategic Initiatives at Childsplay, one of the participating theatres.

The three new plays will be produced and performed in rotation during the 18 month festival which opens in spring, 2008. Participating theatres are People’s Light & Theatre near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Children’s Theatre of Charlotte, in Charlotte, North Carolina; and Childsplay in Tempe, Arizona.

Each play, written for youth ages 8 to 18 and their families, is a page-to-stage production, based upon a novel. All three bring a timely message. *Getting Near to Baby*, adapted by Y York, traces a family’s journey of acceptance and understanding after the loss of a child. *Surviving the Applewhites* adapted by Stephanie S. Tolan and Katherine Paterson, focuses on appreciating differences and discovering your talents, while *Tale of Two Cities*, adapted by Dwayne Hartford, describes the paradox of human nature - war and peace, love and hate, revenge and redemption. Both *Surviving the Applewhites* and *Getting Near to Baby* are based on Newbery Honor Books.

US Airways is underwriting the festival with a significant financial contribution. “We are extremely proud to be spearheading such an innovative festival. This is the first time that three theater companies in three different cities are collaborating to produce and exchange three new plays for young audiences. These plays promote literacy, creativity, and ultimately, academic success for students,” said C.A. Howlett, Senior Vice President Public Affairs US Airways. “The festival is a triple-header for us, for our three partner theaters, and for young audiences in our hub cities.”

US Airways is the fifth largest domestic airline employing more than 36,000 aviation professionals worldwide. Charlotte, Philadelphia and Phoenix are major hub cities for the airline. For information, contact pam@strategies-az.com (602) 952-0040 or check the web site: www.USImaginationFestival.org.