



Firefly Creative: Junior Theatre Festival (JTF) 2026 Interest Packet

We're thrilled you're considering joining **Firefly Creative** at the **Junior Theatre Festival (JTF)** in Atlanta, Georgia this January! I've experienced JTF three times as a student and twice as an educator—and every single time, it changed my life. I left inspired, more connected, and driven to grow in my craft. And, at the end of the day, it's just plain fun.

JTF and iTheatrics (the incredible team behind the event) embody everything we value: collaboration, growth, and joy in storytelling. While there is a healthy element of competition, the heart of JTF lies in the connections formed, the lessons learned, and the lifelong memories made. It's refreshing to step outside our local bubble and meet thousands of young artists who love this just as much as we do. It fuels us to dream bigger and aim higher.

What Is JTF?

The Junior Theatre Festival is the **world's largest celebration of youth musical theatre**. Produced by iTheatrics and Music Theatre International, JTF welcomes thousands of students, teachers, and Broadway professionals for a dynamic weekend of performance, growth, and community.

Each student group presents a **15-minute selection** from a Broadway Jr. musical in front of professional adjudicators. Beyond the performance, students participate in masterclasses in singing, dancing, acting, and technical theatre—all taught by Broadway professionals. The festival also features previews of new shows, special guest performances, and the chance to meet peers from across the globe.

More than a festival, JTF is a transformational experience that helps students grow as artists, teammates, and humans.

Who Can Participate?

Firefly's 2026 JTF Team is open to **students in grades 4–12** who have previously participated in at least **one Firefly program**—whether that's *Schoolhouse Rock Jr.*, a camp, or a weekly class. We're seeking students with passion, commitment, and a team-first mindset.

JTF is all about ensemble excellence—not solos. We want students who love working as part of a team and are excited to tell a story together.

Festival Dates & Travel

The festival will take place **January 16–19, 2026**, in **Atlanta, Georgia**. We'll travel by car early on the morning of **Friday, January 16**, and return by dinnertime on **Monday, January 19**.

Depending on interest, Firefly will help organize carpools or caravanning to ensure every student has transportation. We're committed to creating an accessible and well-supported travel plan for all families.

Pod Performance

Every group performs in a “pod” with six to ten other groups. Each presents an excerpt from a Broadway Jr. show they've recently produced or are about to perform.

This year, Firefly's performance will feature **Schoolhouse Rock Live! Jr.**

Performing at JTF is a one-of-a-kind experience. To keep the focus on storytelling and equity, **no props, costumes, or set pieces are allowed**—only your body and your imagination. This results in some of the most stunningly creative performances you'll ever see.

I'll never forget watching students form a pirate ship with just their bodies, or a group re-creating the moment the icicle pierces Anna's heart in *Frozen*, or chimney sweeps transforming themselves into the rooftops of London so Bert could fly. The creativity on display is jaw-dropping.

For more details, view the **Adjudication Handbook** here: [JTF Adjudication Handbook 2026](#)

Want inspiration? Check out this playlist of my favorite JTF performances on YouTube: [JTF Pod Performances Playlist](#)

Rehearsal Schedule

To ensure we're fully prepared, all students must attend the following key rehearsals:

- **Wednesday, October 1** – 2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.: Mandatory meeting with parents and students. Cutting scripts and specific roles will be given out. Required waivers and group photos.
- **Friday, December 12** – 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (memorization required; videos will be provided in advance)
- **Friday, January 9** – 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- **Tuesday, January 13** – 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- **Wednesday, January 14** – 2:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., followed by a **Friends and Family Preview Performance at 5:00 p.m.**

Full attendance and commitment are crucial to our success.

Parent & Chaperone Information

Parents are welcome—and encouraged—to attend as **chaperones**. Students in **4th and 5th grade are required to be accompanied by a parent or guardian**. Chaperones will be responsible for their own lodging, travel, and registration just as students are.

Why JTF with Firefly?

There's truly nothing like the Junior Theatre Festival. It's a whirlwind of musicals, collaboration, discovery, and inspiration—all in one unforgettable weekend. Students return more confident, more connected, and creatively recharged.

As someone who has experienced JTF from every angle—performer, director, fan—I can promise it's worth every moment. I'm thrilled to bring our Firefly family into this vibrant, transformative tradition.

Cost & Fundraising Details

The estimated **total cost per student is \$400–\$500**. This includes:

Item	Traditional Cost (per person)	Firefly Estimate (per person)
Festival Registration	\$350	\$200 (discounted)
Hotel (3 nights, shared rooms, 4 per room, \$100 a night)	\$75 (per person)	\$75

Group Meals (will include all lunches during the conference)	\$100	\$100
Firefly Gear & Materials Fee	\$80	\$0 (sponsored!)
Your Portion of \$860 Group Fee	\$43	\$0 (prepaid!)
Travel (carpool or caravan)	TBD	TBD
Total	\$700+	\$400–\$500

Firefly has already prepaid the **\$860 group registration fee**, which is **not** passed on to families—making this an even greater value. If we reach at least 20 student participants, we'll be able to reduce the individual registration fee to **at least \$200 per student**, thanks to a \$3,000 allocation from our 2025 budget. This amount may fluctuate—and possibly decrease further—based on the final number of participants committed by July 31.

A portion of our **Fall Firefly Fundraiser** proceeds will support JTF expenses such as meals, gear, and hotel costs—once our 2025 School + Community Tour is fully funded.

Students are encouraged to lead **independent fundraising efforts**—T-shirt sales, bake sales, babysitting, and more. Firefly will enthusiastically support and promote student initiatives.

If cost is a concern, please don't hesitate to reach out. We are committed to making this opportunity possible for every student.

Monthly Payments (Estimated – Will Adjust w/Fundraising and Group Numbers)

Deposit Due by July 31: \$100 (paid to Firefly) <https://www.zeffy.com/ticketing/firefly-junior-theatre-festival-commitment-form>

September 1: \$100 (paid to Firefly)

October 1: \$100 (paid to Firefly)

November 1: \$100 (paid to Firefly)

December 1: \$100 (paid to Firefly)

What's Next?

1. Submit your **\$100 deposit by July 31, 2025** to secure your spot.
<https://www.zeffy.com/ticketing/firefly-junior-theatre-festival-commitment-form>
2. Begin monthly payments in September.
3. Attend the **Mandatory Parent/Student Meeting** on October 1 at 2:30 p.m.
4. Attend all rehearsals starting in December.
5. Pack your bags—JTF 2026 awaits