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KIDS FROM WISCONSIN HALTS 2020 TOUR SEASON DUE TO COVID-19 CONCERNS

MILWAUKEE, APRIL 15, 2020 - The Kids From Wisconsin’s Board reached the difficult decision of canceling the 2020 touring season after considering the health and safety of both the performers and the large audiences that come out to see them as they travel across the state each summer.

Putting on the show requires multiple rehearsal camps in mid-May and early June with nearly 50 performers and staff in very close proximity. In addition to protecting everyone involved, there is no assurance any of the training venues will be open or available in time to prepare for the season.

In addition, the tour typically visits nearly 40 cities, performing in theaters or outdoor venues with sometimes as many as 3,000 people in the crowd. Concerns have been expressed by hosting organizations that they may have to cancel their events over concerns audiences won’t be willing to come out to these types of venues for the next few months.

“It’s really difficult for a group that has brought so much joy to audiences and helped so many young performers over the last 51 consecutive summers to make this decision to cancel,” said Tim Riesterer, board president for the Kids From Wisconsin. “But, after a thorough evaluation of the health and safety concerns and watching many other festivals and musical events cancel or postpone, it became clear this was the only wise choice.”

For the last 51 summers, the Kids From Wisconsin have toured across the Midwest performing a live, two-hour Broadway-style revue of song, dance and music for more than 120,000 people each year. The group showcases Wisconsin's brightest musicians, singers and dancers, ages 15-20 and have been called "Wisconsin's Premiere Musical Ambassadors."

In addition to cancelling 38 performances in Wisconsin, Iowa and Michigan, the decision also affects 15 hands-on performing arts workshops and a specially designed “sensory-friendly” performance, which are part of the “Realize Your Dream” outreach portion of the Kids From Wisconsin.

At this point, the current decision by the Kids From Wisconsin does not affect their annual performances at Wisconsin State Fair where they are one of the most popular attractions. At the time of this release, the State Fair is still scheduled to run August 6-16.

“We are developing a contingency plan for a safe, online way to run rehearsals throughout the Summer, so we can be prepared to support this iconic event,” said Tina Weiss, executive director of the Kids From Wisconsin. “We haven’t missed a State Fair in over 50 years, but we have never seen anything like the COVID-19 pandemic.”

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