

**For More Information**

Megan Gibson, 636.530.5959  
mgibson@stagesstlouis.org

**APPLAUSE! 2007 Gala Sets Fundraising Record**

*Event Generates More than \$345,000 to Support Local Actors, Education and Outreach Programs*

ST. LOUIS (November 8, 2007) – STAGES ST. LOUIS, the region's only professional mid-sized musical theatre company, announced today that its sixth annual auction, APPLAUSE! 2007, raised proceeds in excess of \$345,000.

Funds raised through the event will support Education and Outreach Programs conducted by the STAGES Performing Arts Academy, as well as the employment of local actors. Today, STAGES provides more annual workweeks to local union actors than any other St. Louis-area theatrical company.

The 2007 Gala was held Friday, November 2 at the Ritz-Carlton in Clayton, and was attended by a record setting crowd of 400 guests. Highlights of the evening included a performance by the new STAGES teen troupe, TeamSTAGES. Notable attendees included:

- o Event Chair and STAGES Board Member Judy Kent and husband Jerry
- o Bank Midwest Vice President and STAGES Board President Craig Conway and wife Martha
- o Sachs Properties President Kathy Higgins and husband Paul
- o Brown Shoe Wholesale President Gary Rich and wife Diana
- o Chesterfield Mayor John Nations and wife Bridget
- o Edward Jones Principal, Executive Division Bob Ciapciak and wife Mary
- o McBride & Son Homes CEO John Eilermann and wife Lisa
- o Drury Hotels Vice President of Sales & Marketing Eric Strand and wife Tami
- o US Bank Regional Manager of the Private Client Group Ed Higgins and wife Lynne
- o Fox Associates Partner Mary Strauss

"I am continually amazed at the generosity of the people of St. Louis and their overwhelming support for the unique niche filled by STAGES," said Jack Lane, the organization's Executive Producer. "These dollars enable us to continue providing the region with the highest quality musical theatre performances and educational opportunities."

STAGES will present its 22<sup>nd</sup> season of musical theatre productions in Kirkwood in 2008 and the lineup will include *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (May 30 – June 29), *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (July 18 – August 17), *The Music Man* (September 5 – October 5), and the 2008 Family Production, Disney's *The Jungle Book* (August 6-17).

STAGES is currently in the midst of a \$31 million capital campaign to build a Performing Arts Center in Chesterfield. Once the Center opens, STAGES will be the only non-profit theatre organization in the area to own and operate its own theatre.

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**Editor's Note:** Event photographs available upon request.