

For More Information

Megan Gibson, 636.530.5959
mgibson@stagesstlouis.org

APPLAUSE! 2008 Gala Smashing Success

Event Generates More than \$265,000 to Support Local Actors, Education and Outreach Programs

ST. LOUIS (November 14, 2008) – STAGES ST. LOUIS, the region's only mid-sized professional musical theatre company, announced today that its seventh annual auction, APPLAUSE! 2008, raised proceeds in excess of \$265,000 this past Friday. This year's numbers come on the heels of the most successful season ever in STAGES history in both seats sold and dollars collected. Ticket revenue for the mainstage season was up from 1.5 million to 1.7 million dollars in 2008 and STAGES played to nearly 97% capacity for all of its shows.

Funds raised through the APPLAUSE! 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 2008 Gala was held Friday, November 7 at the Ritz-Carlton in Clayton, and was attended by a crowd of approximately 370 people. 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 President of Logan College of Chiropractic Dr. George Goodman and wife Dr. Elizabeth Goodman
- o President of Monsanto Fund Deborah Patterson
- o Vice-President for External Affairs at AT&T Debra Hollingsworth
- o Brown Shoe Wholesale President Gary Rich and wife Diana
- o Chesterfield Mayor John Nations and wife Bridget
- o Executive Director of the Regional Arts Commission Jill McGuire and husband Daniel

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

STAGES will present its first ever holiday production of *Little Women, The Musical* from December 5 – 20 at The Roberts Orpheum Theatre in Downtown St. Louis. The 23rd season of mainstage musical theatre productions in Kirkwood in 2009 will include *Little Shop of Horrors* (May 29 – June 28), *The Drowsy Chaperone* (July 17 – August 16), *Guys & Dolls* (September 4 – October 4), and the soon to be announced 2009 Family Production.

STAGES is also 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 theater.

Editor's Note: Event photographs available upon request or online at
www.stagesstlouis.org/getinvolved/events/APPLAUSE08Photos.cfm