

LINCOLN PARK

PERFORMINGARTSCENTER

*** MEDIA ADVISORY ***

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For Immediate Release

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Lincoln Park to Host “Pennsylvania Summer School of the Arts”

Seeks to fill void left by cancellation of Governor’s School of the Arts this summer

The Lincoln Park Performing Arts Center is planning a two-week “Pennsylvania Summer School of the Arts” to fill the void left by the cancellation of the Pennsylvania Governor’s School of the Arts. Lincoln Park is working to partner with other organizations to keep the mission of providing a free, high-quality residential arts education experience for Pennsylvania students available during the current economic downturn. The dates of the program are July 12 – July 24.

Last month, the Pennsylvania Department of Education announced that funding for the Pennsylvania Governor’s Schools of Excellence (of which the arts school was the first) would be eliminated in a move to cut costs and address a looming state budget deficit. The Pennsylvania Governor’s School of the Arts was founded in 1973 and offers a five-week intensive study in music, theater, dance, creative writing, and the visual arts. Alumni include Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Aaron J. Kernis, actor Kevin Bacon and author Alice Sebold.

“The board and staff of Lincoln Park are unanimous in our desire to do something to keep the mission and good work of the Governor’s School of the Arts alive and active this summer, and to offer Pennsylvania students the opportunity to engage their artistic interests and develop their talents and abilities,” says Stephen Catanzarite, managing director of the Beaver County-based performing arts center.

Catanzarite, who developed the idea for the Pennsylvania Summer School of the Arts with noted ballet instructor and Lincoln Park artist-in-residence Kenneth Nickel, says the Center will offer an innovative program of study in music, theater, dance, creative writing, and visual/media arts for approximately 125-150 students this summer. All applicants to the Pennsylvania Governor School of the Arts this year will automatically be considered for the Lincoln Park program. The Pennsylvania Department of Education is in the process of forwarding those applications to Lincoln Park, and Catanzarite says he hopes to notify students by May 1 as to whether or not they have been accepted.

Catanzarite, an alumnus of the 1985 Pennsylvania Governor’s School of the Arts, says that in addition to being a part of the Center’s education-based mission, organizing and offering this opportunity is a return on the investment made in the construction of the facility by the state.

“The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania made a significant investment in the development of the Lincoln Park Performing Arts Center through the Department of Community and Economic Development, so we have a duty and responsibility to step up and offer something to serve the families of Pennsylvania who made that investment possible,” he says.

Catanzarite received a letter from Secretary of Education Dr. Gerald Zahorchak last week expressing support for Lincoln Park’s initiative, and that other officials at the Pennsylvania Department of Education have provided guidance and direction. The offices of State Senator Elder Vogel, State Senator Jeffrey Piccola, State Senator Jane Orie, and State Representative Jim Marshall have also provided valuable assistance in moving the proposal forward.

Catanzarite also received a pledge of support from Dr. Barry Bittman, CEO of the Meadville-based Yamaha Institute for Music and Wellness, to provide assistance in developing a series of “out-of-the-box” workshops and training sessions. Catanzarite says he has also been in touch with Doug Woods, Director of the Pennsylvania Governor’s School of the Arts, and that Woods supports the Lincoln Park program and has offered to help in any way possible.

“Our goal is not to take over the Governor’s School of the Arts, but to provide this opportunity as a ‘stop-gap measure’ until funding for the program is, I hope, restored,” Catanzarite says.

“Attending the Governor’s School of the Arts was a life-changing experience for me, and I know we can provide that same sort of experience, in a different way, for students this summer.”

The Lincoln Park Performing Arts Center is located 45 minutes northwest of Pittsburgh in Midland, Beaver County. The state-of-the-art facility opened in 2006 and is home to the Lincoln Park Performing Arts Charter School, a Pennsylvania public charter school providing a state-approved academic program along with professional training in music, theater, dance, creative writing, and media arts. The Center is also home to the Henry Mancini Arts Academy, and presents a variety of professional and student performances each year, include a 3-concert series with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

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