

For Immediate Release

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Legacy Gift propels new Youth Arts Center

(Madison, WI) – In a remarkable commitment of support, Pleasant T. Rowland has pledged \$20M towards the building of the new Madison Youth Arts Center, effectively ensuring it will move into the next stage of development. The new Center will be located on East Mifflin St., across from Lapham School in the Tenney-Lapham neighborhood. The new 65,000 square foot Center is targeted to open in fall 2020.

The Center will be a place where creativity and connections among young people thrive through the arts. It will be the permanent home for Children's Theater of Madison and Madison Youth Choirs, and provide much needed space for the dozens of local art groups that provide opportunities for all youth, regardless of physical or economic ability, to engage in a diverse range of theater, music, dance, and visual arts programming in our community.

"It is my hope that Madison Youth Arts Center will give all children in our community the opportunity to engage in creative expression in a place that affirms their value, honors their voices, and reflects their dreams," says Pleasant Rowland.

A capital campaign committee, headed by Diane Ballweg, has been formed to raise the funds needed to complete the construction and establish an operating endowment fund to ensure sustainability.

*"Youth art groups have been searching for a place to call **home** for decades, wandering from rental halls, to warehouse facilities, to abandoned office spaces. This is a dream come true! It will enhance diverse opportunities for young people to come together to share their talents, skills, and imagination through the arts. What an extraordinary gift!"* says Diane Ballweg.

Vision

Strategic planning over the past five years has identified the need for a dedicated facility to provide programming, performance, administrative, and community space for youth arts organizations in Madison. The Madison Youth Arts Center will be a magnet for youth arts of all disciplines to be nurtured and celebrated in the center of Dane County. Along with so many others, CTM Artistic Director Roseann Sheridan has had this dream since her arrival at CTM in 2007. *"Madison has the need and the ability to support a facility like this, and we've dreamed of a day that this would happen. Thanks to this incredible legacy gift from Pleasant Rowland, and the overwhelming enthusiasm of the community, that day looks to be near. The impact this facility will have on youth in our community will be remarkable, positively impacting the lives of children and families in south-central Wisconsin for generations!"*

Community Involvement

An informational meeting to share the vision of the Madison Youth Arts Center and solicit input for additional collaboration and building use was held in November. Over 70 people attended representing more than 20 arts groups who serve youth. Since then, more groups have expressed

interest in using space in the building, which will house rehearsal studios, classrooms, offices, shared workspaces, outdoor event space, a 150-seat flexible performance space, and a 300-seat theater. Potential user groups are invited to record their interest and learn more about the space at madisonyoutharts.org.

“It will be a thrill to see students from every neighborhood of the city filing into the building to explore opportunities in music, drama, or dance. We’re committed to the idea of a place where affordable space for programming is available to small non-profits and volunteer organizations working with youth.” says Mike Ross, Executive/Artistic Director of Madison Youth Choirs. *“We know small steps can make significant impacts.”*

In a statement to the Planning Commission, the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association shared its support for the project: *“The youth arts center design and the mission of its component organizations were overwhelmingly supported [by TLNA].”*

The Project

A separate non-profit corporation, Madison Youth Arts Center, Inc. has been formed to own and oversee governance and operations of the new facility. The Center is modeled after the tremendously successful Milwaukee Youth Arts Center, which houses First Stage Children’s Theater and the Milwaukee Youth Symphony, as well as hosting dozens of Milwaukee arts groups who serve young people.

We’re excited to help meet the strong need identified in Madison’s 2013 Cultural Plan for a dedicated facility providing space for local arts groups, particularly those serving youth,” says CTM’s Executive Director Allen Ebert. *“We are so fortunate that Stone House Development, Eppstein Uhen architects, and CG Schmidt construction are working with us to make this dream a reality.”*

For questions or more information about this press release, please contact Allen Ebert, CTM, allen@ctmtheater.org or Mike Ross, MYC (mross@madisonyouthchoirs.org).

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