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STAGES ST. LOUIS Receives Maritz Inc. Grant to Launch Dynamic New Teen Program!

In the continuing goal to expand the depth and reach of STAGES ST. LOUIS' impact on young people and their participation in the musical theatre art form, **Team STAGES**, a new initiative to identify and cultivate talented teens from St. Louis county and city, is poised to premiere during the months of November and December, 2007. Maritz Inc. is providing a \$30,000 grant to fund the **Team STAGES** program.

"The St. Louis community and Maritz have a long-standing appreciation for arts and education," said Beth Rusert, vice president of public relations for Maritz Inc. "Maritz is proud to partner with **Team STAGES** as they strive to create a new St. Louis tradition that engages, entertains and educates our community's young people in the arts."

"Long in the planning, **Team STAGES** is a logical offshoot of our very successful performing arts academy which opened in 2004. Due to its fully designed artistic nature, **Team STAGES** will be a unique entity in the teen performance arena in St. Louis. We are thrilled that Maritz Inc. has come on board with this very exciting project," stated Jack Lane, Executive Producer, STAGES ST. LOUIS.

The **Team STAGES** cast, ages 12-16, will perform fully staged 30-minute Winter, Spring, and Summer musical revues developed by the artistic team under the direction of Michael Hamilton, Artistic Director of STAGES. Each revue will entertain and educate both young and adult audiences about the art form of American musical theatre. **Team STAGES** will open with a Winter holiday revue performing at corporate functions, civic events, schools and youth organizations. Rehearsals will begin in March for a second revue, highlighting the evolution of American musical theatre and incorporating selections from STAGES 2008 season. Decidedly more educational in their approach, the Spring and Summer revues will primarily perform in academic settings both locally and regionally from April through July. **Team STAGES** programs will promote the image of STAGES and its sponsors and create exemplary community role models of the entire **Team STAGES** cast.

The **Team STAGES** artistic staff is looking for a wide range of personalities with a vision towards creating a diverse, but cohesive team of 12 individuals and 4 swing/understudy performers. Candidates will be assessed on proficiencies in dance, voice, acting and overall stage presence. Additional talents in acrobatics, magic, juggling, etc. will be viewed as a plus.

Open call auditions for **Team STAGES** will be held on Saturday, September 15, 2007 at 9:00 AM at Shaw VPA Elementary (5329 Columbia Ave., St. Louis) and Saturday, September 22, 2007 at 9:00 AM at Maritz Inc. (1400 South Highway Dr., Fenton). **For complete audition details, please visit the STAGES website at www.stagesstlouis.org.**

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