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NEWS RELEASE

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SUMMER PERFORMING ARTS ACADEMY ATTRACTS KIDS FROM FAR AND WIDE

Johnstown, PA (June 15, 2010) – School may be out for the summer, but Richland Performing Arts Center is bursting with song, dance and acting from the musical favorite *Guys & Dolls Jr.* The Learning Lamp has teamed up with the Richland Performing Arts Club for the third year to engage 65 students from ten school districts in learning music, dance and acting skills.

The program will conclude with live performances of the Broadway Junior version of the musical *Guys & Dolls*. The performances will be at Richland Performing Arts Center on June 25 at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, June 26 at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$5 for students and \$8 for adults and can be bought online at www.richlandpac.com or by phone at (814) 269-0300.

The summer performing arts academy is a two week program for students in grades 6-12. It runs from June 14 - 26 with eight hours each day of acting, dance and music classes. Scott D. Miller, director of the program, explains the program is designed to give students a taste of professional theater. “The kids start by auditioning for parts and graduate to presenting a full, live performance,” he said.

Miller has been an actor, singer, lighting designer, technical director, director and producer for over fifteen years in musicals, plays, and dance. Miller serves as the Director of Technology and Director of Richland Performing Arts Center at Richland School District.

The program started in 2008 when The Learning Lamp received a grant from the Pennsylvania Rural Arts Alliance to launch a musical theater camps for students across the Allegheny region. Each year the program has reached full capacity and has grown from 21 kids in 2006 to 65 enrolled this year.

“We have nearly a dozen school districts represented, and one student who travels from another state to take part in the program,” said Leah Spangler, executive director of The Learning Lamp. Participants are from Richland, Westmont Hilltop, Portage, Greater Johnstown, Conemaugh Township, Forest Hills, Ligonier Valley, Windber, Conemaugh Valley and Central Cambria school districts.

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The official registration and financial information of The Learning Lamp may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free with in Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. The Learning Lamp is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, donations to which are tax deductible to the fullest extent permitted by law.

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“One girl drives over an hour each day to be here and we’ve had 18 kids return all three years,” said Miller. He added, “Two students even come in from Ohio and West Virginia and stay with family specifically for this program.” Miller went on to explain that some participants have never been on stage before, but the program is designed for kids on all levels. His hope is that students will better understand the performing arts and become better actors and actresses by taking part in the program.

As one watches the kids practice and perform it is easy to realize they’re gaining more than just acting experience. They’re building new relationships, learning to interact and work together, while also laughing, using their imagination and learning everything from history to new words.

“What is an overture?” one student asks. Miller enthusiastically responds, “An overture is the very beginning of the music. Now remember tell your story to the audience.”

Another student asks, “What do you mean tell your story?” Miller replies, “Tell your story through the song. Remember you’re turning into a performer.”

Previously the program produced other Broadway classics such as *Annie Jr.* and *Into the Woods Jr.* “This year we chose *Guys and Dolls* because it is just a fun classic,” Miller said. “The community is very supportive of the arts. I hope they come to show support, but also for the entertainment.”

For more information regarding show details, contact the Richland Performing Arts Center at (814) 269-0300 or visit www.richlandpac.com. For details regarding The Learning Lamp and its summer camp programs for children of all ages, call (814) 262-0732 or visit www.thelearninglamp.org.

The Learning Lamp is a nonprofit agency focused on providing children with the support they need to succeed in school. The Learning Lamp offers preschool, child care, before and after school programs, tutoring, SAT prep and summer camps for children in grades PreK to 12.