



## **Father Ryan Arts Center**

*of Focus On Renewal*

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## **Press Release**

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### **Pittsburgh Foundation Grant Sets the Stage for Children's Theater at the Father Ryan Arts Center**

**McKees Rocks, PA, April 07, 2009** – The Father Ryan Arts Center of Focus On Renewal was awarded a \$27,000 grant from the Pittsburgh Foundation to create a professional children's theater program, develop and promote an interest in stage production and acting, provide outreach activities to local schools and build audience participation and loyalty.

As a result, the Father Ryan Arts Center introduced live theater and planted the seeds for a children's theater company in the Sto-Rox neighborhood last December with the production of "A Christmas Carol" and has been implementing the other components of the grant throughout 2009.

This spring, the first class in a series of theater-related curriculum courses entitled Children's Musical Theater was offered to develop students' imaginations, spontaneity and stage presence using the basic elements of theater, music and dance. Children enrolled in the class were encouraged and invited to audition for the upcoming Father Ryan Arts Center production of "Seussical" (currently in rehearsal) debuting weekends in the BAVERSO Theater May 8 through May 17, 2009. Six out of the 10 children participating in the class have been cast in "Seussical," including the lead child role of JoJo. Mary Randolph, Children's Musical Theater instructor, said she was impressed by their energy and commitment to the program. "Many of the children in this class have been waiting for an opportunity to share, grow and express themselves artistically, and although they may be at different levels individually, as a group they respond to lessons and exercises with confidence and an open mind," Ms. Randolph said.

Additionally, members from the "Seussical" cast have also scheduled visits to local school districts throughout the month of April to perform musical selections from the show in an effort to generate interest, enthusiasm and participation in the program. The Father Ryan Arts Center will also offer matinee performances of "Seussical" for area schools in May. In collaboration with theater experts from Actors Civic Theater, the Father Ryan Arts Center exposes students and community members to different forms of self expression while cultivating audience participation with affordable, quality performances through high artistic standards in the months and years ahead.

*Father Ryan Arts Center of Focus On Renewal*

“We are on target to reach and even exceed the goals set forth by the Pittsburgh Foundation grant. The community has responded enthusiastically to our theater productions and local children are excited about being a part of something both challenging and enriching,” said Pat Moran, Father Ryan Arts Center director.

For more information about the Children’s Theater Program or to learn how your school can participate, please call 412.771.3052 or visit [www.FatherRyanArtsCenter.org](http://www.FatherRyanArtsCenter.org).

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*Focus on Renewal (F.O.R.) is a non-profit human service agency that has served the McKees Rocks community for 40 years, and is nationally recognized as a model of comprehensive services to low-income people of all ages. The Father Ryan Arts Center of Focus On Renewal is supported by the generous contributions of Point Park University, Anthony M. Musmanno Funeral Home, Ohio Valley General Hospital, NIRA Consulting Engineers, Inc., Pierogies Plus, Inc., Allegheny Financial Group, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts*