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Services to Youth

Theater ROcKs – Reach Out to Kids Program

Rebecca H. McKeel, Chair of Services to Youth
Greater Kansas City (MO) Chapter

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Link Glenda Masingale Manson
19th Central Area Director

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Background Information –The Need

- Schools eliminated live theatre from school trips.
- Trip to live theatre performance became a luxury.
- Financial pressure forced schools to make difficult decisions on how to allocate scarce funds.
- The Greater Kansas City Links attacked problem of scarce resources as a motivator for action.

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Mission/Vision
Program Implementation

- The Greater Kansas City Links developed a partnership with the Theater League of Kansas City.
- Partnership designed to create an opportunity to address the issue for urban youth in Kansas City
- Reduce limited exposure to live theatrical performances
- To serve as a catalyst to promote stronger critical thinking skills, exhibit increased empathy, display higher levels of tolerance and appreciation for the arts

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Benefits of the Partnership with The Theater League

- Eight (8) grants in five (5) years
- Resources received - $37,500.00
- Enabling over 4,500 students to attend performances
- “Theater ROcKs” is the chapter’s way to “Reach Out To Kids.”

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Goals and Objectives of Program

- 1. By the end of 2015-16 the attendance of students will increase by 70% as measured by the attendance sheets and schools participating.
- 2. By the end of each performance, the youths attending will be enlightened and will develop enthusiasm for continued attendance at live theatre performances.

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Goals/Objectives of Program

- 3. To provide the underserved youth with first time attendance
- 4. To acknowledge and explore career opportunities

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Program Description

- Program serves African American youth
- Early childhood through 12th grades
- Low Income families in Greater Kansas City
- Students who attend are underserved youth in financially strapped school districts
- Schools that have eliminated most arts programs, etc.

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Participating School's Responsibilities

- The invited school must agree to prepare students for performance.
- Must use the written lesson plan/curriculum guide about the play
- Must attend performance "Theatre RAP" session
- All students must write summary of performance.
- All students must write thank you letter to chapter and funder.

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METHODS USED TO DETERMINE GROUPS

- TARGETED GROUPS SERVED BASED ON:
  - Income levels
  - Location of schools
  - School demographics
  - Percentage (90%) free/reduced meals
  - State test scores, grade card, chapter input – total served 4,630

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QUESTIONS?

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Thank You!

Thank you for expressing an interest in the program that has brought so much joy to the members of The Greater Kansas City (MO) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated.

For the past five years, the Theater League has been a great resource. We have gone from receiving $1,000 per year to $15,000 for the past two years. In addition to the money received, we have enriched the lives of hundreds of children who would not have experienced these cultural arts programs.

To show appreciation for the Theater League's generosity, as a chapter, we partner with the theater to create opportunities for adults to widen their horizons in the arts world by promoting some of the performances they bring into town, i.e. last year we received over 500 tickets to sell for MOTOWN: THE MUSICAL and this year we have an opportunity to occupy over 500 seats for RAGTIME: THE MUSICAL.

In addition, to broaden the world for children we are also diversifying and creating a love for the arts for adults in the Kansas City community.

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