



We Need Your Help

Tight economic times severely impact Arts Center contributions

I'm happy to report our 2008-09 "People's Choice" Theater Series has been a success. At the opening of our premiere show of the season, *La Cage aux Folles*, we had already sold over 3,500 subscriptions – more than any other year in the history of the Arts Center.

But unfortunately, ticket sales are only half the story. The faltering economy has caused many of our supporters to discontinue or severely reduce their donations to the Arts Center. So when contributions fall off, we are forced to cut back programming.

The impact of this is much greater than most people realize. Audiences see a crowded theater and assume we are doing quite well financially. But like most non-profit arts organizations, we rely on donations to supplement as much as half of our budget – and half of your ticket price.

Many, many of you have commented that our shows are as good or better than productions you have seen on Broadway, in London or at the Kennedy Center ... and while we strive for the highest level of quality, we have been able to keep our ticket prices much lower than these venues due to contributions subsidizing the other half of the ticket cost.

It's donations that enable us to produce Broadway-style shows like *South Pacific* and *Steel Magnolias*. Without the financial support of our donors, we could not present internationally renowned artists such as three-time Grammy-winner Ramsey Lewis, the Dance Theatre of Harlem Ensemble or the hot new Irish group Celtic Crossroads.

Nor could we offer field trip performances of our shows at the drastically reduced ticket price of \$6, or ArtsReach, a free arts learning program that exposes students to a wide range of art disciplines through our

in-school, pre-school, after-school and special needs programs.

We couldn't present exhibits like *Storybook Art: Telling Tales with Pictures*, which features illustrations created by some of today's top children's book authors, including Dr. Seuss and Stephen Huneck.

Donations also help pay for our four free annual community events – the *Community Christmas Tree Lighting*, *A Taste of Gullah*, *Youth ArtsFest* and the *Flag Day Festival*.

In addition to programming costs, we spend more than \$400,000 annually to operate this wonderful community facility, enjoyed by Lowcountry residents and visitors alike. It's important to understand that the taxpayers of Beaufort County pay nothing to help maintain the building. It falls on all of us to foot the bill for its upkeep and all capital improvements.

We don't have a large corporate presence on the island able to make up the loss in donations. And so we rely on you, our patrons and supporters, to do your part and contribute to the Arts Center to ensure it will remain the cultural asset it is today.

We also encourage you to participate in our upcoming Wine Auction & Celebration – our biggest fundraiser of the year. Proceeds from this popular benefit support our many education and outreach programs.

In these tough economic times, your contribution to the Arts Center is more important than ever. Thank you for your continued support. We wish you the very best for the holiday season and a prosperous new year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kathleen P. Bateson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Kathleen P. Bateson
President/CEO