

Midland Center for the Arts
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Community Leaders Lend Financial Support and Creativity
to Midland Center for the Arts**

MIDLAND MI (February 24, 2010) – A one-of-a-kind work of art was unveiled this morning at Midland Center for the Arts. The work, titled “Act One,” was created by 200 local artists this morning...in only an hour. In reality, the artists were those corporate and regional community leaders who attended the Center’s fundraising breakfast. The attendees were each asked to create a “work of art,” not knowing their piece would be joined with the others to create a masterpiece. The work will be on display in the Center lobby by the large auditorium entrance.

“This is an historic occasion for us, as this is the first time the Center has embarked on a centralized fundraising program,” says Bill Henninger, Midland Center for the Arts president and chief executive officer. “We are excited because more than 50 percent of today’s attendees are new to our donor base, and this is just the beginning of our development efforts. We are also excited because the attendees represent a broad array of region leaders that understand the need of passing the legacy of the Center to the next generation.”

Community support of the Center has been steady throughout the years, with the majority of funding from foundations, corporations and private donors. However, the recent economic meltdown resulted in an immediate loss in promised funds for Center operations of over \$1 million annually because of reduced portfolios and dividend income. This has forced leadership to make drastic reductions in operating expenses, public hours and programming. Unfortunately, existing funding sources aren’t sufficient to bridge the gap that remains after the reductions.

“We have set an ambitious goal of expanding our donor base and cultivating \$1 million in donations over the next three years,” says Don Sheets, Midland Center for the Arts chairman of the board. “Based on the commitment shown today, we have made tremendous progress toward achieving that goal.”

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“We are asking the Midland community and the region to come together to keep alive the tradition of providing the highest quality entertainment and exhibits. What we expect in the region is to experience opportunities that only exist in a much larger city,” says Henninger. “We hope to continue giving kids of all ages creative opportunities to perform, create music and art, experience their local history and make science come alive.”

Midland Center for the Arts is an integral part of what makes Midland, and the Great Lakes Bay Region, a special place to live and work.

- In 2009, the Center had an estimated impact to the community of \$9.5 million and supported 260 jobs.
- Approximately 160,000 people visited the Center during the 2008/2009 season – from all 50 states, six Canadian provinces and Europe. Nearly 19,000 of these visitors were students.
- Almost 45 percent of the visitors come from outside Midland County, impacting restaurants, hotels, gas stations and other local businesses.

In the late 1960s, Alden B. Dow dreamed of a place that would promote the relationship between science and art. His vision was bigger and reached farther than anyone could have imagined. From a young boy who discovers his passion for science, to a teenage girl who learned that she can take the stage and transform herself, to a senior citizen who comes to the Center two or three times a year to see a concert – the Center has impacted lives in countless ways.

About Midland Center for the Arts

Midland Center for the Arts, Inc. is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation formed under the laws of the State of Michigan. The Center’s structure houses the staffs for MATRIX:MIDLAND, Music Society, Midland Symphony Orchestra, Theatre Guild, Midland County Historical Society and the Alden B. Dow Museum of Science and Art. Our combined mission is to provide resources for the education, entertainment and inspiration of the Great Lakes Bay Region through art, science, history, performances and exhibits. Activities at the Center are supported in part by the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. For the latest Center news, visit our web site at www.mcfta.org.

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