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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**HERSHEY AREA PLAYHOUSE THEATRE ACADEMY
INTRODUCES FIRST RESIDENT YOUTH THEATRE COMPANY**

HERSHEY, Pennsylvania—June 25, 2008 - Since its inception in 1999, Hershey Area Playhouse has been committed to providing high quality theatre experiences serving the needs of the young actors. It is no surprise then that the Playhouse is proud to announce yet another addition to its excellent line up of educational programming – a youth theatre performance-training program entitled, Hershey Area Playhouse Theatre Academy Players.

Professional youth theatre director Ms. Cory Wilkerson will be leading the Academy. Wilkerson is no stranger to the Playhouse, having directed three Playhouse productions: *The Sound of Music*, *Annie* and *Oliver!* – all featuring area youth.

“I love directing plays with roles for young people in them,” says Wilkerson, “and I am so excited about this opportunity to begin a youth theatre troupe right here in Hershey.”

The Theatre Academy Players will be open only to young people in grades seven through twelve. Interested youth will enroll as students of the program on a tuition basis, meeting twice weekly each semester. Through this initiative, the students can become immersed in the experience of live theatre at their own level, while experiencing material that allows them to stretch as young actors.

Performances will be held at the end of each semester – twice yearly – with schedules and rehearsal times revolving around typical youth availability.

The inaugural class offering begins in late August of 2008. Class size is limited to 25, so early registration is strongly encouraged. Class tuition will be \$295 per student, per semester, which includes the twelve weeks of training plus an on-stage performance experience. Registration for the Theatre Academy Players will open in late August with a walk in registration and parent information meeting held at the Playhouse on Saturday, August 23, 2008 from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon. Registration and more information for the Theatre Academy Players is available at HersheyAreaPlayhouse.com or by contacting Board Member Randy Cline at rkc4@comcast.net.

All classes and performances will be held at Hershey Area Playhouse at Country Meadows, located on Sand Hill Road at Cherry Drive in Hershey, PA.

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Hershey Area Playhouse (HersheyAreaPlayhouse.com) is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization dedicated to providing residents of the community with an opportunity to participate in the creation and production of a theatrical experience. Since its inception in 1999, Hershey Area Playhouse has staged 29 productions at numerous venues around the Hershey area. In April 2007, the Playhouse opened its new permanent home, Hershey Area Playhouse at Country Meadows.