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marketing@HersheyAreaPlayhouse.com***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****HERSHEY AREA PLAYHOUSE THEATRE ACADEMY
PLAYERS PRESENTS AN ORIGINAL PRODUCTION**

HERSHEY, Pennsylvania — November 12, 2009 — Do you remember the Hershey trolley? Did you know that the Hershey Bears used to have a poster girl? Anyone remember walking to school across corn fields, Mexican jumping beans or seeing their sweetheart off to war? These precious memories and more are shared in this lovely piece that explores seven decades of living through the eyes of some dear friends and letter writers. Throughout the course of the play the six friends experience and explore all of the challenges, triumphs, joys and sorrow that make up a life well lived.

Hershey Area Playhouse is proud to unveil the latest in its series of student driven productions – *Dear Friend* – an original piece written by youth actors under the direction of Ms. Cory Wilkerson. The young actors pulled their material from the memories and stories of some dynamic residents of Country Meadows retirement community. This community outreach program pairs young people with octogenarians to collect oral histories as fodder for drama. Once the interviews were completed, the students worked collaboratively in the studio to find a theme and central conflict that drove the dramatic action of the play – by turning the narratives into letters from one dear friend to another. In these letters the six friends explore their and reflect on their lives as they sort through decades

of memories and ask the question “what is truly important to me?” We in the audience are left to reach our own conclusions as we listen spellbound to their stories.

“The students have spent hours meeting and collecting anecdotes and memories,” says Wilkerson. “Together with their drama partners from Country Meadows, they have produced a sensitive original play that is not to be missed! It is a gem of memorabilia and tidbits combined with the stuff of life that will bring a tear to your eye. You will leave uplifted and renewed.”

The play, which runs approximately forty five minutes, stars youth actors Emma Adams, Sarah Bixler, Katie Kanoff, Aaron Match, Maura McErlean and Kate Wenner. The performance will be held at 7:30 pm on Friday, November 20, 2009 at Hershey Area Playhouse at Country Meadows, located on Sand Hill Road at Cherry Drive in Hershey, PA. Doors open at 7:00 pm, and admission is a pay-what-you-will donation to benefit the education and outreach programs of the Playhouse.

Hershey Area Playhouse Theatre Academy Players is a professional youth theatre troupe designed to provide training for students interested in a career in the performing arts. Contact Randall Cline at 717.497.2315 or TheatreAcademy@HersheyAreaPlayhouse.com if you have questions about this production.

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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 32 productions at numerous venues around the Hershey area. In April 2007, the Playhouse opened its new permanent home, Hershey Area Playhouse at Country Meadows.