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For Immediate Release  
November 28, 2017  
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### Home Made Theater Offers “Play It Forward” Initiative

Home Made Theater, Saratoga’s resident theater company, is pleased to announce its *Play It Forward* initiative. *Play It Forward* provides children in need the opportunity to attend a live theatrical performance, HMT’s holiday production of A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

During their annual subscription and membership drive, HMT asked their subscribers and members to contribute an additional \$12 (the cost of a child’s ticket to their December production). HMT matched every donation received. Thanks to the generosity of their donors, complimentary tickets are being distributed to area non-profit organizations with a focus on children in need.

Why a program like *Play It Forward*? A study by the University of Arkansas showed that live theater events enhance literary knowledge, tolerance, and empathy among children who attend. The NEA identifies both cost and access as major barriers to theater attendance. A recent survey done by The Guardian found that 20% of schools have reduced funding for the arts and arts experiences, and 9% have eliminated these kinds of programs entirely due to lack of funding.

In response to HMT’s program, Fern Hurley, Community Outreach Director of the Captain Youth and Family Services program said “Many of the youth we work with would not otherwise have the chance to attend a theater production.” Other organizations participating in the initiative are Saratoga Mentoring Program, and the Franklin Community Center.

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