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LYRIC ARTS WORKING TO HELP CHILDREN HAITI AND IN ANOKA COUNTY

ANOKA, Minn – In an effort to help displaced children in Haiti, Lyric Arts will be donating a portion of its ticket sales of the upcoming run of *Oliver!*, February 19–March 21, to Feed My Starving Children, a local nonprofit that packages and delivers food to children in need. Each ticket sold will purchase a meal for a child affected by the devastating earthquake in Haiti.

Feed My Starving Children has set a goal of delivering 3 million meals to the quake-stricken country, and Lyric Arts wants to do its part. A single bag of food from Feed My Staving Children costs a dollar to produce and feeds six children. “We cannot even begin to comprehend the devastation in Haiti, but we can do our part to help the situation,” commented Managing Director, Laura Tahja Johnson.

With its latest production focusing on the plight of orphans, it follows that Lyric Arts is focusing its efforts on helping the tens of thousands of children orphaned by the cataclysmic quake. “We can all do little things that make a great impact in the world no matter how far we are from those affected,” said Tahja Johnson. Though a nonprofit itself, Lyric Arts hopes to do what it can to help the children of this destitute nation.

Lyric Arts is also working to help families in its own community. Throughout the run of *Oliver!*, Lyric Arts will be collecting donations for the ACBC Food Shelf. Audience members can bring canned goods and condiments to benefit a local nonprofit. “Many of our friends and neighbors are struggling right now, so we want to do what we can to support children in our community,” commented Tahja Johnson. ACBC Food Shelf provides emergency food and clothing to all persons in need in the area of Anoka, Andover, Coon Rapids, Nowthen, Oak Grove, Ramsey, and a portion of Champlin. During 2009, 42% of those receiving help from the food shelf were children. This is just one more way Lyric Arts and its audience members can help children in need.

Oliver! is the musical adaptation of the much-loved Charles Dickens’ story, *Oliver Twist*. *Oliver!* follows the adventures of an innocent and kind-hearted orphan who, in his quest to find a loving home, falls in league with a troop of young pickpockets and a few unsavory adults. This popular musical features such well known songs as: *Food, Glorious Food, As Long As He Needs Me*, and *Where is Love*. *Oliver!* begins Friday, February 19 and runs through Sunday, March 21.

Tickets for *Oliver!* are available now. Tickets are \$18, \$16 for seniors and students, and \$20 for box seats. Tickets are available on the Lyric Arts website, www.lyricarts.org, or by calling 763-422-1838,

Lyric Arts is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization formed in 1995 that presents theater for the community, by the community. As the only full time year-round theater in the northern suburbs, Lyric Arts provides access to theater for hundreds of volunteers, artists, and tens of thousands of audience members annually. The Lyric Arts Company of Anoka does this with the support of donors throughout the area. Donations from individuals and corporations comprise up to 40 percent of the organization’s annual budget.

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Located at 420 East Main Street in Anoka, Minnesota, Lyric Arts Company of Anoka presents an average of 10 to 12 productions per season, including an evening of one-act plays, and offering a unique mix of comedies, dramas, classics, musicals, and children's productions and now acoustic concerts. In addition to offering theater productions, Lyric Arts also provides theater workshops, weekday matinees for schoolchildren, touring performances, and educational outreach programs. For more information, please contact Joanna Diem at 763-433-2510, ext. 102 or at joanna@lyricarts.org

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