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HOWARD COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL PRESENTS THE 2012 *CELEBRATION OF THE ARTS IN HOWARD COUNTY*

Ellicott City, MD – Howard County's signature event, the *Celebration of the Arts in Howard County* gala, will be held on Saturday, March 24, 2012 at the Peter and Elizabeth Horowitz Visual and Performing Arts Center at Howard Community College. Enjoy a reception including culinary delights from area restaurants and caterers, bid on fabulous works of art by local artists, and enjoy performances throughout the Grand Hall and Studio Theatre. At 8pm guests will be invited inside the Smith Theatre for the live presentation of the 2011 Howie Awards and the 2012 Rising Star Competition, or they can enjoy the show via simulcast in the Studio Theatre. The 2012 Arts Council Arts Scholarship recipients will also be announced. **Tickets will be available for purchase in January 2012.**

County Executive Ken and Jaki Ulman will serve as Honorary Chairs and Richard W. Story, Senior Vice President for Marketing of JPB Enterprises, Inc., will serve as Event Emcee.

The Rising Star Competition showcases ten young performing artists (ages 18-35) who are living, working or studying in Howard County – vying for a no-strings-attached $5,000 professional development award. The *Celebration* audience will choose the winner!

The 2011 Howie Awards will also be given out on the Main Stage at the *Celebration of the Arts*. The Howie Awards are presented annually to the Outstanding Artist, Outstanding Arts Educator, and Outstanding Business or Community Supporter of the Arts. Nominees are judged on their long-term contributions and the significant impact they have on the artistic life of Howard County.

Sponsorship and volunteer opportunities are available. *Celebration* tickets, available in January 2012, are $100 (Reception and live performance in Smith Theatre) and $50 (Reception and simulcast in Studio Theatre).

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The Howard County Arts Council is a non-profit organization whose mission is to serve the citizens of Howard County by fostering the arts, artists and arts organizations. The Howard County Arts Council receives major grants from the Howard County Government and the Maryland State Arts Council and sustaining annual support from corporate, foundation and individual sponsors. The Howard County Arts Council offices are located at the Howard County Center for the Arts, 8510 High Ridge Road, Ellicott City, MD 21043. The Howard County Center for the Arts is an accessible facility encouraging the full participation of individuals with disabilities. For information, call 410.313.ARTS (2787), fax 410.313.2790, or email info@hocoarts.org. TDD: 711