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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Photos available upon request

## **STAR LAUNCHED AT 12<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF THE ARTS IN HOWARD COUNTY**

Columbia, MD--On Saturday, April 25, nearly 700 business and arts leaders attended the Arts Council's **12<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration of the Arts in Howard County** at the Jim Rouse Theatre in Columbia. This year's annual benefit gala raised over \$89,000 and an additional \$80,000 in donated goods and services for the arts in Howard County.

A highlight of the evening is the 2009 Rising Star Emerging Performing Artist Awards one of the nine Rising Star finalists performing on the Rouse stage were voted by the audience to receive a "no strings attached" professional development award of \$5,000. The winner was actor and Atholton High School alum, **DeWanda Wise** with a monologue excerpt from *In the Continuum* a play written by NYU students about HIV/AIDS.

The 2008 Howie Awards were presented onstage for outstanding leadership in the Arts in Howard County. **Wayne Larrivey**, director of *No Boundaries*, received the Howie for Outstanding Arts Educator. Fine artist and teacher **David Zuccarini**, received the Howie for Outstanding Artist. Zuccarini thanked his family, students, fellow artists, and the Arts Council, "I always tell my students that art is not a team sport...artists still need a support system. In Howard County that support comes from the Art Council...You have always fostered an environment where we can make art. After that, it is up to us." **Richard B. Talkin** received the award for Outstanding Business Supporter of the Arts. **Doris and Dr. Claude Ligon** received the Legacy in the Arts award for the positive impact they have had on Howard County in founding the African Art Museum of Maryland. The Arts Council also announced the **2009 Arts Scholarship Recipients**: Michelle Patschke, Visual Art, a senior at Reservoir High School; Natalie Scimonelli, Vocal Music, a senior at Oakland Mills High School; Eve Mobley, Visual Art, a senior at Glenelg High School; and Megan Clark, Visual Art, a senior at Glenelg High School.

The crowd was also entertained by guest performers, **Hua Sha Chinese Theatre**, **Caleb Jones**, a 2006 Rising Star Award winner and ten-year-old singing sensation, **Maya Goldman** as well as by event host **Richard W. Story**, CEO of the Howard County Economic Development Authority. **Rand Griffin**, CEO of Corporate Office Properties Trust (COPT) served as the event's Honorary Chair. Over 20 of the county's finest restaurants and caterers provided food and competed for Best Display ribbons. Absolutely Perfect Catering won the first place ribbon for Best Display. The Rumor Mill and Ranazul received Honorable Mentions. Eighty-eight local artists contributed 142 works to the silent auction guests and over eighty works of art were sold. During the early evening reception guests were entertained by singer Rae Bernard, accompanied by pianist Patty Hammer, selections from the cast of *High School Musical*, Flute Cocktail, and stage combat by fight choreographer Jenny Male.

Proceeds from the *Celebration* support grants to local arts organizations and schools (grades K-12); awards for scholarships for emerging artists and participatory programs in the arts for children and adults at the Howard County Center for the Arts. The Arts Council salutes all of the sponsors, guests, artists and volunteers who made the event such an overwhelming success.

For more information, call 410-313-ARTS (2787) or visit the Arts Council website: [www.hocoarts.org](http://www.hocoarts.org).

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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. 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](mailto:info@hocoarts.org). TDD: 711