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Grant to bring more theater options to Floyd County

Stage One, Music Theatre Louisville performances to come to IUS, riverfront for free

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>>SOUTHERN INDIANA — A six-figure grant will bring more art opportunities to Floyd County for free to residents, starting now.

On Wednesday, the Horseshoe Foundation of Floyd County gave a \$185,000 grant that will offer support to Stage One and Music Theatre Louisville and will also expand their arts and cultural offerings in New Albany.

That will pay for two MTL performances at the New Albany Riverfront Amphitheatre this summer, two different Stage One plays to be performed at Indiana University Southeast's campus for free to local children as well as an ecodrama education program, where students are taught about the environment through a play, that has already started and will be in every elementary school in the county by the end of this school year.

Jerry Finn, executive director with the foundation, said the group is always looking for ways to make Floyd County even better.

"As part of the foundation, we focus on quality of life and making Floyd County the best place to live and we feel this is one of those many ways," he said. "We think great communities deserve great arts."

New Albany Mayor Doug England said this is needed, especially now with people hurting because of the economy.

"Doing something like this can put fun and laughter in someone's heart and they can have fun with something they didn't have to pay for," he said.

England said this wouldn't have been possible without the grant.

"No way we could have done it," he said. "All of our budgets are strapped."

The Stage One productions will include "If You Give a Mouse a Cookie" for all kindergarten- and first-grade students in the fall and "Tuck Everlasting" for all fifth- and sixth-grade students in the spring. Both shows will be free to Floyd County students.

The MTL performances on the waterfront features one in June, which will be a season preview with portions of the three plays up for performances this year being on stage. The other, in September, will

feature highlights from Broadway.

“I think the arts are one more opportunity to rejuvenate what's already here,” Finn said.

Finn said so far the foundation has given Floyd County \$19 million in grants.