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For Immediate Release  
May 22, 2017

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### **Community Foundation and Stage Notes to Launch \$10,000 Community Spirit Grant Giving Challenge**

The Northern New York Community Foundation and Stage Notes are combining forces to launch a new giving challenge which will provide Jefferson County middle school students with the opportunity to compete for a total of \$10,000 in community grants to area organizations by year's end. Students who will be in grades 7 and 8 in September will be asked to participate by submitting an essay describing what the word "community" means to them. They will then recommend a local charitable organization that they feel helps support their definition of community. A committee will judge the applications and various grant amounts will be awarded, which the students will present to their chosen organizations.

The program is partially funded from the Community Foundation's Community Betterment Fund annual giving campaign and a through a portion from the proceeds from this year's Stage Notes performances. The program is an extension of the Community Foundation's Youth Philanthropy Program, which engages high school students in community grantmaking. "We see this as a way to encourage civic engagement even earlier than we are now, and also to help provide a program which can better prepare students for possible involvement with the current Youth Philanthropy Program. We also hope this may become an opportunity for educators to blend these concepts into their classroom discussions," said Rande Richardson, Community Foundation executive director.

"A program such as this is part of what Stage Notes is all about. Opening our eyes to what the younger generation sees as the needs of our community is an important step towards our future. We look forward to partnering with the Community Foundation to further our support of the community and to working with the students to give to programs that are important to them,"

said Michele Glover, Stage Notes president. Stage Notes recently presented *Working* and will produce *High School Musical* in July.

The Community Foundation and Stage Notes will work directly with the schools to provide detailed information at the beginning of the school year. Entries would be due by the end of October, winners announced by Thanksgiving, and grant awards presented during the holiday season.

Stage Notes, Inc. is a not-for-profit local theater company. Their purpose is to help students see their passion for musical theater make a difference in our community. The Northern New York Community Foundation makes grants to support the work of non-profit organizations and provides scholarships to individuals in Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence Counties. The Foundation has been built and added to from gifts (both while living and through their legacy plans) by individuals and organizations committed to meeting the changing needs of Northern New York, as well as supporting specific charitable interests and passions.

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