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**EIGHTEEN AREA ORGANIZATIONS INCREASE AWARENESS AND
ACCESSIBILITY TO THE ARTS AND CULTURE IN WEST MICHIGAN**

*Unprecedented Local Collaboration to Encourage
Broader Community Participation and Visitation*

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich.—September 6, 2006—The cultural community of greater Grand Rapids is alive and vibrant, and today 18 area arts and cultural organizations announced a new marketing collaboration directed towards their members and subscribers. The Culture Pass, a new coupon book, will allow members of one organization to save on tickets or admission to other area organizations. Offers range between discounts on performances, to buy-one, get-one-free admission at local institutions. The pass will be directly distributed to members and subscribers of participating arts and culture organizations beginning September 22nd.

The Culture Pass is the creation of the Culture Marketing Group, consisting of marketing representatives from 16 of area's leading arts and cultural organizations as well as the Arts Council of Greater Grand Rapids and the Grand Rapids/Kent County Convention and Visitors Bureau . The goal of the program is to bring the distinct cultural life of Grand Rapids within reach of more consumers, including many underserved audiences.

“A program to bring greater accessibility to Grand Rapids’ arts and culture institutions is exactly what this community needed,” said Iliana Ordaz-Jeffries, executive director of the Arts Council of Greater Grand Rapids. “Studies show that members of one arts organization are more likely to patronize another, the Culture Pass gives them the motivation to experience Grand Rapids cultural community by saving money.”

A secondary objective of the Culture pass is to expand awareness for the following participating organizations:

- Actors’ at Spectrum Theatre
- Circle Theatre
- Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park
- Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library & Museum
- Grand Rapids Art Museum
- Grand Rapids Ballet Company
- Grand Rapids Children’s Museum
- Grand Rapids Civic Theatre
- Grand Rapids Public Library
- The Grand Rapids Symphony

- The Public Museum
- Heritage Theatre Group
- Jewish Theatre Grand Rapids
- John Ball Zoo
- Opera Grand Rapids
- Urban Institute for Contemporary Art

The Culture Pass is made possible by the Arts Council of Greater Grand Rapids who will print more than 25,000 of the coupon booklets. Each organization will distribute the Culture Pass to their members in various ways—as a mailing, a bonus for renewing members or direct email, alerting them to availability in their lobbies. Currently, the Culture Pass is available only to existing members of the various arts and culture organizations. Offers are good between October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007.

The Culture Pass and the Cultural Marketing Group initiative follow the example of larger communities, such as New York, Chicago and Washington, D.C., which have coordinated similar programs. Based on the success of the Culture Pass, the project could be expanded and future collaborations will be discussed.

For additional information about the Culture Pass, please contact the Arts Council of Greater Grand Rapids at 459-2787 or visit their website at www.artsggr.org.

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