



Greetings! Wondering what's been happening with the auditorium project? Well, there's been a great deal of activity since springtime, much of it happening "behind the scenes" (no theater pun intended!).

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Sarbanes and Mikulski Announce "Magical" Federal Funding for Old Blair Auditorium



Senators Mikulski and Sarbanes

On July 20th, Senators Paul S. Sarbanes and Barbara A. Mikulski announced \$200,000 in a federal appropriations bill (for FY07) to renovate the Old Blair Auditorium. This is a very exciting, major milestone for the project! We are extremely grateful to Senators Mikulski and Sarbanes for their help in adding federal support to the project.

The process was kick-started last October, when Silver Spring resident Aaron Klein (a Montgomery Blair High School graduate and then a staffer for Senator Sarbanes) stopped by the Old Blair Auditorium booth at the **Magical Montgomery Festival** and encouraged us to apply for federal funding. From that day, Aaron worked tirelessly to make this a reality for all of us. Thanks Aaron!

Arts and Humanities Council Grant

We received a \$2,400 management assistance grant from the Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County. We sought this grant to implement a donor management system, selecting "DonorPerfect" and entering nearly 2,000 supporters and donors into the database. This grant also allowed us to seek training and assistance from the Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations – right here in Silver Spring.

The Business Plan

Over the summer, we conducted a needs analysis, interviewing and surveying more than 30 arts business professionals, and consulting community leaders and neighbors about their needs for performance and rehearsal space and about market rate fees.

More than 22 local, regional, and national performing arts and culture organizations already have expressed serious interest in using the future space for specific activities, and almost half a dozen have made preliminary commitments to joining the project as resident companies.

The result of our analysis will be published this fall as part of our detailed business plan.

