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Raue Center unveils launch of new educational program

Author(s): REGAN FOSTER - rfoster@nwherald.com **Date:**
April 27, 2007 **Section:** News

CRYSTAL LAKE - Patrons **of** the arts, lovers **of** film, budding performers, and lecture connoisseurs all will have something to look forward to during the 2007-08 season at the **Raue Center** for the Arts. Executive Director Richard Kuranda on Thursday night unveiled an ambitious plan for the **center** that includes more than 200 performances ranging from multi-day musical and cultural festivals to classes and workshops for area performers.

The coming season, slated to start in mid-August, will bring changes to everything from patron ticket packages to programming itself.

"All **of** the **new programs** are designed to build a customer base that will really reach out to the entire McHenry County community," Kuranda said. "It's incredibly important for us to continue to foster talent in our community."

The **center**, traditionally in operation from September through May, will offer programming year-round starting this summer, when it **launches a new educational program**.

The **center's Raue Studio** will give adults and children alike the chance to take both performing arts and fine arts classes. And for experienced performers hoping to spread their wings on the **Raue Center** stage, a **new** initiative to blend local talent with nationally and internationally known artists just might give them that chance.

For example, an area ballet company will have the chance to dance "The Nutcracker Suite" alongside professional performers, Kuranda said.

"It will provide them an opportunity whether they're in high school or college or just enthusiasts," Kuranda said. "If we can build more **of** a

community, that's what we want to do."

And that's good news to Jeffrey Keck.

"We need the culture, we need the art, we need to raise dialogue," said Keck, a member of the **Raue Center** board. "We are trying to serve everyone from our school kids to our senior citizens."

Six **new** ticket packages also will allow patrons the chance to buy season tickets, family packages, tickets for certain series, admission for the **center's** three festivals, individual packages or a create-your-own package.

Tickets go on sale in June, Kuranda said.

Crystal Lake resident Gail Angell said that before Thursday, the last time she had been in the **Raue** theater was when it was a full-time cinema. But she said that would likely change, as the **new** season kicks into gear.

"It was just wonderful to see so many more **programs**," Angell said. "It's really a nice thing for the community."

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