

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **OPUS BANK SPONSORS THE LAGUNA PLAYHOUSE YOUTH THEATRE**

**LAGUNA BEACH, CA, OCTOBER 25, 2011** - Opus Bank has awarded a \$5,000 grant in support of The Laguna Playhouse's award-winning Youth Theatre, and the education of Conservatory students who form the core "company" of the Youth Theatre season, according to Donna Inglima, Director of Youth Theatre and Education.

Inglima explained, some students will take their places on stage and others will carry the productions back stage in the roles of stage manager, lighting designer, sound designer, box office manager, house manager, props and stagehands. These assignments allow them to experience all aspects of play production. 2011-12 Youth Theatre productions will be the world premiere musical *Looking for Home: A Story from the Orphan Trains* November 4 – 13, 2011, *Fairy Tales: Hansel and Gretel & Cinderella* February 24 – March 4, 2012. Theatre for a New Generation will present *The Giver* February 17 – 19, 2012.

Katie Steele, Executive Director of Opus Bank Community Foundation offers, "Success in the workplace begins with imagination in the classroom. Unfortunately, due to budget cuts, it will be some time before K-12 arts curriculum can be implemented in our schools. The Laguna Playhouse is a leader among local nonprofit arts organizations who fill this need by teaching these skills, and we are delighted to help continue their work."

Inglima adds, "The Laguna Playhouse Youth Education Programs further our mission to enrich the cultural, civic and social fabric of our region by providing theatrical performances of the highest professional quality, offering unique educational opportunities for people of all ages, and serving as a catalyst, collaborator, and resource for experiences that inspire and stimulate cultural and social interaction throughout our community."

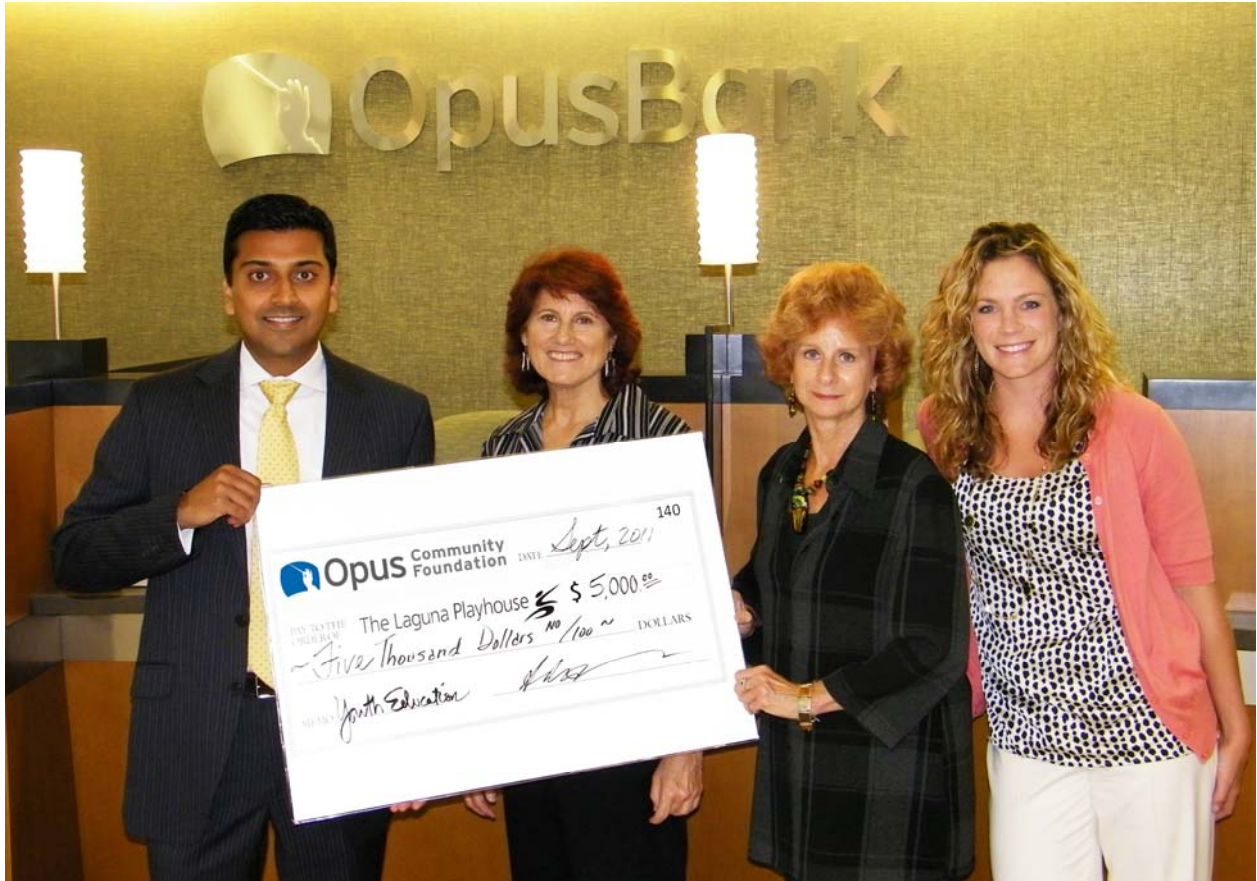


Photo Caption (left to right): Bilaji Krishna (Opus Bank Newport Beach), Donna Inghima (Laguna Playhouse), Leslie Mogul (Laguna Playhouse), Katie Steele (Opus Community Foundation)/

Photo Credit: Jereme Sinclair

## **ABOUT LAGUNA PLAYHOUSE**

949-497-2787 ext. 1 (group tickets ext. 229)  
[www.lagunaplayhouse.com](http://www.lagunaplayhouse.com)

Box Office Hours:  
Tuesday – Sunday: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
(open until 8 pm on performance days)

Physical Address:  
606 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach, CA 92651

Founded in 1920 and celebrating its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011-2012, The Laguna Playhouse is one of the oldest continuously-operating theatres on the West Coast. In January 2011, The Laguna Playhouse was honored at the Laguna Spirit Awards and received The Laguna Beach Chamber of Commerce Premiere Business of the Year award.

More than 100,000 theatergoers annually attend performances at the Laguna Playhouse. Its continued artistic excellence, audience popularity and critical acclaim have helped make The Playhouse one of Southern California's most important nonprofit theatre companies. The Playhouse has produced national tours of *The Belle of Amherst* (with Julie Harris) and *Copenhagen*, and has presented many world, national and regional premieres.

Over the years, the Laguna Playhouse has garnered numerous awards from LA Drama Critics Circle, NAACP, Backstage, OC Weekly, and many more, and was named Best Arts Organization by ArtsOC. Notable performers that have performed at The Laguna Playhouse include Bette Davis, Harrison Ford, Charles Durning, Marlo Thomas, Roddy McDowell, Rita Rudner, Cloris Leachman, and Sally Struthers.

The Laguna Playhouse is noted for its Youth Theater Education and Outreach programs. In 1989, its Youth Theater was recognized as "Outstanding Children's Theatre" by the American Alliance for Theatre and Education. The theater's touring production, TheatreReach, brings books to life on stage for elementary school children throughout southern California.

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