

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Steel Beam Children's Theatre Actors Bring *The Second City* to the Suburbs,
November 1-3, 2011**

Steel Beam Children's Theatre actors are bringing *The Second City* to the suburbs, and their director Bonnie Gruesen is helping them make it happen. Together they are developing a "suburban living" themed comedy show, which includes original sketches, an entirely improvised section, and an original song. "We want to do *The Second City* format without the blue humor," says Ms. Gruesen, who studied at Chicago's iO (Improv Olympic) and Second City training centers, and holds a B.F.A. in theatre performance from The University of Michigan. "By the time the show is over, you won't even realize that you didn't hear one swear word or innuendo. The material is smart, relevant, and at times, very touching." The goal of the show is to poke fun at, but also pay homage to, suburban life-- from Facebook to final exams; from girl scouts to minivans; from childhood dreams to zombies.

Ms. Gruesen and her co-writer brother Michael didn't start writing anything until after they had cast the show. "We wanted to write specifically for the kids we cast – playing up their strengths," says Michael Gruesen. "Normally kids are given a script, they learn the blocking, and that's it—to change any of the material would literally be illegal," notes Ms. Gruesen. "But in this show, the cast helps choose what needs to be edited, added, and cut. They are a part of the creative process, which is unique."

For material, the cast drew from their own auditions and even from their own homes. "I had the kids tell me phrases their parents always say so we could add them to the show," says Ms. Gruesen. "Between impressions and quotes, I think parents will be surprised at how much of themselves they see onstage!"

Shows are Tuesday, Nov. 1, Wednesday, Nov. 2, and Thursday, Nov. 3, 7:30 pm at Steel Beam Theatre ,111 W. Main Street, St. Charles, IL. Tickets are \$7.00 and can be purchased at www.SteelBeamTheatre.com or by calling 630-587-8521.

The Steel Beam Children's Theatre sketch comedy cast includes Joseph D'Amico, Lissy Holbrook, Beth Kahan, Lily Lichner, Beth Mehl, Caroline Whittaker and Grace Zimmermann, all of St Charles; Evan Kafka, Garrett Otto, and Natalie White, all of Geneva; Joe Masini of Batavia and Lindsey Gallaher of South Elgin.

The Steel Beam Children's Theatre's motto is *It's What Happens Off-Stage that Counts* to emphasize Steel Beam's belief that participation in theatre is not simply about winning a starring role, and that life skills like communication, discipline, teamwork and respect are developed during the rehearsal and performance process. Steel Beam Theatre offers classes, summer camps, workshops and audition-based theatrical productions for children ages 6-16. Hundreds of area children have started their training in the theatrical arts in Steel Beam's intimate, non-threatening and nurturing environment, where the student/teacher ratio is always low and each child receives individualized attention. Many Steel Beam Theatre alumni have gone on to major in the arts at college, or appear in professional productions.

Steel Beam Theatre (SBT), 111 W. Main Street, St. Charles, IL, guides audiences and actors in shared experiences that help the participants more fully understand humanity. SBT's mission is to bring high quality theatrical entertainment, training and arts awareness to the Fox Valley community at an affordable price. Since 2001, Steel Beam Theatre productions have attracted thousands to St. Charles, and the Theatre is an anchor that adds diversity and draws visitors to the historic downtown area for any given production. Steel Beam Theatre - **Experience** Life! Visit us on Facebook, at www.SteelBeamTheatre.com, or call 630.587.8521.

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Diane Handler
Steel Beam Theatre