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The Actors Gymnasium Named Inaugural Recipient of \$25,000 “Signal Grant” from Celebrity Chef Rick Bayless’ Foundation

EVANSTON, IL, Dec. 17, 2019 — The Bayless Family Foundation has named The Actors Gymnasium as one of two recipients of the inaugural “Signal Grant,” a new grant intended to highlight theaters that are particularly deserving of the Chicago philanthropic community’s support.

According to the foundation, “The grant will be given occasionally to draw focus to a company the foundation believes in and to inspire other donors to give.”

The Actors Gym plans to use the \$25,000 award to make critical improvements to its equipment and facilities, which are used by over 1,000 students annually. “We are tremendously grateful for the Bayless Family’s support, which will have an immediate, tangible impact on the quality of our classes and our audience experience,” said Executive Director Murphy Monroe.

In addition to the Actors Gym, the African Diaspora-inspired Congo Square Theatre, located on the Near North Side, was also named as one of the recipients.

Formed in 2017 by Bayless and his wife Deann, the Bayless Family Foundation supports established Chicago theater organizations with a vision for institutional and artistic growth. Since its inception, it has supported five local theaters with multi-year Stepping Stone grants and has awarded more than \$500,000 dollars in support of over 25 Chicago-area theatre companies.

About Actors Gym

The Actors Gymnasium is one of the nation’s premiere circus and performing arts training centers, led by master teacher and Circus Ring of Fame artist Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi. Founded in 1995, it provides educational programs for students of all ages and levels, produces original and daring circus-theatre, and offers award-winning entertainment for corporate and other special events.

Actors Gym is proud to partner with many performing arts organizations throughout Chicagoland and serves as the exclusive provider of circus performing arts training for Lookingglass Theatre.

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