

(Chicago, IL) To celebrate the brave men and women in the armed forces, Goodman Theatre provides more than 550 free tickets to its closing day performance of *A Christmas Carol* on Thursday, December 31 at 2pm

. The local servicemen and their families invited to attend include companies deploying to Afghanistan in January.

Community Day

is hosted by Senator

Richard J. Durbin

, Representative

Jan Schakowsky

(Illinois' 9th District) and Representative

Mike Quigley

(Illinois' 5th District), three ardent supporters of the armed forces who tirelessly advocate on behalf of American servicemen everywhere. During the closing performance, Representatives Schakowsky and Quigley prove that "acting" speaks louder than words when they take to the stage—joining the cast of

A Christmas Carol

. The audience will also rock to the holiday spirit with the music of Chicago band, Fair Herald, in the Goodman's lobby prior to the performance.

Community Day

is coordinated by Goodman Theatre Director of Education and Community Engagement and U.S. Navy veteran Willa J. Taylor. The Goodman is grateful for the assistance of the United Service Organization (USO) of Illinois President and Chief Operating Officer Anthony Enrietto who, together with his staff, provided assistance identifying families in need of holiday cheer before deployment.

"There's not a single person on the Goodman's staff or stage who does not recognize the tremendous sacrifices military families make each day," said Willa J. Taylor, Director of Education and Community Engagement. "It is especially difficult during the holidays; as a U.S. Navy vet, I understand it firsthand. This performance, this celebration is just one small thing Goodman could do to say 'thank you' to all the men and women serving their country both here and abroad, and to support the families who love them."

With the strong support of Representative Schakowsky, Congress approved the largest single increase in veterans' funding in the 77-year history of the Veterans Administration. She is actively engaged in resolving the backlog of claims that is slowing delivery of care for many veterans and is intimately concerned with addressing the needs of veterans in her district. Her chief objective is to make sure men and women returning from combat receive the care they need to fully heal and have the best quality of life possible.

"As a member of Congress, it has been a top priority to make sure that the men and women who serve in the military and their families, receive the respect, services and benefits that they have earned by serving our nation so valiantly," said Representative Schakowsky. "I will continue to do everything I can to make sure that they obtain all of the support that they deserve and need."

During his first eight months in office, Representative Quigley worked diligently to ensure that the men and women of the armed services receive the support they need. He voted to extend the first-time homebuyer tax credit for military personnel, introduced a resolution honoring the largest deployment of Illinois National Guardsmen since World War II, and most recently, introduced GI Bill Accelerated Tuition Payment Act of 2009 to prevent veterans from going into debt in order to pay tuition while waiting for their GI Bill education benefits

"Goodman Theatre has shown just how deeply we appreciate the sacrifices of our servicemen and women by collaborating with the local USO to organize this thoughtful closing day dedication of *A Christmas Carol*," said Representative Quigley. "I commend the Goodman for doing their part to give something back to the members of the armed services and their families, and I thank them for allowing me to be part of this exceptional event."

About Representative Jan Schakowsky

Jan Schakowsky was elected to represent Illinois' 9th Congressional District on November 3, 1998, after serving for eight years in the Illinois State Assembly. She is in her fifth term. Schakowsky serves in the House Democratic Leadership as Chief Deputy Whip and as a member of the Steering and Policy Committee. She is a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, where she will work to accomplish her top priority in Congress—providing universal healthcare coverage for all Americans. On that Committee, she serves as Vice-Chair of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection and as a member of the Subcommittee on Health and the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. Speaker Pelosi recently appointed Schakowsky to serve on the House Select Committee on Intelligence. Schakowsky opposed the Iraq war resolution and was a founding member of the Out-of-Iraq Caucus. Schakowsky is a leading advocate for women's issues in Congress, sponsoring legislation that would prevent violence against immigrant women, establish transitional housing for women and children who are victims of abuse and commemorate International Women's Day. During the 110th Congress, Schakowsky serves as Democratic Vice Chair of the bipartisan Women's Caucus. A citizen advocate, grassroots organizer and elected public

official, Schakowsky has fought throughout her career for economic and social justice and improved quality of life for all; for an end to violence against women; and for a national investment in healthcare, public education and housing needs. In the House, Schakowsky has won major legislative victories to increase federal assistance for abused women and children and to protect the rights of battered immigrant women; to reform election laws guaranteeing that no registered voter is turned away at the poll; to expand housing opportunities for low-income people; and to assist small business owners and farmers. A longtime consumer advocate, who in 1969 led the fight that put freshness dates on products sold in the supermarket, Schakowsky carries on that tradition in Congress with efforts to safeguard the rights of victims of identity theft and to protect consumers from predatory lenders. A champion for the nation's seniors, Schakowsky is actively engaged in the campaign for seniors and persons with disabilities to access affordable prescription drugs. Schakowsky is also working to ensure that seniors receive quality home, hospice and nursing care. Prior to her election to Congress, Schakowsky represented the 18th District in the Illinois General Assembly for eight years. She served as a Democratic Floor Leader and as Secretary of the Conference of Women Legislators. For twenty years prior to her election to the State House, Schakowsky fought for the public interest and rights of Illinois citizens. As Program Director of Illinois Public Action (1976-1985), the state's largest public interest organization, she fought for energy reform and stronger protection from toxic chemicals. As Director of the Illinois State Council of Senior Citizens from 1985-1990, she organized across the state for lower cost prescription drugs and tax relief for seniors, financial protection for the spouses of nursing home residents and other benefits for the elderly. She has been deeply involved in the fight to protect women's reproductive freedom.

About Representative Mike Quigley

Mike Quigley was elected to Congress to represent Illinois' 5th District on April 7, 2009. A former Cook County Commissioner, Quigley has served his community for more than twenty years. He began his career serving as an aide to former 44th Ward Alderman Bernie Hansen and became a champion for environmental protection, equal rights and ethical, open government. As the Commissioner from Cook County's 10th District, Quigley fought for transparency, accountability and fiscal sanity, earning the reputation as an honest and effective leader on reform. During his time on the Cook County Board of Commissioners, Quigley sponsored every piece of major environmental legislation adopted by Cook County government; he still regularly participates in local clean-up and restoration efforts, earning him awards from the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club. *Chicago Reader* has said he is "arguably the greenest elected official in Chicago." Quigley has also fought for equal rights for those in the LGBT community, additional protections for victims of domestic abuse and a woman's right to choose. A staunch advocate for government reform and accountability, Quigley wrote several revolutionary memos laying out detailed plans for the "reinventing" of Cook County government, to make it more efficient and more responsive to its citizens. His first act in Congress was to co-sponsor the Hate Crimes Bill to expand federal protection for victims. He has also supported legislation and spoke out for repeal of the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, co-sponsored

the Respect for Marriage Act, to recognize and provide benefits for all marriages and been a leader in the fight for comprehensive immigration reform. Quigley voted for the popular "Cash for Clunkers" program to encourage Americans to purchase more environmentally friendly and fuel efficient cars and the American Clean Energy and Security Act (ACES) to combat climate change and create jobs, as well as a bill to increase fuel economy standards. He has introduced the State Ethics Law Protection Act, which would prevent the federal government from interfering in states' pay-to-pay restrictions, and a bill to prohibit any Congressional earmarks to for-profit organizations. Congressman Quigley sits on the House Committee on the Judiciary and the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and has continued his strong commitment to those issues important to him and the 5th District.

About United Service Organization (USO)

Since before the United States entered World War II, the United Service Organizations (USO) has been the bridge between the American public and the U.S. military. In times of peace and war, the USO has consistently delivered its special brand of comfort, morale and recreational services to the military. The USO, a congressionally chartered, private, nonprofit organization, relies on the generosity of individuals and corporations to support USO activities. Today, the USO delivers its programs and services at more than 130 locations around the world. In recent years, the USO opened centers in Kuwait, Qatar and Afghanistan to support service members participating in Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom, as well as centers in Vicenza, Italy and at the Dallas/Fort Worth, Raleigh/Durham and Denver International Airports.

Military personnel and family members visited USO centers more than 5.3 million times last year. Services include free Internet and e-mail access, libraries and reading rooms, housing assistance, family crisis counseling, support groups, game rooms and nursery facilities. For 68 years, the USO's mission has remained the same. The USO will support U.S. troops and their families wherever they serve. Across the United States and around the world, the American military knows that the USO is there for them. By supporting the USO, Americans show their appreciation and express their gratitude to the men and women who defend us.

About *A Christmas Carol* (through December 31)

Based on Charles Dickens' 1843 novella, *A Christmas Carol* is the tale of the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge, who is opposed to holiday cheer and indifferent to the sufferings of the poor in Victorian London. Scrooge is visited by four ghosts who offer him the opportunity to sympathize

with his fellow man. Dickens' famous characters include Scrooge's kind-hearted clerk, Bob Cratchit, and his family, including Tiny Tim; the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future; the merry-making Fezziwig couple; and the Ghost of Jacob Marley. Throughout its history at the Goodman, more than 1 million people have experienced

A Christmas Carol

and the production has hosted six directors, seven Scrooges, 27 Tiny Tims and nearly 20,000 "Bah, Humbug!"s.

To learn more about

A Christmas Carol

, visit

www.ExploreTheGoodman.org/A-Christmas-Carol

This season the Goodman continues its annual tradition of support for Season of Concern (SOC) with ongoing donation collection in the theater's lobby and the holiday event, "Pooch on Scrooge." Since 2001, Goodman Theatre has raised nearly \$200,000 for Season of Concern, a local organization which provides compassionate care to those in the theater community experiencing the effects of catastrophic illness. Cast members from *A Christmas Carol* greet patrons and collect donations in the lobby following each performance. In addition, the Goodman's annual "Pooch on Scrooge" event—during which dogs dress up for the holidays and pose for a portrait with Ebenezer Scrooge—has become another source of donations for SOC. The contributions help the fight against HIV and AIDS by funding programs that provide direct care to members of the Chicago and Midwestern theater community.

About Goodman Theatre

Named the country's "Best Regional Theatre" by *Time* magazine (2003), Goodman Theatre is a leader in the American theater, internationally recognized for its artists, productions and educational programs since its founding in 1925. Artistic Director Robert Falls and Executive Director Roche Schulfer's forward-thinking leadership has earned the Goodman unparalleled artistic distinction, garnered hundreds of awards—including the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre (1992) and Pulitzer Prizes for *Ruined* by Lynn Nottage and *Glengarry Glen Ross* by David Mamet—and moved dozens of plays from Chicago to stages in New York and abroad. Central to its commitment to the reinvestigation of classics and development of new plays and artists is the Goodman's Artistic Collective, including Brian Dennehy, Frank Galati, Henry Godinez, Steve Scott, Chuck Smith, Regina Taylor and Mary Zimmerman. The largest not-for-profit theater in Chicago, the Goodman moved in 2000 into a brand new state-of-the-art complex which houses two principal theaters: the 856-seat Albert Ivar Goodman Theatre and the 400-seat flexible Owen Bruner Goodman Theatre. Board Chairman is Patricia Cox and Karen Pigott is President of the Women's Board. American Airlines is the Exclusive Airline of

Goodman Theatre.