



# Arts For Life 13th Annual Best Performance Awards

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*Take Two Productions "Hairspray" comes out on top*

*12 area theatre groups win at the ARTS FOR LIFE Best Performance Awards*

More than 550 community theatre performers, patrons and enthusiasts from the metropolitan St. Louis area attended the 13th annual Arts For Life Best Performance Awards June 10 in the William D. Purser Theater at Logan College of Chiropractic. Twenty-five awards were given out for excellence in community musical theatre, along with two special awards for musical performance and a Lifetime Achievement Award presented to esteemed theatre critics Bob Wilcox and Gerry Kowarsky.

The ceremony included performances from the 12 shows nominated for best large ensemble, small ensemble and youth production, in addition to a special number reflecting AFL's "Love, Lift Us Up" benefit last fall for those affected by the tornados in Joplin and North St. Louis County. Bob Strickland led the cast with a showstopper version of "You Raise Me Up."

Twelve different companies were recognized for 2011 efforts. Take Two Productions took home the most trophies, with six wins for "Hairspray," including Best Large Ensemble Musical and the special LeeAnn Smith Cho Award for Best Musical Performance by an actress, singling out Karen L Fulks for her portrayal of Motormouth Maybelle. "The Spitfire Grill" by Alton Little Theater collected five awards, including Best Small Ensemble Production. "Bye, Bye Birdie" at Christ Memorial Productions earned four acting awards while St. Louis Summer Players swept the youth awards, winning Best Youth Actor Cole Whiting (Willard), Best Youth Actress Rachel Bisch (Rusty) and overall Best Youth Production for "Footloose," their first top prize. BPA

host and radio personality Vic Porcelli, who was 0 for 5 previously, and his son Chris both won acting awards for their performances in KTK Productions' "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee."

Other acting awards included Family Musical Theater with two wins, while Hawthorne Players, Monroe Actors Stage Company and first-time winners Maryland Heights Community Theater and Take A Bow Showcase each won one award. In lead acting categories, winners were Tina Poynter-Abell, who played Miss Mona in Family Musical Theatre's "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas," and David F Wicks Jr., who played Emile de Becque in Take a Bow Showcase's "South Pacific." A special award, Best Youth Musical Performance, was given to Grace Seidel of Shooting Star Productions for her outstanding singing performance in "Big, the Musical."

The AFL Board of Directors inaugurated a \$500 Scholarship this year, with the first recipient Lorraine Stippec of South St. Louis County. The AFL scholarship was created to encourage those entering college or continuing their college education to pursue a career in the arts following graduation. Lorraine is a dance major at Webster University.

To see a complete list of winners please visit our website, [www.artsforlife.org](http://www.artsforlife.org).