



MICHAEL CAIRNS/COURTESY OF ORLANDO REPERTORY THEATRE

## Cultural Collaboration

**In May, every eighth-grade student in Orange County Public Schools had their social studies curriculum brought to life onstage at the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, thanks to a \$200,000 donation from Walt Disney World Resort to United Arts of Central Florida.**

Walt Disney World Resort orchestrated a program in partnership with United Arts, Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts and the Orlando Repertory Theatre that will surely resonate with the students for the rest of their lives.

“While growing up in Central Florida, I attended a performance that opened my eyes to the vibrant world of theater,” says George A. Kalogridis, president of Walt Disney World Resort. “By collaborating with these community organizations, we’re bringing this the-

ater experience to young people to enhance their education in a fun, memorable and engaging way.”

They did it in true, magical Walt Disney World fashion too. All 13,000 eighth graders had the opportunity to attend a performance of *The Mostly True Adventures of Homer P. Figg* at the Walt Disney Theater inside the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts. The presentation by the Orlando Repertory Theatre tells the Civil War-era story of a young boy following the Union Army in search of his brother. The production is based on a popular work of fiction and complements the county’s eighth-grade social studies curriculum.

“This special gift will allow our young children—many for the first time—to experience the theater, sparking a potential lifelong appreciation for the arts and culture,” says Flora Maria Garcia, president and CEO of United Arts.

“The arts play an important role in a student’s overall academic experience,” says Bill Sublette, chairman of Orange County Public Schools. “By adding arts to the science, technology, engineering and math movement, we help students build critical thinking skills through creativity.”

As an entertainment company with 74,000 cast members who live and work in Central Florida, Disney supports organizations that value the role of arts in the community. One of the earliest and largest investors in the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, Disney contributed \$12.5 million for the 2,700-seat, state-of-the-art Walt Disney Theater. In addition, cast members provide expertise to local arts organizations through pro bono work, assistance with community stage productions and arts workshops.