Glencoe, IL, August 19, 2014—Writers Theatre Artistic Director Michael Halberstam and Executive Director Kathryn M. Lipuma are pleased to announce the next phase of development of its new Theatre Center: demolition, groundbreaking and construction. Having raised $25 million of the $31 million base goal for the On to a New Stage fundraising campaign (with plans for an additional $3 million cash reserve), Writers Theatre has hired general contractor W.E. O’Neil to helm the project. Demolition will begin September 2, 2014 and the construction is expected to be completed by early 2016. A groundbreaking ceremony will take place in mid-October 2014, with details forthcoming.

The company will continue to raise funds for named gifts through 2014, and anticipates a broad-based public campaign in 2015.

"We are thrilled to welcome W.E. O’Neil as the newest member of our project team, and have great faith in their ability to see us through the construction phase as we create a permanent home for the Theatre," said Executive Director Kathryn M. Lipuma. "They will be a tremendous asset to the vision that we have created with Studio Gang Architects, and an ideal fit with the expertise provided by the rest of our exceptional team of consultants. With $25 million dollars raised of our $31 million dollar base goal, and with a top notch contractor on board, we’re excited to break ground and begin construction by mid-October."

"We’re very pleased to be involved in such an innovative project," commented W.E. O’Neil Construction President, John Russell. "Our partnership with Writers Theatre and Studio Gang is extremely supportive and focused on delivering a world-class building that fosters great performances for years to come."

The full design team includes:

**Architect**
Studio Gang Architects

**Engineers**
dbHMS – MEP/Fire Protection Engineer
Halvorson and Partners – Structural Engineer
SPACECO, Inc. – Civil Engineer

**Consultants**
AMS Planning & Research Corporation – Management Counsel
Auerback Pollock Friedlander – Theatre Consultant
Coen + Partners – Landscape Architect
Lightswitch Architectural Chicago – Lighting Consultant
Premiere Systems – Security/IT Consultant
Thirst – Graphics Designer
Threshold Acoustics – Acoustical Consultant
Venue Consulting – Cost Consultant
W.E. O’Neil – General Contractor
The On to a New Stage Campaign will establish the nationally-recognized company’s new home – a theatre center designed by Chicago’s internationally renowned Studio Gang Architects, led by Founder and Design Principal Jeanne Gang. The center, to be located on the site of the current Woman’s Library Club of Glencoe, will provide Writers Theatre with two intimate, state-of-the-art performance spaces under one roof, patron and artist amenities, and rehearsal and production space. For more than two decades, Writers Theatre has been attracting enthusiastic audiences throughout Chicago and the country with its commitment to the artist and the written word. The center will ensure Writers Theatre’s future as a cornerstone of the Chicagoland cultural community and strengthen its national reputation for the finest theatrical productions.

The sustainably-designed theatre center will replace two performance spaces that have long exceeded their maximum life span, and will allow the Theatre to uphold first-rate standards for both audiences and artists going forward. Among the key features in the new center:

- A 250-seat thrust stage theatre purposefully designed to maintain Writers Theatre’s hallmark intimacy;
- A 50 to 99-seat flexible theatre space inspired by both Writers Theatre’s first performance space at Books on Vernon in Glencoe, and by its recent Tudor Court venue;
- A “Theatre in a Park” atmosphere, with patron access to surrounding parks, outdoor rooftop terraces, landscaped and rooftop gardens, and beautifully integrated views of existing parks to the east and west;
- A spacious main lobby that functions as a central gathering area, featuring seating tribunes where patrons and students will enjoy supplementary artistic, family and educational programs; and
- A luminous grand gallery walk, designed by renowned engineer Peter Heppel and structured entirely from wood, suspended around the lobby and serving as viewing area and “front porch” to the building

The On To A New Stage Campaign has raised $25 million to date, with more than 72 families, foundations and corporations contributing to the campaign and early lead support from a wide range of Chicagoland’s distinguished philanthropists, including:

- Alexandra C. and John D. Nichols, who have donated a gift of $5 million. The 250-seat theatre will be named the Alexandra C. and John D. Nichols Theatre in their honor.
- Alec and Jennifer Litowitz, who have donated a gift of $3 million. The theatre center lobby will be named in their honor.
- Gillian and Ellis Goodman, who have donated a gift of $3 million. The flexible 50 to 99-seat theatre will be named the Gillian Theatre.
- Mary Winton Green and the Green family, who have donated a gift of $2 million. The rehearsal and special events room will be named for the Green family.
- Stephanie and Bill Sick, who have donated a gift of $1 million. The rooftop terrace and garden will be named in honor of Stephanie and Bill Sick.
- An anonymous donor who has contributed a gift of $2 million.

ABOUT WRITERS THEATRE: For more than 20 years, Writers Theatre has captivated Chicagoland audiences with inventive interpretations of classic work, a bold approach to contemporary theatre and a dedication to creating the most intimate theatrical experience possible, establishing the Theatre as a major Chicagoland cultural destination with a national reputation for excellence.

Under the artistic leadership of Michael Halberstam and the executive leadership of Kathryn M. Lipuma, Writers Theatre has been deemed the “best drama company in the nation” by the Wall Street Journal and achieved twenty years of surplus operations. Praised for the finest interpretations of classic and contemporary theatre in its two venues, Writers Theatre’s work includes Artistic Director Michael Halberstam’s world premiere in Glencoe and subsequent production of A Minister’s Wife at Lincoln Center Theater; David Cromer’s productions of A Streetcar Named Desire and Picnic; and the commissioning, world premiere and New York premiere of Crime and Punishment, which has received more than 30 subsequent regional theater productions.

You can find Writers Theatre on Facebook or follow Writers Theatre on Twitter at Twitter.com/WritersTheatre. For more information, visit www.writerstheatre.org.
ABOUT STUDIO GANG ARCHITECTS: Studio Gang Architects is a collective of architects, designers, and thinkers whose work engages pressing contemporary issues and their impact on human experience. Honored with the 2013 National Design Award for Architecture from the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, the Studio acts as a laboratory—testing ideas on various scales, from cities and environments to material and physical properties. Cross-field research, collaboration, and iterative experimentation using both digital and analog technologies are integral to the Studio’s process. Each project is designed to resonate with its specific site and culture while addressing global themes such as reuse and sustainability. This innovative approach has resulted in works such as Aqua Tower, whose facade encourages building community in the vertical dimension; Nature Boardwalk at Lincoln Park Zoo, where fourteen acres of bio-diverse habitat are designed to double as storm water infrastructure and engaging public space; the WMS Boathouse at Clark Park, which is catalyzing an ecological and recreational revival of the Chicago River; and the National Aquarium BLUEprint, a strategic plan that updates the aquarium model for the 21st century. In addition to creating transformative architecture, Studio Gang is dedicated to employing the tools, methods, and visionary capability of design to engender positive change through public engagement and advocacy. The Studio is based in Chicago and New York.

For more information on Studio Gang Architects, visit www.studiogang.net.

ABOUT W.E. O'NEIL: W.E. O’Neil is one of Chicago’s leading contractors in the delivery of performing arts centers, including recent construction projects for the Chicago Theatre, Oriental Theatre, Auditorium Theatre and the DePaul University Theatre School. Founded in 1925, W.E. O’Neil brings extensive general contracting experience to Chicagoland’s most challenging projects. Our foundation is rooted in our people and our commitment to quality, integrity and responsiveness to our clients’ needs.

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