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May 30, 2014

### **Ashland, KY Resident to Receive National Theatre Award**



**Ashland, KY - Melanie Cornelison** of Ashland is being honored with the **Distinguished Merit Award** from the American Association of Community Theatre (AACT). The award will be presented at an awards ceremony during the AACT International Theatre Festival (aactWorldFest 2014) in Venice, FL June 16 – 21, 2014.

The AACT Distinguished Merit Award is presented to individuals and organizations in recognition of contributions made to promote and develop the highest standards for community theatre.

Melanie saw the need for an in-house community theatre shortly after accepting the position of Director of Education and Outreach at the Paramount Arts Center; thus Paramount Players was born. As the group's current Artistic Director, Melanie produces, directs, and volunteers her time to create the choreography for each of the 5 - 7 plays and musicals in addition to her other job responsibilities. In furthering arts education for ages 7 - adult, Melanie created an Arts Academy Program and personally oversees the nearly 20 local artists who deliver classes in acting, dance, chorus, visual arts, and private voice lessons. Wanting to reach underprivileged children and rural schools with the arts, Melanie created Paramount on Tour, taking productions on the road. Thanks to Melanie's vision, nearly 1,000 tri-state residents now call themselves Paramount Players and whether on-stage or backstage, there's a place in the community for everyone to shine.

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The American Association of Community Theatre (AACT) provides networking, resources, and support to suit the needs of those involved in community theatre. AACT represents the interests of more than 7,000 theatres across the United States and its territories, as well as theatre companies with the armed services overseas.