

## **Knight Foundation Grant to Fund 2014 Happy Minnesota Productions on University Avenue in St. Paul**

**ST. PAUL, Minn.** (Oct. 11, 2013) – The Happy Minnesota initiative of Dangerous Productions will continue to spread interactive theater, happiness, economic growth and community to St. Paul's Central Corridor in 2014, thanks to funding provided by the Knight Foundation.

Dangerous Productions was awarded a \$20,000 grant by the Knight Foundation so the Happy Minnesota project can brighten University Avenue in the capital city with additional shows.

The Knight Foundation awarded the grant so Dangerous Productions could continue "to activate storefronts affected by construction of the Central Corridor Light Rail on University Avenue in Saint Paul with site-specific interactive theater productions."

Dangerous Productions has contributed significantly to the artistic pulse of the Central Corridor in St. Paul during that construction. The company has staged 12 completely original Happy Minnesota productions in an 18-month span. Founder and Grand Master Tyler Olsen announced the next Happy show will be Happier Crazier New Year in late-December 2013, and the initiative will culminate with a show titled Happy Craziest New Year in late-December 2014.

"Holy Mackerel! It would be hard to find a better partner for the Happy Minnesota Projects," said Olsen of the Knight Foundation. "From their focus on community engaged art to their love of Saint Paul, we're absolutely thrilled about this new partnership."

Olsen is a veteran actor, playwright, production company founder and creative catalyst for St. Paul theater. He founded and leads Dangerous Productions and established the Happy Minnesota initiative to infuse the Central Corridor in St. Paul with retail traffic and artistic vibrancy.

While many consumers had avoided University Avenue because of disruptive light rail construction, Olsen sought to attract people – and their disposable income – to the legendary corridor. Happy Minnesota productions have been rehearsed and staged in a variety of vacant storefronts on University Avenue as well as in open businesses such as the Gremlin Theater space, and restaurants including Mai Village, Lao Thai, and Que Nha.

The completely original Happy Minnesota productions have included several interactive theater events, cabarets, guerilla ice cream socials, and what Olsen called "parties with a plot," such as the interactive Happy Crazy New Year and Happy Crazy St. Patrick's Day shows.

### **About Dangerous Productions & Happy Minnesota**

As a St. Paul-based arts organization, Dangerous Productions exists to make everyone who experiences our arts more powerful, innovative, fulfilled citizens of our world. Happy Minnesota is an initiative by Dangerous Productions to bring happiness, economic growth, and community to the Central Corridor in St. Paul. Happy Minnesota rehearses, performs, and partners with businesses along the Central Corridor, creating hilarious and exciting productions in vacant storefronts, as well as in still-operating businesses.

Learn more at [www.dangerousproductions.org](http://www.dangerousproductions.org) and on the Dangerous Productions Facebook page.

**About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation**

The Knight Foundation supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts. We believe that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged. Through its arts program, the foundation seeks to weave the arts into the fabric of selected communities to engage and inspire the people living in them. The foundation believes that the arts are a catalyst for public dialogue, and that shared cultural experiences contribute to a sense of place and communal identity.

Learn more at [www.knightfoundation.org](http://www.knightfoundation.org)