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CITY OF LAKE FOREST VOTES GENEROUS SUPPORT FOR RAGDALE'S "OPERATION RENOVATION"

(November 28, 2011– LAKE FOREST, IL) At their November 21 meeting, the members of Lake Forest City Council unanimously voted to forgive \$100,000 of interest on the Ragdale Foundation's \$2 million loan for the renovation of the Ragdale House.

"This action by the City is wonderfully generous and a terrific vote of confidence for our project," said Susan Page Tillett, Executive Director of the Ragdale Foundation.

Ragdale has always been an important cornerstone of architecture and culture in Lake Forest. The Arts and Crafts style retreat was built in 1897 as a summer home of Chicago architect Howard Van Doren Shaw. In 1986 Shaw's granddaughter, the poet Alice Hayes donated the five-acre property to the City, to be operated as an artists' community. Since then, thousands of writers, visual artists and composers have spent time living and working at Ragdale, creating new work, including best sellers like *The Time Traveler's Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger and *Loving Frank* by Nancy Horan. In addition to operating the nation's fourth largest artist community, Ragdale is committed to providing the community with access to the arts through programs and preservation of the historical site.

In 2001, Ragdale and the City reached a new agreement, extending the use of the property through the 21st century in exchange for the Foundation taking on the maintenance and preservation of the property. Since that time Ragdale has raised more than \$6.2 million in private funds and reinvested it into the historic property.

Mayor Jim Cowhey comments that "Ragdale is one of the country's major providers of opportunities for residents to interact with working artists. We are thrilled to have this Howard Van Doren Shaw legacy and community treasure in Lake Forest."

The restored Ragdale House is scheduled to reopen in May, 2012 with a gala celebration on May 5, followed by Ragdale Days, a series of public programs designed to reacquaint the community with this cultural treasure.

"This latest action by City Council takes our successful public/private partnership to a new level," said former Mayor Mike Rummel who is now a Ragdale trustee.

Ragdale's mission is to support writers and artists in a retreat setting and make the arts more accessible to the public through three core program areas: the artists' residency program, community programs, and preservation of the historic site. For more information on The Ragdale Foundation, please visit www.ragdale.org or call (847) 234-1063 x. 205.

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