

# PRESS RELEASE

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**United Way  
Of Jackson County**

## **“KUCHIPUDI” DANCE BENEFIT HELPS LOCAL YOUTH**

**Raja Reddy dance company kicks off US tour with benefit concert in Jackson**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Monday, July 17, 2006 – Nearly 150 people enjoyed a captivating performance by the Raja Reddy Dance troupe on Saturday, July 8 at the Western Community Performing Arts Center. The event featured a dazzling demonstration of classical “kuchipudi” style Indian dance - a 2,000 year old story telling tradition that blends acrobatic movements with stylized expressions and gestures, all accompanied by colorful, exotic costumes, dramatic make up and glistening jewelry. The dances were performed to enchanting, rhythmic melodies provided by a live, four-piece orchestra of drums, percussion, violin, wooden flute and voice.

“What a great evening”, said Kim Hastings, Executive Director of the Jackson School of the Arts. “The dancers were spectacular. I know everyone feels they’ve experienced something truly special and wonderful!”

Earlier in the day, about a dozen local youth participated in a dance workshop taught by Raja Reddy and others members of the dance troupe. The two-hour class taught aspiring dancers the basic elements of the kuchipudi dance, including body stance, footwork, positioning of the arms and hands, and special emphasis on the expressive facial and hand gestures for which the dance is known.

“We’re just so pleased to be able to give kids the opportunity to learn from a master like Raja Reddy,” said Ken Toll, Executive Director of the United Way of Jackson County. “It’s a great learning experience, both in terms of a unique and historical form of dance, and as a chance to explore and learn a different culture.”

Sponsors and guests were also treated to a special catered dinner of authentic Indian cuisine during a pre-show reception honoring the dance company. Organizers of the benefit included long time United Way supporters, Dr. Sadasiva Reddy and Dr. Nitin Ambani.

The benefit performance in Jackson kicks off a nearly two-month, worldwide tour for the Raja Reddy dance company, including performances in New York, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Brazil, and London, England.

Approximately \$12,000 was raised at the event, with proceeds supporting the Jackson School of the Arts and the United Way of Jackson County.

For further information, contact Jim Brian at the United Way of Jackson County, 784-0511.