

## **BOARD DEVELOPMENT CONSULTING**

### **Case Study: Victory Gardens Theater 2008**

Founded in 1974, Victory Gardens Theater has achieved local and national acclaim. A recipient of the 2001 Tony Award for Best Regional Theater, Victory Gardens devotes itself to new work and is unique in its mission to strengthen and enrich the playgoers experience with an ethnically and culturally diverse community of local and national playwrights. Committed to artistic excellence in the center of Chicago's vibrant arts community, Victory Garden presents annual mainstage shows and offers various programming to support local schools and the surrounding community with its 23 full-time staff and 33 board members.

Having recently settled into their new performance space at the totally renovated, historic Biograph Theater, it was time to lay the foundation for an update to Victory Garden's long range plan. In October of 2007, Victory Gardens approached Arts & Business Council (A&BC) Board Development Consulting (BDC) services for assistance in designing and facilitating a retreat to move the theater forward.

"The goal was to foster conversation about goals, activities and outcomes for the future of Victory Gardens Theater in its new facility," said Marcelle McVay, the theater's Managing Director.

"Their objective was to lay the groundwork for future planning and we facilitated discussions that focused on artistic considerations, audience development and board development," said BDC team leader Steve Carlson.

"Close collaboration between Board, staff and the BDC team enabled Victory Gardens Theater to efficiently lay the groundwork for an update to its strategic plan," Carlson said. "Strong support from the Board and staff enabled the project (including the board retreat) to be completed within 30 days." Post-retreat, a follow-up summary was presented at Victory Garden's next board meeting.

"The consulting team was very helpful in keeping the process on track and focused. Steve was a terrific listener and excellent guide," McVay said. The consulting process successfully provided a framework to move Victory Gardens into its next stage of planning and organizational development, positioning the theater to appropriately update their strategic plan.