

# Bringing theatre to the youth of Tsogo Sun's Arts Programme

20 March marks World Day of Theatre for Children, with thousands of children from around the globe being encouraged to experience the thrill of theatrical performances through a worldwide campaign initiated by ASSITEJ, the International Association of Theatres for Children and Young People.



As people from all walks of life are urged to 'take a child to the theatre so they can see, hear, feel, think and imagine', Tsogo Sun's Arts Academy is doing just that. The learners in the programme will, for the first time in 2014, be actively participating in the World Day of Theatre for Children.

Currently in its second year, Tsogo Sun's Arts Academy forms part of the extra-curricular activities of 12 schools in the Diepsloot and Mayfair communities, teaching 480 students the basics of drama, dance, vocal training and voice projection, together with a structured life skills course that covers a broad spectrum of topics to empower the youngsters to make sound choices throughout their lives.

As part of a year-long schedule showcasing the many and varied facets of the arts, the children spent the week (17-21 March) engaged in an intense series of workshops and theatre outings, followed by an integrated curriculum, which is designed to educate and nurture these young learners' minds around theatre and the production process while fostering life skills.

## Ongoing learning experience

During the week, the arts students attended the annual Naledi Arts Awards, workshops on what theatre is, theatre-themed sports games, theatre etiquette, the value of storyboards and storytelling, and group discussions on children's rights and responsibilities.

Throughout the year students will also experience backstage tours and enjoy a number of performances at The Lyric at

Gold Reef City and The Teatro at Montecasino, as well as have the opportunity to meet the performers of the various productions. The year will culminate in community concerts produced by the students themselves where they will showcase their hard work, talent and skills developed over the year.

"Tsogo Sun's focus on entertainment and theatre meant forming an Arts Academy for young people was a natural fit. The Arts Academy allows us to expose young school-goers to the world of arts, to identify the most talented young artists early on and to nurture their talent. The programme is aligned to government priorities to reintroduce extra-curricular activities back into schools and Tsogo Sun has worked closely with the Gauteng Department of Education in identifying schools and developing the programme," explains Vusi Dlamini, Tsogo Sun's Group HR Director of Tsogo Sun.

ASSITEJ was established in 1965, as a global alliance linking thousands of theatres, organisations and individuals working in the field of theatre for children and young people. The initiative highlights World Day of Theatre for Children as a conduit to advocate quality children's theatre, educate youth, cultivate youth's access to quality theatre and encourage an appreciation of theatre. "On March 20th, the World Day for Theatre for Children and Young People, ASSITEJ invites everyone to participate in our ongoing "Take a Child to the Theatre Today" campaign. YOU can make a difference to the children and young people with whom you come into contact. Give them a space to dream, bring them to the theatre or take the theatre to them, but make that magical contact happen!" says ASSITEJ International President Yvette Hradie.

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