

# Support ASSITEJ Day to promote theatre amongst youth

Every year ASSITEJ centres the world over celebrate the World Day for Theatre for Children and Young People on 20 March. For the next three years, the global association will be uniting theatres across the world in conveying one message: "Take a child to the theatre today".

Generously supported by the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund, ASSITEJ South Africa launched the global campaign in Vrygrond near Cape Town on 31 January 2012. In South Africa, the "Take a child to theatre today" campaign aims to engage with the theatre community, government departments, the private sector and the general public to advocate for the value of theatre in the lives of children and young people.

"ASSITEJ SA is bringing corporates on board to sponsor children to attend theatre, and we ask companies and receiving houses to open their doors on 20 March to children, young people and their families," says Yvette Hardie, director of ASSITEJ SA and president of ASSITEJ International. "The campaign goes to the heart of what ASSITEJ is all about, working to ensure that all children and young people have access to the arts."

## Children must fall in love with theatre

This will be an opportunity for emerging and established theatres and theatre companies across the country to join hands and encourage the development of audiences in community halls, schools, professional theatres and site specific venues. "Unless children are given the opportunity to fall in love with the theatre experience, we will have no theatre industry in the future," Hardie believes.

Each a year a significant world leader/artist in theatre for young people is asked to write the message for the ASSITEJ World Day. This year, it will be Suzanne Lebeau, celebrated and multiple award-winning French-Canadian playwright. She is keen to visit South Africa since ASSITEJ SA has produced her play, *The Ogreling*, and has commissioned Sindiwe Magona to translate it into isiXhosa (iZim'elincinci), and she is looking forward to seeing the local production, the first on the African continent.

Along with the campaign this year, ASSITEJ will be launching its ASSITEJ Youth Ambassador's programme, which encourages youth leadership and participation in the activities of the association. ASSITEJ Youth Ambassadors range in age from six to 25 and are passionate spokespeople for the value of theatre in their lives. They have the capacity to become catalysts for social cohesion and transformation, bridging divides between communities through exploring a common love of the theatre.

ASSITEJ encourages all South Africans to make a generous contribution of R10 by texting "Theatre4Youth" to 38490, thereby sponsoring children and youth to visit the theatre.

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