

arepp:Theatre for Life

presents



Look Before You Leap: Oh Yeah!



arepp:Theatre for Life has just completed a High School tour, performing our *Look Before You Leap: Oh Yeah!* show to Grade 8 learners across the Cape Town Metro districts.

In partnership with the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), **arepp:Theatre for Life** produced an Applied Theatre presentation which was aimed at addressing and engaging young adults around issues of **substance abuse, social expectations, relationships, and sex and sexuality awareness**. The show was specifically targeted for Grade 8 learners and was performed during the 3rd term of 2014 and 2015.

Using a rights-based approach, each show is age-appropriately crafted to highlight and foster thought and debate about the issues presented. Performed in the real-life context and home language of the audience, the productions are specifically designed to be performed as a Life Orientation lesson in the schools' daily schedule and to complement and support the outcomes of the national Life Orientation curriculum statements.

Look Before You Leap: Oh Yeah! has been in **arepp:Theatre for Life's** repertoire since 2004 and has been performed a number of times in High Schools across the country. The show also focuses on the myths and lack of transparency surrounding substance use, HIV/AIDS, sexual behaviour, and basic rights. It challenges and highlights pre-conceived notions and stereotypes regarding the roles of men and women, and their 'place' in society; and equips the audience with the skills and knowledge to identify potentially harmful situations, how to avoid them, and where to seek help.



Look Before You Leap: Oh Yeah! was performed in the third term of 2014 and 2015, and we've had 2 amazing teams who brought the productions to life.

In 2014, Roxanne Blaise directed Hein Poole, Shaun Klaasen, Siyasanga Nkata and Yentl Bosman. The 2015 cast included Almar Müller, Courtney Smith, Shaun Klaasen and Sonia Buqwana, who were directed by Kathleen Stephens.

Each team rehearsed for two weeks during the June/July school holidays and opened to an super excited Grade 8 audience in the third term.

Oh Yeah! has a strong focus on Substance Abuse, those who received the programme were targeted schools nominated by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) who's learners were struggling with alcohol and/or drugs. The show has had an enormous impact over the two years, with both learners and educators feeling positive about the impact of the intervention.

Over the 2 years, **arepp:Theatre for Life** performed over 150 shows to more than 21,000 learners!

Look Before You Leap: Oh Yeah!

Oh Yeah! pivots around the first school dance of the year and the competitiveness, the pressures, the rivalry and temptations that such events bring to bear. The audience share with the characters the frustrations of not always fitting in, of being different, of feeling unsure of yourself, and of not being able to live up to everyone's expectations The show's focus is an examination of peer and social relationships, the allure of alcohol and drugs, and the need to fit in while struggling to find and keep your own identity.

Ultimately it's about understanding the nature of expectations, the pressures they can bring to bear, and the consequences of easy solutions, and so learning to trust and believe in yourself, and your own choices, rather than becoming trapped by the expectations or pressures or ill-considered decisions of others.



“I responded mostly to the drugs and the alcohol because I see these problems a lot in my community”

- Grade 8 Learner, 2014

“The most valuable thing for me was the way they went into detail about stuff. And it explained to me to be very careful about the choices I make in life.

- Grade 8 Learner, 2015

As part of **arepp: Theatre for Life's** ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation, the learners complete and evaluation in which they share how they felt about the presentation.

The learners often compared themselves to the characters and compared their own struggles to the struggles of the characters. They also placed a huge emphasis on their ability to make better choices and to take responsibility for their lives, particularly in relation to peer pressure when it comes to drugs, alcohol and sex because they were able to see similar situations and the consequences of choice played out by the characters.

Specifically, their response to themes around Substance Abuse was mature. They engaged in thoughtful and considered decisions when discussing these issues. They engaged with characters who both experienced and perpetrated peer pressure in relation to Substance Abuse. Many of the learners expressed that this is a very real situation for them and that it is something that happens everyday in their lives.

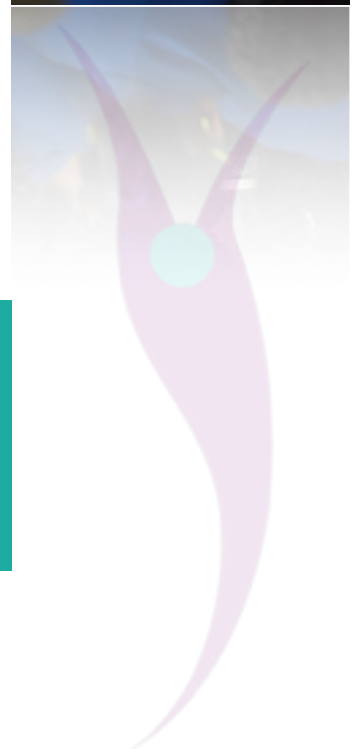
“The most valuable thing about the presentation was when they asked questions about real things, things that really happen around us”

- Grade 8 Learner, 2014

The learners also said that they thoroughly enjoyed the facilitated discussion at the end of the play because they were able to ask questions, share their thoughts and feelings about the show, and openly debate difficult issues in a safe and non-judgemental way.

“I also liked the discussion with the facilitators because they weren't scared of answering the questions we asked and they didn't judge the way we asked them”

- Grade 8 Learner, 2015





“Very relative and on par with their emotional and social development. I think the presentation has a positive impact on the learners as they can identify with many of the themes and topics that were presented”

- Educator, 2015

The Educators are also requested to complete an evaluation after each performance. Their feedback was consistently positive, supportive and appreciative. An overwhelming majority recognised the educational value of the show and called for more programmes like this that deal with rights and responsibility in relation to the learners. Several commented that they felt that the content of the presentation was relevant to the learning areas in the life-orientation curriculum, that the show was age appropriate and that the subject matter was relevant to the lives of the learners.

“I think that the performance will instil a long-term impact on the learners as it deals with current issues faced by young people today”

- Educator, 2015

They commented that the presentation was relevant to current issues facing the communities of the learners. One of the educators said that most of the learners live in an environment in which most of the community use alcohol and drugs.

The Educators also highlighted the medium of theatre as a valuable teaching tool. They felt the learners were able to relate and engage with the characters, which enhanced their understanding of the show’s themes and enabled them to make positive lifestyle choices.

“The innovative presentation of the challenges that learners face enlightened and educated them in a new way regarding these social and peer pressure related issues. It will undoubtedly leave an indelible mark on them”

- Educator, 2014

arepp:Theatre for Life is immensely proud of impact of the project, performing over 150 shows to 21,000 Grade 8 learners in Cape Town, and would like to thank our incredible teams and production staff for making this tour a success!

arepp:Theatre for Life would also like to thank the Western Cape Education Department for their generous support in making the *Look Before You Leap: Oh Yeah!* project possible.





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