

VSA arts of Minnesota

"Access to Performing Arts" Project 2007-2008

Goals of the project

- Identify theatres and other groups interested in making programs and spaces accessible to people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, of low vision, or have other disabilities;
- Match participating theatres with high-quality, theatrical American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters and Audio Describers;
- Promote high professional standards;
- Offer educational opportunities for theatrical ASL Interpreters, Describers & Theatres;
- Build a database of audience members who attend theatre/dance performances.

Benefits to groups participating in the project

- Matching funds up to \$100 to enable the ASL Interpretation or Audio Description for each of three productions (total \$300 by July 2008);
- Subsidized tickets (up to \$7 / ticket) for individuals who are Deaf or Blind & one companion;
- Marketing and publicity to organizations, individuals, publications and media sources used by people who are Deaf or Blind.

Responsibilities of the participating theatres

- Present a production offering ASL or Audio Description accommodations;
- Book interpreters/describers in advance;
- Assure availability of audio description equipment/receivers;
- Avoid conflicts with other accessible performances (check VSA arts calendar);
- Plan publicity and accessibility to the presentation thoroughly;
- If requesting *Access to Theatre* funding, return Final Report within 1 month of the event;
- Capture names/addresses of audience members using Access services.

Roles and responsibilities of Access to Performing Arts Partners

VSA arts of Minnesota will:

- (a) pay theatres matching interpreter/describer stipends & audience subsidies;
- (b) set up training/orientation meetings for theatres, Interpreters and Audio Describers;
- (c) build/maintain lists of ASL Theatrical Interpreters, Audio Describers and Audience;
- (d) develop supporting materials, update equipment, and fulfill grant responsibilities;
- (e) distribute publicity of ASL/AD performances to:
 - Disability organizations and agencies, and offices serving students with disabilities;
 - Individuals and Community Centers serving the Deaf and Blind communities;
 - Media with disability, arts or entertainment constituencies;
 - Computer on-line services, World Wide Web sites and voicemail recordings.

The Minnesota Association of Community Theatres will:

assist with publicity and marketing the *Access to Performing Arts* project through the MACT Hotline (612-706-1456 or 800-290-2428), *Minnesota Theatre* newsletter, Web site (www.mact.net) and weekly e-mails.

The Guthrie Theater will:

provide Audio Description apparatus: a mask/microphone system, listener headsets and a rechargeable battery unit. Reserve the equipment by calling Hunter Gullickson at 612-225-6243 or e-mail hunterg@guthrietheater.org; pick up at the Box Office.

Access to Performing Arts Project Reimbursement What to Do Next

Make Contacts ASAP

Good ASL Interpreters and Audio Describers book months in advance. VSA arts of Minnesota can provide lists of people available and can tell you what other accessible performances are planned on the dates you're considering.

Interpreter/Describer matching funds

To request funding support, send the attached Request for Funds and Publicity Form at least 5 weeks before shows to:

VSA arts of Minnesota, 528 Hennepin Avenue, Suite 305, Minneapolis, 55403

612-332-3888 Voice/TTY, Fax 612-305-0132, or e-mail: jon@vsaartsmn.org.

Each theatre or dance company is eligible to receive three mini-grants of up to \$100 each for three different productions during the year (through July 2008). We can publicize performances primarily intended as fund-raisers but do not provide funding for them.

Ticket Subsidy

VSA arts can reimburse you for ticket discounts offered to patrons who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing/Blind/Low Vision who use the ASL or Audio Description service and, if requested, to one companion. This applies to every play for which you send us a *Request for Funds and Publicity Form* (not just the two shows per year receiving interpreter/describer funding). If your ticket price is \$14 or more, the VSA subsidy is \$7. For prices less than \$14, the subsidy is 50% of the ticket cost. Thus, for a \$10 ticket the patron pays you \$5 and VSA reimburses you after receiving your Final Report.

Advance Publicity

Put ASL/AD performance information on your advance publicity (season brochures, media releases, postcards, e-mails, faxes, etc.) and make sure VSA arts of Minnesota receives copies. Access to Theatre calendar listings go out once a month to hit key media (20th-25th of each month), thus the need for 5 weeks' notice.

Reservations

Prepare your box office staff with information to give prospective deaf/ blind patrons: accessible show date(s), names of ASL interpreters or audio describer, ticket discounts, transportation directions, summary & running time of show, availability of a sensory tour, wheelchair seating, nearby TTY telephones, and alternative formats available (large print, e-mail, computer disk, Braille). If they ask for an *Access to Performing Arts* discount, **take the patron's name, address, phone # & e-mail** (for building the patron database, confirming subsidies & finder's fees), and tell them the ticket price they will pay.

Credit

Whenever possible, credit funders of accessibility accommodations to alert other audience members to the availability of this service for their friends. For instance: Accessibility services (Audio Description or American Sign Language Interpreting) are provided in part by VSA arts of Minnesota *Access to Theatre* Project, United Arts and Medtronic Foundation.

After the performance,

mail, fax or e-mail within two months of the event:

- (1) the Final Report (which we send you upon receiving the Request/Publicity form),
- (2) a copy of the employment agreement with the audio describer or interpreter, and
- (3) names/contact info of people who received subsidies. VSA arts of Minnesota will reimburse you for half of the describing/interpreting fee up to \$100, plus ticket subsidies.

THANK YOU -- and have a successful, accessible run!

Access to Performing Arts Project Request for Funds & Publicity for Accessible Performances

At least **5 weeks** before you schedule an Audio Described (AD) or ASL-interpreted performance, send this request for funding and publicity sheet to:
Jon Skaalen, VSA arts of Minnesota, 528 Hennepin Avenue, #305, Minneapolis 55403;
Fax 612-305-0132; jon@vsaartsmn.org; FMI: 612-332-3888 or 800-801-3883

Your Name: _____ Date: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Web site: _____ Email: _____

Are you seeking VSA funding for ASL/AD costs for this show? _____

Will you participate in the Access to Theatre ticket subsidy? _____

(ASL/AD audience member pays less; VSA reimburses you up to \$7 per person)

Show Information:

Performing Co./Artist: _____

Performance Venue: _____

Venue Address: _____

Box Office Phone: _____ TTY (if available) _____

Performance Title: _____

Author: _____

ASL-Interpreted Show Dates/Times: _____

ASL-Interpreter Name(s): _____

Audio Described Show Dates/Times: _____

Audio Descriptor Name(s): _____

Ticket Price range \$ ____ - \$ ____ . Price for users of ASL or AD service: \$ _____

Production Run (first thru last dates): _____ to _____

Summary of play: _____
