

May 2009

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Award-winning independent production company Love Productions (www.loveproductions.co.uk) has been commissioned by the prestigious Arts department at Channel 4 to make 'Bright Young Things' (working title), a ground-breaking project which will give young people with autism and their families from around the UK the chance to come together and benefit from taking part in a unique artistic project encompassing music, dance and drama.

We are looking for people like you and your family to participate. At this stage it is important to stress that we will be working with our ASD experts throughout the application process to ensure that each potential participant is suitable for this experience. Unfortunately not every applicant will be able to take part in the television series, and some people might be disappointed. Please bear this in mind when you are considering applying and completing the documentation.

OUR PROJECT

The high profile new series, which we anticipate will be broadcast in early 2010, will take the form of a prime-time documentary broadcast in four one hour episodes. It will follow a cast of people with autism, their families and professionals as they devise and stage a brand new show.

Under the guidance of a team of experts in stage performance, and supported by advisors in ASDs, young people from across the country, aged between 11-25 years old, will embark on a creative journey together, working individually and collaboratively to create a brand new show, that will culminate in a high profile awareness-raising performance in a central London location at the end of 2009.

The filming will be in the style of an observational documentary, conducted by a small team of professional, sensitive film-makers. We will also film the young people at home to provide a unique insight into the lives of autistic children and their families in a way that has never been seen on British television before.

OUR AIMS

Love Productions and Channel 4 believe that this series can raise the awareness and understanding of ASDs in an intelligent, populist and accessible way. The project will enrich and celebrate the unique skills and talents of people with autism; it will be positive and life-affirming and we hope it will show what it is like to live with this complex condition.

The series will also explore the positive role that creativity can play in improving the lives of those with this condition. The project will play to the strengths of its participants and we hope it should encourage socialising and potentially improve the young people's self-esteem and confidence. All those involved hope and expect that this extraordinary creative journey will leave a lasting legacy in which many more autistic young people will discover the benefits of performance.

OUR SUPPORTERS

We have support from many major charities, schools and professionals working in the area of autism, including **The National Autistic Society, Research Autism, Autism Awareness, Autism Speaks, Autism Alliance, Music for Autism, Turtle Key Arts and Roundabout Music and Drama Therapy**. They will provide expert guidance on the project and representatives from different organisations will sit on a steering committee to help monitor progress and ensure they are happy at all times with how the project is being conducted.

A professional theatre company will work with the cast to create a collaborative piece of theatre that will come from the cast, and play to their strengths. The creative team will be fully supported and mentored in their artistic endeavours by experts who work exclusively with drama, music and dance for people with autism. Together, they will facilitate workshops and rehearsals and ensure that the experience is a positive one for everybody involved.

We will be working with professional staff, composers, designers and writers to ensure a polished final performance of which all the participants and their families will be proud. We are currently in the process of securing a central London Theatre for the performance, to take place at the end of 2009.

WHO CAN TAKE PART

We are keen to open this unique opportunity to as many people as possible across the Autism Spectrum. We're looking for approximately ten children and young people in total who are between 11 and 25 years old.

Participants should ideally have some verbal skills, but they do not need to have any previous experience or obvious aptitude in acting, music or dance. This is a chance for people who may normally be excluded from mainstream extra-curricular activities. We will have a support network in place to ensure all participants are in a safe and protected environment.

We're also very keen to find young people whose families are happy to be part of the observational documentary, so that we can also document what it is like for families to live with a child with ASD.

We intend that the experience will prove enjoyable, beneficial and rewarding for everyone involved.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT

Many of the exact arrangements for the performances, workshops and rehearsals will be confirmed as we proceed; however we will endeavour to give you as much detail and notice as possible.

In broad brushstrokes, we anticipate that the young people will meet and work together during their school holidays as much as possible, with occasional weekend meetings during term-time. If you or your child is selected to take part in the project we will liaise with your school about potentially missing a short period of school. We will try and ensure as many workshops as possible take place within school holidays.

Most of these events will be held in London or in the surrounding area. Travel and loss of

earnings expenses will be covered and for those who live out of London suitable accommodation will be provided.

We are also very keen to film in your own home if possible; this is to ensure we get a real insight into what it is like to live with the condition. We will create as little disruption as possible, and have only small teams and minimal equipment; we aim to be as intimate as possible.

WHAT TO DO NOW

Enclosed with this letter is a detailed application form which should be filled in by a parent, guardian or young person themselves if over 18 years old. Please provide as much information as possible and email or post back to Nonie Creagh-Brown at Love Productions. **The cut off date for applications is July 5th 2009, but we'd encourage you to send applications back as soon as possible. The cast is limited and the applications will be considered on a first come first served basis.**

Email: nonie.creagh-brown@loveproductions.co.uk

Postal address:

**Nonie Creagh-Brown
'Bright Young Things' (working title)
Love Productions
43 Eagle Street
London WC1R 4AT**

The application process:

1st round: Applicants will be contacted to discuss their forms within several weeks of their application being received.

2nd round: Successful applicants will be visited in person and briefly filmed. Their families might be filmed as well. These films will be presented to the Executive Producer and Channel 4.

3rd round: Within several weeks we would hope to be able to contact those applicants who have been selected to take part in the project. We will contact everyone to let them know whether their application has been successful.

ABOUT LOVE PRODUCTIONS

Love Productions is an award-winning UK-based independent production company set up in October 2004. We specialise in thought-provoking, intelligent television.

We've made agenda setting documentaries - *Me and My Mum*, *Stairlift to Heaven* and *I Want My Dad Back* and *Can't stop eating*. We also have made successful ground breaking hit formats - *The Baby Borrowers*, *Filthy Rich and Homeless*, *Britain's Missing Top Model*, and *Boys and*

Girls Alone.

The senior editorial team has a proven track record in Documentaries, Factual Entertainment, Entertainment, Features and Daytime. Between us we have made award-winning documentaries, devised formats which have sold around the world and produced long-running returning series for all the major UK broadcasters. Love has production bases in London, Bristol and Los Angeles.

Best wishes,

Nonie Creagh-Brown.

Producer