

## SHOWKIDS INVITATIONAL THEATRE BROCHURE



ShowKids Invitational Theatre (SKIT) is a non-profit youth organization dedicated to making theatre magic for audiences of all ages. Based in High Bridge, New Jersey, SKIT offers the community professional-quality family entertainment from its home at Voorhees High School in Lebanon Township.

SKIT presents two full-scale musical productions per year, with each show running for 6 to 8 performances. Past productions have included “Annie”, “Cinderella”, “The Sound of Music”, “Fiddler on the Roof”, “Little Shop of Horrors” and “Bye, Bye, Birdie”.

The most common reaction of first-time SKIT audience members is “I didn’t expect it to be that good!” They discover what founder, producer and director Carolyn Newman knows – there is no limit to what children can achieve if they work hard and enjoy what they’re doing. In fact, in 2001 SKIT was named Outstanding Community Theatre by the Recognition of Excellence in Community Theatre (RECT) organization – the highest honor in New Jersey community theatre.



### WHERE CHILDREN STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE

There are approximately 150 members of SKIT, ranging in age from 7 to 18. Most hail from Hunterdon County, but there are some from Warren and Somerset Counties as well. Being involved with SKIT is a tremendously positive and rewarding experience for the children. They learn how to work together with others to accomplish their goal: a successful show capable of delighting audiences. They learn that the harder they work, the better their performances. And the better their performances, whether they are in starring roles or in the chorus, the better the show as a whole.

Although rehearsals are time-consuming, most SKIT members still manage to be above average students. Many also are involved in other activities: sports, music, dance or student government. They learn to make the most of the time they have, which sometimes means studying during a rehearsal break, instead of socializing. The atmosphere is one of achievement, and the lessons they learn in striving for excellence on stage carry over to their daily lives.

## ABOUT THE PRODUCER



Carolyn Newman founded SKIT in 1987, though it could be said that SKIT found her. A former nutritionist, Newman was asked to direct a small children's production, and soon after the performance began receiving calls from parents who wanted to know how their kids could join her group. Though she had not intended to go beyond that one production, she suddenly found herself with a fledgling theatre troupe. She has since guided SKIT through many successful seasons, and has watched as the ranks of cast members and fans alike have grown!

Newman has received several personal honors for her work, including the Golden Award from the Hunterdon Chamber of Commerce. In 1992 she was proud to accept the MasterCard Leadership in Entrepreneurial Achievement and Philanthropy (LEAP) Award for the U.S. Eastern Region. She was also nominated for Outstanding Director and Outstanding Production for her 1996 musical "Bye, Bye Birdie, as well as for Outstanding Production for 1997's "The Wizard of Oz".

## SKIT BRANCHES OUT

As the ranks of SKIT members have grown over the years, the group has diversified in order to accommodate the members' various skill and experience levels. In 1997 the Pre-SKIT group was formed as a training ground for children under 12 who are new to theatre. The group meets weekly, engaging in theatre games, attending seminars and rehearsing and performing one modest-sized production per year. Past Pre-SKIT



productions include "Really Rosie", a whimsical show featuring music and lyrics by children's author Maurice Sendak, "Wanna Play?", a revue of engaging musical numbers dealing with the trials, tribulations and joys of growing up and the perennially popular "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown".

There is also a SKIT Traveling Troupe, which, as its name implies, takes its performances out on the road. They have performed at an eclectic array of venues, including the "Magic of Alexandria" Balloon Festival, Franklin Township School (Warren County) and the groundbreaking ceremony for a park in Lebanon Township (where the back of a flatbed truck served as a stage). The Troupe is made up of children and teens from the mainstage group. Rather than perform one complete show, the Troupe usually does a revue of production numbers from different musicals.

## THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN SKIT



The parents of SKIT members are integral to the success of the group. SKIT is structured as a family activity; parents are required to perform backstage duties in order to ensure the success of the show. They construct sets, make costumes, sell tickets, design hair and make-up effects and do sound and lighting, among the myriad tasks involved in mounting a full-scale production. Rather than look at those jobs as burdensome, most parents relish the opportunities to utilize their creative talents and spend meaningful time with their kids.

Parents also contribute financially to SKIT. Families pay a sliding scale tuition each year, with the money going directly toward the productions. Since tuition offsets only part of the production cost, parents also pitch in to spearhead several fundraising drives throughout the year.



## SKIT MISSION STATEMENT

- To offer the community professional-caliber entertainment, primarily full-scale productions of family-oriented musicals.
- To provide SKIT members (children ages 7-18) with a nurturing theatrical experience. The children strive for excellence in theatre in an environment which fosters self-esteem through achievement.
- To provide SKIT parents with opportunities to spend quality time with their children working towards a common goal, thereby enriching the lives of both parents and children.