

For the last five years, the “Youth Theatre Troupe of Sderot” has enabled youth from the city of varied backgrounds – religious and secular, new immigrants and veteran Israelis – to work in partnership and to share their experiences and air their voices and concerns to the community in a productive and creative manner. Unfortunately, when the security threats began to escalate last year and Sderot again fell victim to continual, brutal attacks, activities for youth were stilted and the troupe’s activities came to a halt.

That’s when you stepped in to make a difference. Thanks in large part to your dedication and support, the troupe has resumed its activities and is even surpassing its previous success. Ilanit Suissa, a graduate of Tel Aviv University and the director of the troupe, moved from Tel Aviv to Sderot in order demonstrate her commitment to the city and its struggle, and to show her commitment to the youth of the city. She is a gifted and talented professional and a true role model for our local youth, and especially for the members of the Youth Theatre Troupe..

Last October, auditions for additional participants took place at regional schools and ten new members were selected. The new group comprises 14 young participants in grades 10-12, new and returning members.

During the months of November-March, the group held several meetings to get to know one another and begin working as a team. The participants learned basic concepts of drama and developed the text for their new production, “Cabaret for Times of Emergency.” Rehearsals began in December and intensified through March, when it was performed for over 300 viewers in a premiere performance for the inauguration of the new public auditorium of Sderot.

“Cabaret for Times of Emergency” has been described as “a moving performance in which [the youth of Sderot] effectively convey, with humor, scenes from the daily life of youth in Sderot.” Producing and performing the play allowed the participants and enables viewers to express their fears of incoming Kassam missiles while maintaining a fierce desire to continue their lives and to maintain healthy, routine, normal lifestyles in Sderot.

As a result of the immense talent on stage as actors, singers and dancers, and the powerful message of the play, the troupe was invited to perform in Paris in July, and will perform for the leaders of the French Jewish community, as well as at the Youth Theatre Festival. Upon their return, the production will be marketed to community centers, schools and theatres throughout Israel.

The “Youth Theatre Troupe of Sderot” is a phenomenal program, contributing to the social and educational and cultural opportunities in the city, enabling performers and audiences to express their experiences through an alternative format, and encouraging community-building in a community of Israel that needs and truly appreciates your important support. The members and staff of the troupe, the staff of the Sderot Community Center, the youth, young adults and families of Sderot and the staff at UIA in Israel THANK YOU for making this program possible. You are helping us make a real and meaningful difference in Israel!