



**Patrons:**

**Jimmy Carr** (Comedian, TV presenter, writer)

**Tanni Grey-Thompson** (Athlete, Life Peeress & Disability Campaigner)

David Burgess  
The Apollo Foundation



Dear Mr Burgess,

I am writing to ask the Apollo Foundation to consider supporting Mask On Mask Off Theatre with a grant of £1,500 towards our 2024 Panto Tour. We are a small registered charity based in Anytown, led by volunteers with a passion for inclusion. We work exclusively with, and for the benefit of disabled children and their families and have been performing across Anytown and the surrounding region for the last 13 years. Our overriding aim is to relieve the needs of children/young people with a wide range of disabilities through stimulating and engaging theatre activities. We are hoping to bring our multi-sensory Panto to 18 special schools this year as well as providing 5 community events that the whole family can enjoy. These performances give children with disabilities an opportunity to enjoy an interactive and immersive Panto experience with their families or school friends.

For many children with special needs and their families attending a traditional theatre can be a daunting experience and has many barriers. Our performances are designed to help overcome these barriers with advance packs to help prepare the children, a relaxed and safe atmosphere and a cast that understands and adapts to the needs of each and every child. *"He cannot cope with being in a traditional theatre set-up, so thank you for bringing the theatre to him at level he can understand and appreciate."*

There is only one theatre in Anytown with a changing place toilet (with hoist and changing bed) and none in the neighbouring borough of Somewhereville. We use special schools as venues as they provide the kind of facilities that the families we reach need. With support from our funders, we are able also to keep ticket prices low (£5 pp) - with most mainstream Panto productions costing in excess of £100 for a family of 4 we provide an affordable alternative that is local and accessible for disadvantaged families. *"It was really wonderful to have an activity that my disabled child and my four year old could enjoy together"*.

Special schools also often struggle to find inclusive activities/events that they can attend with students. They have to find accessible venues, organise transport and consider the safety of children, many of whom have high support needs and find new environments distressing. Our school performances provide the answer. They are fully inclusive and we work with the school and students to ensure that everyone is involved as we bring the panto to them. Some students also have the opportunity to join us as volunteer actors providing an unforgettable experience for many as they perform in front of their peers. Students develop confidence, teamwork and a feeling of inclusion. Feedback from schools shows that we are providing a really valuable experience:

*"Our students thoroughly enjoyed the pantomime. Your team were fantastic."*

*"From a staff point of view I saw a couple of children completely come out of themselves and interact in a way I've never seen before, something I was able to feed back to their parents and carers. Thank you so much for giving them a wonderful experience."*

Mask On Mask Off Theatre: Registered Charity No: 3781611

25 Tragedy Lane ° Anytown ° Somewhereville NE7 0WN ° Tel/Fax: 01357 924680

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We already have good relationships with schools and venues across Anytown and Somewhereville and will be firming up on dates once funding has been secured to support delivery. Donors will be acknowledged and thanked in programmes, press releases and via our social media channels. We are keen to increase our sustainability by making a charge for our performances to those attending but also recognise that extra funding is needed to make this affordable for the disadvantaged people we aim to reach.

Panto season is a special time of year. Do you want to help us ensure that children with learning disabilities have an opportunity to enjoy this experience just like anyone else? With your support we can make a lasting impact for the children and families we support. *"It means so much to the children and you have helped us to create lasting memories for them."* Our Pantomimes give children with disabilities the opportunity to 'live their best lives' by giving them the same opportunities as other children. We break down barriers and bring the Panto to them in a fun, accessible and positive way. *"He cannot cope with being in a traditional theatre set-up, so thank you for bringing the theatre to him at level he can understand and appreciate."*

A copy of our project budget/current fundraising plan is given below for reference and a copy of our latest signed annual report and accounts is attached. Thank you for your time in considering our request.

Typical Expenditure - 1 Day (2 performances or workshop and a performance)

2 x Actors @ £165 plus 1 x Actor/Tour Manager @ £175 =	£505
Share of production costs (to include props, costumes, script, music, storage, rehearsals)	494
Direct Admin Costs	150
Travel: Van and Petrol	95
Volunteer Expenses	70
Share of organisation Overheads	<u>178</u>
<b>Expenditure Total for one day</b>	<b>£1492</b>

**Secured Income**

Garfield Weston (overheads)	£178	
School Contribution	<u>450</u>	
<b>Income Total for one day</b>		<b><u>628</u></b>

Funding Shortfall per day	<u>864</u>
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<b>Funding Request</b>	<b>£1,500</b>
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The remaining costs will be met through community fundraising/additional grants. The total cost of the tour is £32,851. We have secured £22,134 to date and have bids pending for £4,765. We are constantly researching potential donors and feel confident that we will reach our target. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information. Thank you for your time in considering our request.

Yours sincerely,

*Lee*

Lee Durr  
Voluntary CEO

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