

NEWS

What would you stand up to save?

A New Vic community project puts the protests of local youngsters on stage

Saturday 31 July

Young people are making a stand on stage this month as part of a project exploring their community.

Members of the New Vic's Young People's Theatre Company are taking part in *Regeneration*, a theatre piece based on Stephen King's *Roadwork*.

The drama tells the story of a new road that threatens to split a community in two and asks: what would you stand up to save?

As part of the interactive experience, theatregoers are being invited to participate in the production, write their opinions on placards and play a direct role in the 'protest' alongside the young actors.

Established for young people of different abilities and backgrounds, the Young People's Theatre Company is made up of children previously involved in projects with the New Vic's award-winning community programme, *Borderlines*.

Around 20 local youngsters, ranging from those at risk of offending to those with special educational needs, are taking part in the play. Through workshops they have explored the aspects of what a community is and debated their thoughts on urban regeneration.

Director of the Young People's Theatre Company, Chris Lewin, said: "*The Young People's Theatre Company is about giving these youngsters something stable in their lives. And, for us, the most important aspect about any production is the journey of the young people involved and seeing them flower.*"

"It's been fascinating to see how the opinions of our young participants have mirrored those of some local councillors. These young people really understand and care about regeneration in our city and the communities they live in."

Regeneration forms part of a major New Vic *Borderlines* project, *The World in Our Street*, taking place across Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme. The project explores what makes a community: is it the houses, buildings and street? Is it the families and individuals? How are communities formed and when do they come together? And what would a community fight for?

Borderlines Director, Sue Moffat, explains: "*We are helping the people involved to explore the diversity within their communities and learn to appreciate each other.*"

"Within the project the participants can express their own worries and hopes for the future, so we can help them to find a positive solution, and create for themselves a safer community."

Tickets, which cost £3.50, are available from the box office on 01782 717962.

Regeneration will be showing at the New Vic Theatre on Saturday 31 July, at 4pm. For more information contact Charlotte Moulder on 01782 717954 ext 309 or email cmoulder@newvictheatre.org.uk

The multi award-winning New Vic *Borderlines* team works with some of North Staffordshire's most disadvantaged communities: young people in trouble, people with learning disabilities and children under seven and their families. The team uses theatre to help people find new and positive ways to understand themselves, their communities and their responsibilities. They challenge destructive and anti-social attitudes, build self-awareness and self-worth, and develop positive attitudes.