



**INVISIBLE THEATRE - PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**THE INVISIBLE THEATRE  
and  
THE LOFT CINEMA**

*Presents*

**A DISABILITY AWARENESS MONTH SCREENING**

*Of*

**SUCH GOOD FRIENDS**

**A documentary by Cyndee Wing and Film-IT Productions**

**With Theme Song by Amanda McBroom  
(Composer of “The Rose”) and Michele Brouman**

**Saturday, October 29, 2016 at 11:00 a.m.  
(Doors open at 10:45 a.m.)**

**The Loft Cinema  
3233 E. Speedway Blvd. Tucson, AZ**

*(September 30, 2016, Tucson, Arizona);* **SUCH GOOD FRIENDS** is an award winning documentary chronicling the Invisible Theatre of Tucson’s Pastime Players. For over 30 years, Susan Claassen, artistic director of the Invisible Theatre, has spearheaded this arts project. She, Gail Fitzhugh and a dedicated group of artists teach theatre, music and dance twice a week to exceptional education students. Verl, Danny, Beth, Janna, Meg and Jennifer have been members of this performance troupe. Their connections and ultimate friendship tells the story of two very different worlds coming together through the power of the arts. In the documentary, we witness how they have changed the lives of the other individual participants and a community. We also see how this project has changed their lives. We meet their families and follow them as they embark on adulthood. We watch them as they make choices and struggle with the rigors of putting together their theatrical performance – **THE ME INSIDE OF ME.**

This production is made possible in part through the generous support of  
The David C. and Lura M. Lovell Foundation

# SUCH GOOD FRIENDS

Saturday, October 29, 2016 at 11:00 a.m.  
(Doors open at 10:45 a.m.)

The screening will be held at  
The Loft Cinema  
3233 E. Speedway Blvd. Tucson, AZ.

FREE! Seating is very limited!

Running time for the screening and discussion – 1 hr, 45 min

For information and special needs seating, call The Invisible Theatre at (520) 884-0672

[www.invisibletheatre.com](http://www.invisibletheatre.com)

**SUCH GOOD FRIENDS** is much more than a film about a theatre project in an inner-city public school. It is an unforgettable journey from heart to art. Each story is a triumph over the odds. Some make it to the final performance - others don't. Some students make it in life - others don't. Some are defined by their disability and others by their ability. **SUCH GOOD FRIENDS** is what makes the difference.

In speaking about this project, Susan Claassen says "PROJECT PASTIME exemplifies an innovative program that proves the idea that when artists, teachers, administrators, funding agents, students and parents come together we really can make a difference! It has been my dream to make a film that showed the world that we are only limited by limited expectations - Expect the most and that is what you will get! When I contacted my longtime colleague and award-winning filmmaker, Cyndee Wing, she immediately came on board. As a direct result of working on this documentary, Cyndee went back to school and supplemented her Master's Degree in Education in a post-graduate program and became a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. This program has been life-changing for everyone involved."

This documentary is the culmination of five years of filming. Our most recent collaborators are Amanda McBroom and Michele Brouman. When asked why she would write the theme song for the film, Amanda replied, *"First of all, I would follow Susan Claassen to the ends of the earth. I think she is an astounding force for good and for art on the planet. Being able to participate with the Pastime Players is good art! And inspiration. And hope. And most of all, it is an example of the major importance participating in theater plays in the lives of young people. It is imperative that theater be brought back into the schools to feed the imagination and creative inspiration of every student. Theater jump starts the confidence in all young people, especially these fabulous kids in the Pastime Players. I am honored to be included in the project!"*

Harriet Tubman said *"Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world."* It is the Invisible Theatre's hope that this film will be an inspiration for other communities around the world to create similar projects and to reach for the stars."

# **“SUCH GOOD FRIENDS” CAST OF PLAYERS**

## **THE PASTIME PLAYERS**

Over a decade before the Presidential campaign of 2008, the Invisible Theatre’s Pastime Players adopted the motto “Yes, We Can!” to help motivate our public school Special Needs programming. During the Pastime Player’s inspiring musical performance, those three words come to life in a way that leaves no heart untouched and no soul unstirred! The Invisible Theatre’s Pastime Players, under the direction of Susan Claassen, started as a workshop in 1984 and has grown into a prototype of innovative arts education programming that focuses on ability rather than dwelling on disability. The project is centered at the culturally diverse Doolen Middle School in the Tucson Unified School District. The students (ages 10-14) receive instruction from the artists of the Invisible Theatre in music, drama and dance. The year-long instruction culminates in the production of an original musical called THE ME INSIDE OF ME.

No wonder there are outstanding ovations at each performance! No wonder these students have gained the respect and admiration of their peers and esteemed professionals including everyone from Dame Cleo Laine and Sir John Dankworth to the award-winning actor, Kathleen Chalfant!

The Pastime Player’s Touring Troupe has performed throughout Arizona in such diverse venues as the state legislature, Raytheon Corporation, The City of Hope – National Spirit of Life Dinner and at the Senior Olympics Opening Ceremonies. Audiences have ranged in size from 20 to 5,000. The Pastime Players handled themselves brilliantly in each of these unique settings. The Pastime Players also help to educate a community about the special gifts we all have to share and showcase the best of America’s public education.

The Pastime Players exemplifies an innovative project that supports the concept that when artists, teachers, legislators, administrators, funding agents, students and parents come together as a community, we really can make a difference! We are only limited by limited expectations: Expect the most and we get the most!

Some consider what these young people have achieved as mere dreams, but as Eleanor Roosevelt said, “The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams!” The Pastime Players have proven her right.

## **THE INVISIBLE THEATRE**

The Invisible Theatre (IT) of Tucson, founded in 1971, is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and is dedicated to producing quality theatre and arts education experiences for all facets of the community in an intimate setting that showcases local professional talent and guest artists. IT takes its name from the invisible energy that flows between a performer and audience, creating the magic of theatre. Film-IT productions is a part of the Invisible Theatre - Artistic Director, Susan Claassen and Associate Artistic Director, James Blair.

## **THE LOFT CINEMA**

The Loft Cinema is a nonprofit, community-supported cinema that honors the vision of filmmakers, celebrates ideas and promotes the appreciation and understanding of the art of film. It is Tucson’s premiere venue for art films – independent, foreign, alternative and classic narrative films and documentaries.