

## Families betray children

Contributed by Wonder Guchu  
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A Friend in Need, National Theatre of Namibia's fourth and last Back Stage offering under the Theatre Zone banner ran Wednesday and Thursday last week.

Written and directed by Marelize Maletsky with the help of veteran actor, David Ndjavera, A Friend in Need, focuses on that time in the life of the youth when the world seems to be treating them wrong.

It is about when the youth engage in different searches for their identities and when their search collides with the general and accepted societal norms.

Said to be based on a true life story, A Friend in Need, which is set in Khomasdal focuses on the lives of three teenagers from dysfunctional families.

One of the youth was brought up by a step-father and her gripe is why she was not told earlier about it. In anger, she leaves home, gets into drugs and alcohol. She has no respect for her mother and uses every little excuse to fleece her step-father financially.

The other youth is a policeman's son. Although his parents are alive and living together, the youth runs away from home to live on the streets where he can get drugs and alcohol. Some times he has to steal from his parents to feed his habit.

The third youth has a problem with her parents and she opts for the street where friends feed her drugs and alcohol.

Today society has changed. The standard family unit does not exist any more. While years back, family members cared for each other, today it's one man for himself. This has created anger and frustration among youth who have nowhere to go but resort to drugs and alcohol.

This is A Friend in Need's strength &ndash; a correct portrayal of society today.

Although the play had sad episodes like when one of the youth almost died in a fight, it also has moments of humour which rocked the audience throughout.

I have realised that the NTN Back Stage is not only a learning ground for actors and playwrights but a venue for brilliant stage make-up.

There were three setting &ndash; a shebeen, a shed and a place in the garden. There was also sand brought in to make the set real.

Actors: Donovan Van Schalkwyk, Lizel Jankowsky, Arlene Mouton, Stanley Gariseb, Pontsettia Van Wyk, Guy-Willson Mbuba, Angeliqne China, Hubert Kavandje, Steven Afrikaner and Sylvani Beukes.