

RDEČI NOSKI (RED NOSES) PROGRAMS PESTER ORKESER (CARAVAN ORCHESTRA) AND NAŠA DRAGA ŠKATLA (OUR DEAR BOX)



LOCATION: Ljubljana, Slovenia

TARGET GROUP: Children with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities from 3-18 years old

The mission of Association Red Noses is to inspire joy, cheerfulness and courage. The clown visits of the Red Noses are mainly aimed at children in the children's wards of Slovenian hospitals, but they also visit other health and social institutions, such as homes for the elderly, kindergartens and schools for children with special needs. The red noses bring art to places where children and adults are otherwise



Photo: Agencija Bobo

deprived of such experiences. They approach children and adults who are particularly vulnerable with openness, honesty and humour, easing the days they must spend in a non-domestic environment, inspiring cheerful thoughts, courage and confidence. In this way, they have a positive impact on the emotional quality of life, which helps the audience to face difficult situations with courage. Clowns are dedicated to everyone, with all their heart, knowledge and talent.

The program Caravan orchestra is a show specially designed for children and youngsters with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities. It originates from the Netherlands, where Stichting CliniClowns has been running a similar program for many years and learning what works the best for this target group and how to adapt the performance to their needs.

Performance Our dear box was created by Red noses and is based on their extensive experiences with performing program caravan orchestra around Slovenia.

Performers believe that all children and youngsters have the right to experience quality art and the aim of this performance is to enable children and youngsters to use their senses to experience it. Both performances have a very simple structure but its essence lies not in the story itself, but in the way it allows children and youngsters to use their senses to experience it and be part of it. The show is based on music, on touch and on visual experience. The three actors address the participants individually

by singing their names and the most important aim of the show is for the participants to relax within the show and experience it as they want to. This means that they can participate in it or just observe it.

And because the clowns want to be able to focus on each person individually, the number of participants in the show is limited to maximum 9 people (including accompanying persons).

In their experience, this is the optimum number of people to keep children and youngsters relaxed, concentrated and to allow the clowns to focus on each person. It is also important that the performance is in the familiar place with the familiar people so participants can feel safe.



Photo: Društvo Rdeči noski

People with diverse abilities are often excluded from traditional performances, as these shows are rarely adapted to their needs. In conventional performances, they may feel overwhelmed by the large crowds, have trouble seeing from a distance, and may struggle to concentrate due to unfamiliarity with the space. But when performances are thoughtfully tailored to them, they can reveal surprising abilities that even their educators might not have expected.

These performances which are designed especially for them, allow the participants not just to watch but to actively join in and be a part of the performance. They can walk around, speak up, come on stage, and interact with performers. This immersive, inclusive approach fosters greater focus and concentration, helping them to truly engage with the experience.

Play is a fundamental need for every child, regardless of their abilities or special needs. Children with unique needs share the same desire for playfulness and self-expression. Sometimes, educators and accompanying person are amazed to see how these children and youngsters respond: those who normally show little interest in certain objects become intrigued when they see these items used in new ways. Often, they continue playing with these everyday objects long after the performance, exploring them from fresh perspectives. These moments highlight the importance of adaptation and individualized approaches; children who are usually reserved open up, while hyperactive children find calm.



Educators and accompanying person also become part of the performance, joining the children and youngsters in play which creates a special connection between them. Through song and interaction, children learn melodies, remember them, and even sing them independently later. The performance is adapted to the participants needs, ensuring

that their experience and enjoyment are prioritized over any rigid performance structure. This approach gives them an opportunity to express things they may not feel comfortable expressing elsewhere.

During the pandemic, the Red noses adapted their shows to an online format, allowing one or two children and youngsters to participate at a time. This virtual approach continued to provide children and youngsters with a valuable experience despite physical distance.

With an average of 40 performances annually across Slovenia, these shows allow children and youngsters with diverse abilities to explore new ways of experiencing the world, building confidence, and enjoying the freedom of play.

For more information check out [their website](#).

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