

Mrs. Evelin Ilves and the Prime Minister of Norway, Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, who was on a visit to Estonia, today took part in a charity event at Town Hall Square within the framework of the “Aitan lapsi” (Helping Children) campaign. The purpose of the campaign is to offer children from under privileged families cultural experiences. It was launched in May of this year by the Charity Foundation “Aitan Lapsi”, Mrs. Evelin Ilves and 17 theatres from the Estonian Association of Performing Arts Institutions.

More than 30,000 people from all over Estonia have donated money through reverse vending machines for over four and a half months to help organise theatre visits for Estonian children from under privileged families within the framework of “Aitan lapsi”. More than 30,000 Euros has been collected from 158 reverse vending machines, which allows more than 5,000 children from under privileged families to go to the theatre at the beginning of this autumn’s season.

"It is a great pleasure for me to learn that people have contributed so willingly to this initiative. I have heard that many children who get their pocket money from bottles taken to the reverse vending machine have started donating some of it to children who could not go to theatre otherwise. It is the same with our family; money from every other delivery will be donated. I cannot wait for the first visit to the theatre with those children," Mrs. Evelin Ilves added.

At county level, donations have mostly been made in Harju and Tartu counties and Western and Eastern Virumaa. The smallest amount of donations has come from Läänemaa and Rapla counties. In regard to towns, the largest share of donations has come from Tallinn, Tartu, Pärnu, Rakvere, Tabasalu and Võru.

Donations to buy theatre tickets for children can be made throughout Estonia from reverse vending machines, which are fitted with an additional automated button. Benefactors do not have to transfer any funds; it is sufficient to take empty bottles to the reverse vending machines and push the button.

In total, 17 performing arts institutions have joined the “Aitan lapsi” charity campaigns – Estonian Drama Theatre, Foundation Estonian Theatre Festival, Emajõe Summer Theatre, Endla, Kanut Guild Hall, Kuressaare City Theatre, NO99, Estonian Puppet and Youth Theatre, R.A.A.A.M., Rakvere Theatre, Tallinn City Theatre, Old Baskin’s Theatre, Vanemuine, Russian Drama Theatre, VAT Theatre, the Von Krahl Theatre and Ugala.

Rimi, Selver, ETK Maksimarket, Stockmann, Kaubamaja and Grossi Toidukaubad are the largest retail chains to have joined the project, and the Tomra reverse vending machines that are fitted to their stores can be used for making donations.

The Charity Foundation “Aitan Lapsi” (Helping Children) was established in 2009 by the Norwegian-Estonian Chamber of Commerce in co-operation with the Royal Norwegian Embassy. Last year, the Foundation supported the children’s department of Põlva Hospital in acquiring medical equipment and hospital furniture.

Office of the President
Public Relations Department
Phone 631 6229