

And he's off!

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Josias Mashiane (Centre) with the team behind the SOS Charity Fund, Bruce and Duncan Riley, Lee Baird and Robert Izzett.

Thanks to the generous sponsorship of the Stagecraft Institute of Las Vegas and the help from the SOS Charity Fund, South African lighting technician Malesela Josias Mashiane, is heading off to Las Vegas to attend training to further his career.

In 2016, Josias attended the Movers, Media and Rock'n' Roll 3 week training class in lighting consoles, systems, and programming (at the Stagecraft Institute and due to his success, was invited back again this year for the next level of Track 2 and five additional weeks of full tech training. His plight to raise funds to attend this course which kicks off in June became known to DWR Distribution who head the SOS Charity Fund. The SOS agreed to pay for Josias' travel costs and to contribute to his living expenses during his stay in the United States. Jane Childs (life partner and widow of SILV founder Don Childs), Director of the Stagecraft Institute of Las Vegas waived tuition fees and arranged accommodations in Las Vegas. Additionally, in the South African entertainment industry, lighting designer Oliver Hauser from HL Design also contributed to make Josias' dream a reality.

"In founding Stagecraft Institute, part of my boy's vision was to create a training program for the future that could repay his industry mentors led by his dear noble friend Ladislav Vychodil of Bratislava, Czechoslovakia," commented Jane Childs. "Some might say that it sounds corny or overly ambitious, but Don envisioned a program where students world-wide might learn best practices from industry leaders. As the Institute begins its eleventh season, Josias and his journey represents a prime example of that mission: clear passion, driven by integrity, and supported by industry friends who strive to make our piece of this world better every day. Collaboration is our art and theatre our vehicle and best training is our mission. Here's to friends half way around the world who share and support that same vision and prove that a better way is possible. Thank you South Africa, and, with the help of our SILV friends, we will rise to meet the challenge of being

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even better than expected!"

"I am very excited," said Josias. "If it wasn't for everyone helping me, I would not have been given this opportunity. While attending the course last year, I learnt that it's not just about talent, but it's about doing things with passion."

Duncan Riley of the SOS believes that Josias is going to grab hold of this opportunity with both hands. "Make use of this Josias," said Duncan. "The combined sponsorship all adds up to a lot of money, and this is your chance to make a difference."