



Con Edison and The Town Hall Present Annual Black History Month Festivities

February 8, 2001

NEW YORK, Feb. 8 /PRNewswire/ -- Following last year's successful Black History Month celebration, The Town Hall and Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc. (Con Edison) are proud to bring back the Ishangi Family African Dancers for six free performances for public school students in grades 3-8 from all five boroughs.

This family dance troupe, led by Baba Ishangi, has been performing in the United States for more than 25 years and showcases the customs, history and legends of Africa. The performances will be February 12, 14 and 15, at 10:30 a.m and 12:30 p.m.

Through a wonderful blend of music, dance and narration, the program is designed to educate while it entertains. This is an opportunity for children to learn about the culture, dance, music and history of West Africa. The program incorporates everyday activities, such as how clothing is washed by hand, beating the cloth on rocks, and how history is told using ancient instruments. All dance and musical presentations are thoroughly explained.

"Through our partnership with The Town Hall we are able to showcase the talented Ishangi Family African Dancers and enter into their entertaining world of professional storytelling, which is a real educational treat for the children," said Frances Resheske, vice president of public affairs for Con Edison. "We should celebrate and share the spirit of Black History Month."

The program also addresses problems that face today's youth, such as drug abuse and suicide. Baba Ishangi, the leader, creates a rapport with the children using the wisdom of his culture. He encourages them to be the very best that they can be, and never to give up because, "although the night is long, the day is sure to follow."

This is the fifth year that Con Edison has sponsored this festival at The Town Hall. Both organizations continue their commitment to bringing quality educational entertainment to grade school children in efforts to illustrate the importance of Black History Month.

"Were it not for the interest and cooperation of Con Edison, it would have been difficult for Town Hall as a non-profit institution to host 9,000 school children, none of whom are asked to pay for their ticket," says Marvin Leffler, President of The Town Hall. "Working with Con Edison has expanded the opportunities for Town Hall to help all children."

Children also have the chance to win cash prizes in a Poster/Essay Contest sponsored by Con Edison and The Town Hall. Students who attend the show are invited to enter the contest by designing a poster for Black History Month that celebrates the role of the African-American artist in music. They also have the option of writing an essay explaining how the African-American experience has influenced American music from jazz, blues and gospel to hip-hop. Five winners will be selected and will receive prizes at an awards ceremony at Con Edison Headquarters at 4 Irving Place in Manhattan. Their posters and essays will also be featured for one month on The Town Hall website.

"Every year I continue to be impressed by the quality of the writing and artwork submitted by the children," says Mr. Leffler. "I am continually amazed at the way they absorb and convey what they see in the show."

This Black History Month Festival is one of a series of programs designed for young audiences at The Town Hall. To receive information on future events, fax request and contact information to The Town Hall at 212-997-1929.

Con Edison is a subsidiary of Consolidated Edison, Inc., (NYSE: ED) one of the nation's largest investor-owned energy companies, with approximately \$9 billion in annual revenues and \$16 billion in assets. The utility provides electric, gas and steam service to more than three million customers in New York City and Westchester County, New York. For additional financial, operations and customer service information, visit Con Edison's web site at <http://www.coned.com>. SOURCE Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc.

/NOTE TO EDITORS: Photos of dancers available or to schedule an interview with a town hall or Con Ed representative contact D. Joy Faber of Con Edison, 212-460-4111 or Kerrie Smith of The Town Hall, 212-997-1003/

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