

# NTC

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# SPOTLIGHT

## New Study Demonstrates the Power of NTC Financial Education Programs

The National Theatre for Children's financial-literacy programs have encouraged students across the country to save a little more money, spend a little less and use credit wisely. And while student and teacher feedback indicated that the plays made an impact, a recent study by renowned academic Lewis Mandell provides empirical evidence that NTC's productions are influencing student attitudes on personal finance.

Dr. Mandell, a frequent NTC collaborator who is also a professor of finance at the University of Washington, conducted pre- and post-tests to students who watched a performance of NTC's "Mad About Money" show at 10 middle schools in the Bismarck, ND area last



**Lewis Mandell**  
Professor of Finance  
University of Washington and  
the Aspen Institute

September. Students, who were in grades 5 through 9, also followed NTC's post-performance classroom curriculum. The results demon-

strated that watching "Mad About Money" significantly increased the students' knowledge of personal-finance concepts.

"The intervention increased knowledge by more than 13 percent, which was highly significant," writes Dr. Mandell in his report.

Overall, the students answered 72 percent of the questions correctly on the pre-test, but that number rose to 81.7 percent on the post-test. Females improved slightly more than males and students from the lower grades appeared to have much larger increases in their scores than those in the upper grades. The results of

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## Introducing the NTC Research Foundation

The National Theatre for Children recently launched the NTC Research Foundation (NRF), a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to developing, researching, measuring and publishing new, effective ways to educate young people about important skills and concepts, such as financial literacy, health, renewable energy and character education.

NRF conducts research to

evaluate the process, art and results of live theater in elementary and secondary schools. For example, NRF funded Dr. Lewis Mandell's study on the effectiveness of NTC's "Mad About Money".

NRF's research projects are funded by corporate, non-profit and government agencies that understand the benefits of live theatre in schools as an educational catalyst for behavior change

and awareness. The research studies are designed and executed by leading academic, medical, and industry practitioners, who have a long history of publishing studies in national and international journals.

To learn more about the NRF, feel free to call 612-341-0882 x 204 or log on to [www.nationaltheatre.com](http://www.nationaltheatre.com).

## NTC Partners with Regional Water Organizations to “Wet the Minds” of Students with Water-Themed Theatre

As a nation, we tend to think our water supply is infinite, so we waste millions of gallons each year on long showers, dripping faucets and elaborate sprinkler systems. Water education is becoming increasingly important as our country’s water infrastructure is aging and numerous water pipes, treatment plants and transmission mains are due for repair or replacement in the coming years.

While many of us have a long way to go on improving our water-use habits, The National Theatre for Children and its regional water partners, including American Water, East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD), several Southern California water districts, New England Water Works Association, Hillsborough County Arts Council and others, have been making headway on water education for years.

For instance, NTC partnered with Illinois American Water, a subsidiary of American Water, in the early 1990s to bring the play, “The Water Pirates of Neverland: A Boatload of Trouble!” into Illinois elementary schools. Based on positive feedback from students and teachers, the program has been expanded into

American Water’s service areas of Iowa, Indiana and Missouri in recent years.

“We utilize NTC to help us spread the important message of using water wisely in a fun, interactive way to school children,” says Terry Mackin, Director of Communications and External Affairs for American Water in the Midwest. “When you reach children, you are also reach-

schools each year and reaches more than 85,000 students through NTC performances that teach proper water use and the importance of water conservation and environmental protection.

“At EBMUD, we know it’s crucial to educate our students on water issues that closely impact our local community,” says Jeff Becerra, Senior Public Information Representative at East Bay Municipal Utility District. “A theater program like NTC’s brings our students enjoyable performances that keep them interested and captivated while they absorb key water messages.”



*Showdown At Dry Gulch is currently touring Southern California.*



*The Water Pirates of Neverland is NTC’s longest running water show.*

ing their teachers, administrators and parents.”

In the late 1980s, NTC also joined forces with EBMUD after a drought hit the area. For more than 20 years, NTC has brought water-themed theater performances to elementary school students in Alameda and Contra Costa counties in northern California.

EBMUD’s tour visits 140



*NTC water shows teach elementary and secondary students the importance of water.*

## “LazyTown” and NTC Team Up for New Show on Nutrition

NTC and “LazyTown” have joined creative forces to introduce a new show about nutrition geared at elementary students. A popular TV program featured in the “Nick Jr.” block of shows aimed at preschoolers, “LazyTown” follows a little girl named Stephanie around a wacky world full of music, dancing and laughter to teach kids about making healthy lifestyle choices.

“We’re very excited to be working with ‘LazyTown’ to create such a dynamic show for the students. Our other nutrition shows like ‘Food Fit ‘N Fun’ and ‘Power of the Pyramid: Sideshow Snacking’ have been a big hit with our audiences and we think this new show will be just as well-loved,” says NTC President Ward Eames. Jordan Jedeiken, LazyTown’s brand

activation manager, agrees: “‘LazyTown’ is a lifestyle brand and we are very excited to be able to join NTC’s program to reach students.”

“LazyTown’s” creator, Magnus Scheving, first introduced the interactive play in Iceland for kids to get up, move around and learn about a healthy lifestyle. The overseas success led to a best-selling children’s book series, pro-health musicals and the “LazyTown” TV program, which has been yet another children’s “must-see” TV show in the United States and 160 other countries.

“We’re passionate about kids and being healthy. We want the students to have fun while they learn about eating better and living a healthy life style. ‘LazyTown’ is a per-

fect match, and I think the students will enjoy learning from the characters,” adds Eames.



Student Workbooks reinforce the nutrition and fitness concepts introduced in the shows.

## Look for New NTC Energy Video on PBS’ “Planet Forward”

NTC has submitted a new energy video that shows just how influential kids can be regarding their family’s energy choices, to be included in the recently launched TV and Web program “Planet Forward.” If chosen, NTC’s video will air on PBS stations across the country on Wednesday, April 15, 2009.

The video, which is available on [www.nationaltheatre.com](http://www.nationaltheatre.com), under the “News & Events” section, reveals how skilled NTC actors are at boiling down challenging, urgent issues, like the energy crisis, into understandable,



The Energized Guyz is NTC’s longest running energy efficiency program.

entertaining scenes for elementary school students. Humorous characters and scenes from NTC’s renewable energy and energy-efficient performances demonstrate how the plays get students talking with friends, teachers and family members about smart energy use.

“Researchers have long documented the link between student-advocates and choices and behaviors made at home,” says NTC President Ward Eames.

NTC’s “Planet Forward” video highlights scenes from live NTC productions of “The Energized Guyz,” “Global Gamble” and “Boomerang Jack and the Unseen Green Machine.” It also includes



Global Gamble: A Climate Change Comedy uses audience volunteers to teach secondary school students energy efficiency.

excerpts from teachers and NTC staff members about how NTC shows engage students and often influence them to share their discoveries at home with loved ones.

“As educators, artists and business professionals, we can make sure young people are passionate about energy and the environment. And theatre is one way for kids to look, laugh, learn and take action,” says Eames.



Boomerang Jack and the Unseen Green Machine teaches renewable energy to elementary students.

Check local TV listings for the PBS “Planet Forward” show time in your area.

# New Study Demonstrates the Power of NTC Financial Education Programs

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this study echo those of an earlier study conducted in Chicago in 2005-06, in which students at 10 area middle schools were given similar tests before and after watching an NTC financial-literacy production called “Googolplex,” which was funded by the Credit Union National Association (CUNA).

NTC President Ward Eames says the results of Dr. Mandell’s study should change the debate on financial education. Rather than using the dismal data on high-school students’ knowledge of financial concepts as an excuse to add more of the same old boring classroom presentations, educators should focus on younger students and use methods designed to appeal to students’ emotions.

“We’ve heard wonderful stories from teachers, students and parents about the impact ‘Mad About Money’ has had, and now we have the data to back up those claims,” Eames says. “Interactive theatre has a place in American education, and we’re proud to be on the cutting edge of the financial-literacy curriculum.”

For a copy of Dr. Mandell’s study, contact NTC at 1-800-858-3999 or [info@nationaltheatre.com](mailto:info@nationaltheatre.com).

**Top: Scene from the show “Crazy About Credit” for high school students.**

**Bottom: Mad About Money uses improv comedy to teach personal finance to Middle School Students.**



## NTC Tour Coordinators Tag Team

As tour coordinators at The National Theatre for Children, Maria Stukey and John Trones are a stupendous tag team. Through job sharing, they coordinate the details to make the tours flow smoothly.

Trones, who has been working with NTC since January 2008, is another multi-talented NTC employee. Outside of NTC, he has released four CDs and co-founded 8-Ball Theatre in Minneapolis.

Stukey, who performed as an actress with NTC, became a tour coordinator in September 2008. “I really enjoy working at NTC. It’s

not your typical office job and it’s always fun when you can promote a positive message to others,” says Stukey.

“I really enjoy the flexibility that job sharing offers. It’s reassuring to know that I share the job with someone I trust.” states Trones.

Stukey and Trones first met performing together in local shows, teaming up originally in “The 1940’s Radio Hour.” Together they share their job seamlessly and are proud to be a part of a company that is focused on positive messages, education and fun.



**Maria Stukey**



**John Trones**