

# Illusion

This Is No

## South Dakota-Born Illusionist Reza Brings His World-Class Show To Yankton To Assist Two Local Charities

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE  
shauna.marlette@yankton.net

A night of magic and illusions will provide great exposure for the Yankton Contact Center and the Yankton Homeless Shelter when nationally acclaimed illusionist Reza comes to the Dakota Theatre on Feb. 25. The proceeds from the event will benefit the two Yankton organizations.

"I happen to know Reza and his assistant personally, and I went to a show of theirs up in Brookings and was just totally impressed by it," said Carol Pooler, executive director of the Yankton Homeless Shelter.

"I thought about the Homeless Shelter and the Contact Center — which I have been involved with for years — the need is so great right now with food. In 2011 the contact center served 7,000 individuals for food. Everyone thinks of giving at Thanksgiving and Christmas, and this community is just awesome at doing things like that. But the need continues. They serve approximately 500 individuals with food each month. Our needs at the Homeless Shelter continue year-round, and I just thought what a neat way to raise money for these two organizations."

The idea finalized recently when Reza was visiting Yankton and toured the Homeless Shelter. He said that the idea of being able to give back to such worthwhile organizations and giving others a chance, as well, made this a very easy idea to organize.

"I got a chance to go over to the shelter and see what they were doing and that is kind of where the idea started to help raise money for the organization," Reza said during a telephone interview with the *Press and Dakotan*. "I think any kind of support of organizations is great, but many times people don't have an outlet for that support. They want to do something, but without that call to action, it kind of gets left undone. By coming in and offering a show that otherwise they would just come and go to for the entertainment — and at the same time allow them to support a cause, even in a small way — that is all it takes to make a big impact."

While the two organizations have not done a fundraiser like this in the past, officials hope the community comes out and enjoys the show for a good cause.

"They can expect to see a Las Vegas-style show, although it is very family oriented," Pooler said. "It is

very entertaining. There is something there for everyone. There is something there for every age. Best yet, the proceeds from the show will go into the general operations of both organizations to purchase foods and meet needs in the community."

Reza, who grew up in Brookings, acknowledges that his chosen career is not a typical occupation in South Dakota, but credits the support he received for his success.

"It is a unique hobby, let alone profession," he said. "All the way from my schooling — preschool through college — I got a lot of support. The downside was there was not really anyone to mentor and inspire me because it is so unique to the area. There are a lot of musicians not a lot of magicians. I think I was 14 when I got a chance to go to Branson, Mo., and had an opportunity to open for a show there in town. I then got discovered there by another entertainer and they offered me a shot in a show, which led to us having our own show there in Branson. I think I was the youngest headliner at that time in the city. That is where it turned from a hobby into more of a profession."

His talent has continued that success. He is currently on a country-wide tour traveling from Florida to Branson, South Dakota and Washington, D.C., to name just a few locations he will visit in the next few weeks.

Reza said that the audience is his favorite part of the shows and he enjoys getting to interact with them on several levels.

"The audience interaction during the show — feeling that vibe, that kind of reward and talking to people afterwards — is my favorite aspect of doing the shows," he said. "Any chance we get a chance to perform in South Dakota is a cool experience."

He noted that he likes to think of his show as "a million miles away from a magic show."

"It is just so different from what people expect," Reza said. "There is that cliché of what people expect at times of corny and cheesy. The big difference is this is a modern version of a very ancient craft. We use rock concert lighting and sound, large-scale illusions and blend that with relatable things that people can be a part of. Either experience it on stage or just in the audience, it is a very interactive show that is really for the entire family."

Tickets for the show are currently on sale at Hy-Vee, the Yankton Chamber of Commerce, the Contact Center and also from Homeless Shelter board members. The performances will be held at the Dakota Theatre in downtown Yankton, with the show performance starting at 7:30 p.m.

"I encourage people to interact with our Facebook page, go check out our YouTube page and our website at [rezalive.com](http://rezalive.com)," Reza said. "I think they will find they really want to come out and see the show and support two great organizations."



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