



AILEY®

Arts In Education & Community Programs



Press Kit



AILEY ARTS IN EDUCATION & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

“AileyCamp helped me become a leader... It taught me that through hard work and dedication, anything is possible.” – AileyCamp Newark participant



AileyCamp New York. Photo by Cherylynn Tsushima.

Ailey’s Arts In Education & Community Programs (AIE) offer people of all ages, and particularly young people, opportunities to enrich and transform their lives through dance-based education programs. Since 1992, AIE has given young people from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to explore their creative potential while also imparting life skills such as teamwork and self-discipline. The organization’s year-round education and community initiatives, which reach 100,000 people each year, are designed to cultivate a life-long love of the arts, develop creativity and promote healthy lifestyles.

AileyDance Kids offers dance training in a comprehensive format that inspires self-respect and confidence, while also fostering an appreciation for the joy of dance. AileyDance Kids residencies were implemented in 106 schools during the 2017-2018 academic year, engaging more than 9,000 students in dance throughout the greater New York City area, including schools in Newark, New Jersey; and over 1500 youth in select tour cities where the companies perform.

National and International Educational Reach through *Revelations* and *Night Creature* Residencies: *Revelations*: An Interdisciplinary Approach and *Night Creature*: An Imaginative Journey Through Dance residencies were conducted in several cities – including two residencies in Atlanta, GA, Los Angeles, CA; and Miami, FL; Washington, D.C; Boston, MA, and Costa Mesa, CA. . More than 1500 young people were reached through these national residencies during the 2017-2018 academic year.

***Revelations*: An Interdisciplinary Approach curriculum supports New York State Arts Standards:** Alvin Ailey’s life and his signature work, *Revelations*, serve as an organizing theme for learning experiences in dance, English language arts, and Social Studies. Annually, Ailey’s AIE division implements successful *Revelations* residencies in New York City and metro area public schools for middle school aged students

***Night Creature*: An Imaginative Journey Through Dance:** In the spring of 2017, AIE launched its newest curriculum initiative, *Night Creature*: An Imaginative Journey Through Dance, modeled after the *Revelations* curriculum. This new program for elementary age youth in grades 3 through 5 is based on the study of Alvin Ailey’s *Night Creature*, a fusion of Ailey’s buoyant choreography and Duke Ellington’s sparkling music.

AileyDance Kids SOAR: Success. Opportunity. Artistry. Respect: This new initiative provides opportunities for student with disabilities to participate in dance classes, lecture-demonstrations and performances. These residencies are structured in collaboration with school administrators and classroom teachers to meet the individual needs of students who have a variety of special needs. Experienced dance teaching artists and musicians with training in teaching special needs populations conduct AileyDance Kids SOAR residencies.

AileyDance for Active Seniors: Ailey believes the transformative power of dance is applicable for all ages and is developing *AileyDance for Active Seniors* to assist with reaching senior citizens, an important and vital segment of NYC's population. An *AileyDance for Active Seniors* residency will provide dance classes that support strength and flexibility training through a thoughtful and sequential progression of movement that promotes both cardiovascular and cognitive stimulation. More than a fitness program, *AileyDance for Active Seniors* offers participants an outlet for artistic expression through learning together and creating choreography which cultivates the imagination and fosters a sense of joy. These shared artistic experiences build a greater sense of community among the participating seniors. Far too often, adults become prone to injury due to inactivity, isolation, and have limited opportunities to express their creativity. *AileyDance for Active Seniors* is designed to engage adults physically, mentally, socially, and aesthetically.



AileyDance for Active Seniors. Photo by Nicole Tintle.

In our pilot year, we reached over 100 Active Seniors in two community centers, one independent living residence and one assisted living residence.

AILEYCAMP

DAILY AFFIRMATION

I will not use the word “can’t” to define my possibilities.



Alvin Ailey believed “dance is for everybody” and was especially dedicated to using dance to enhance the lives of underserved children. AileyCamp represents a vital continuation of Alvin Ailey’s vision, using the power of dance to enrich and positively alter the lives of at-risk youth. Young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are in need of programs that stimulate, present positive themes, and provide role models and mentors.

AileyCamp is an innovative summer program designed to engage underserved children ages 11-14. Through disciplined dance training, creative writing instruction, personal development, and communication workshops, campers develop a respect for themselves and others that meaningfully impacts their lives.

Started by Alvin Ailey himself along with the Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey in 1989, AileyCamps now operate in 10 cities across the country:

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Atlanta, GA | Kansas City, KS | Newark, NJ |
| Baltimore, MD | Kansas City, MO | New York, NY |
| Berkeley/Oakland, CA | Miami, FL | Seattle, WA |
| Chicago, IL | | |

AileyCamp has helped me express myself and make better decisions.
- AileyCamper

Each day of AileyCamp, students take five classes rotating among ballet, modern, jazz, tap, and West-African dance; a Personal Development course examining issues of self-esteem, decision-making, peer-pressure, and self-awareness; and a Creative Communication course which emphasizes the power of writing and visual arts to communicate thoughts and feelings.

Since 2012, AileyCamp has built in programs that provide the young men enrolled in AileyCamp with opportunities to focus on their particular needs at this critical stage in their personal development. Boys' Percussion Workshop and Boys' Day provide male campers with a private space to focus on their development as young men, while simultaneously allowing female campers the same freedom to converse with their teachers and peers in an all-female environment. Boys' Percussion Workshop presents the history of African culture through music, teaching the campers how to play the Djembe drum and other West African instruments.

AileyCamp summer activities conclude with an end-of-camp performance of dance, drumming, and poetry by the campers for family, friends, and community leaders. The performance not only showcases the creative and technical skills of the campers, but also serves as an exciting display of the self-confidence, performance skills, and pride developed during camp.



Since attending AileyCamp, my daughter has gained patience, the ability to work with others, being accountable for herself and her actions, and coping skills.

- Parent of an AileyCamper



Since its inception, this vital program has reached thousands of underserved youth across the country, providing direction and hope to children who are most in need of knowing that there can be a bright future.

Drawings from campers



AileyCamp Newark. Photo by Nan Melville



AileyCamp Newark. Photo by Nan Melville



AileyCamp has helped me socially and mentally and helps me find different ways to handle peer pressure. It helps me be able to deal with the issues of life itself.

- AileyCamper



Revelations: An Interdisciplinary Approach



Nasha Thomas leads students in a *Revelations* Residency at Washington Carver Middle School.
Photo by Drew A. Kelley

Overview

For more than fifteen years, Ailey's Arts In Education & Community Programs has brought, *Revelations: An Interdisciplinary Approach* into classrooms nationally and internationally. This innovative, curriculum-based initiative uses dance to reinforce the academic material learned in the classrooms of participating students. The Ailey organization worked with experts in the field of arts in education to develop age and interest appropriate written lessons and movement activities for middle school students.

The program has been implemented nationwide in cities such as Atlanta, Detroit, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C., Miami; and internationally in London, England. It has also been used in residencies in New York City and Newark, NJ schools and plans are in place to implement *Revelations: An Interdisciplinary Approach* more broadly in both New York City and in schools nationwide.

Revelations Curriculum

The *Revelations: An Interdisciplinary Approach* curriculum is designed to utilize Mr. Ailey's signature work, *Revelations*, as the inspiring theme for a comprehensive, sequential, in-depth study of language arts, social studies, and dance. Through this innovative program, participants actively engage in a process of thinking, reflecting, discussing, researching, writing, creating, performing, and assessing. This approach encourages learners to explore and embody the life story of Alvin Ailey and *Revelations* while connecting it to their own life experiences, community, state, and world issues as well as other bodies of literature and works of art.

The *Revelations: An Interdisciplinary Approach* curriculum was designed by youth education expert Kathleen Isaac with the standards set by the New York State Learning Standards for the Arts, the New York State Learning Standards in Social Studies and the New York City Board of Education New Performance Standards in English Language Arts. Participating schools must qualify as having Title-1 status, be located in underserved or economically struggling communities, and typically be lacking in arts instruction. Students from these schools are often from lower to middle income households and have never before seen dance on the concert stage. With arts funding for public schools diminishing year after year, it has become vitally important for programs like *Revelations: An Interdisciplinary Approach* to exist on a national level.

Each residency is led by the National Director of AileyCamp/Spokesperson & Master Teacher for Arts In Education, Nasha Thomas, formerly a leading Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater company member for 12 years, and her team of teaching artists. On the first day of the residency, the program instructors meet with the school teachers to actively walk them through the curriculum and demonstrate how to most effectively use the curriculum throughout the residency and then integrate it within their everyday school instruction. Participating teachers come from a range of backgrounds, including Art, English, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Special Education.



Students in a *Revelations* Residency at Washington Carver Middle School.
Photo by Drew A. Kelley

Revelations: An Interdisciplinary Approach (cont'd)

Student Enrichment through *Revelations: An Interdisciplinary Approach*

During the *Revelations* residencies, students participate in a variety of exercises which help them to not only learn the history of dance, but also the accomplishments of Alvin Ailey and the creation of his masterpiece, *Revelations* – a ballet which has been seen by more people across the globe than any other work of dance. Each day of the program begins with a physical warm-up, which then progresses to lessons in language arts and movement/choreography.

The daily lessons conclude with a creative writing activity, allowing each student to actively analyze and reflect on his or her experiences that day. Through this residency, students learn discipline, self-esteem, creativity, and how to express their uniqueness.

Each of the week-long residencies culminates with the students attending a special school performance of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. After seeing the dance elements and concepts that the students practiced in their classrooms then demonstrated for them on the concert stage by the professional first Company, students, and teachers alike leave the performances in awe and truly inspired.



Young Men's Preparatory Academy *Revelations* Residency students.
Photo by Rosie Castro

This residency is about students cultivating life experiences through vocabulary development, poetry, narrative reports and critical reviews and then translating them into motion as a means of self-expression.

Nasha Thomas

National Director of AileyCamp/Spokesperson & Master Teacher for Arts in Education

Comments about *Revelations* Curriculum

You gave our students a wonderful gift...You will never know the tremendous impact you had on these kids. With half of our student population at the poverty level, we treasure these opportunities for enrichment.

Dee Gardner

Principal of Piedmont Open Middle School in Charlotte, NC

Our students had such a wonderful experience – they have been reminiscing this past week...You can be sure that the hip-hop warm-up and 'I Wanna Be Ready' will be practiced MANY times before the school year is over!

Nancy Nussbaum

Dance Instructor at Parkway Middle School of the Arts in Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Revelations Residencies

NEW YORK:

“Having an established professional dance company present in a performing arts school strengthens school and student behaviors, academic and social.”

Teacher, Ronald Edmonds Learning Center (MS 113)

“One of my favorite parts was when we were doing our warm-up and it was my turn to show the class a move. It was very exciting seeing them all do my move. I felt like an actual choreographer!”

Student, Ronald Edmonds Learning Center (MS 113)

“Alvin Ailey’s story inspired me to work harder in school and my schoolwork.”

Student, Ronald Edmonds Learning Center (MS 113)

ATLANTA:

“This is an excellent way to teach. Everyone was successful! Superb planning...something they will remember the rest of their lives.”

Teacher, Brumby Elementary School

“I really love the Alvin Ailey dance instructors. They were really fun to hang out with and dance with. Also they were great performers...It was so fabulous to have them here and teach us these dances.”

Student, Brumby Elementary School

“I had a lot of fun with the dancers. Also, I have learned a lot of new dances that I can show my family and other friends. I hope the next school they visit has as much fun as we did.”

Student, Brumby Elementary School

BOSTON:

“I really enjoyed the workshop! One can easily make connections to curriculum and classroom management by integrating dance.”

Teacher, Renaissance Charter Public School

“It was a great way to learn the advantages of moving in the classroom and teaching cooperation through movement...Thanks so much!”

Teacher, Renaissance Charter Public School

CHICAGO:

“I learned that sometimes you have to believe in yourself in order for other people to believe in you.”

Student, Reavis Elementary School

“I learned that dance is...art and a physical way of telling a story. It was fun and if they’re coming back next year, I’m in!”

Student, Daniel Boone Elementary School

“Thank you for leaving New York and coming to teach us some of your dance steps because now I know them by heart and I’m teaching everyone else!”

Student, Reavis Elementary School

Night Creature: An Imaginative Journey Through Dance

Overview

In the spring of 2017 Ailey's Arts In Education & Community Programs launched its newest curriculum initiative: *Night Creature: An Imaginative Journey Through Dance*, modeled after the *Revelations* curriculum. This new program for elementary-age youth in 3rd through 5th grades is based on the study of Alvin Ailey's *Night Creature*, a fusion of Ailey's buoyant choreography and Duke Ellington's sparkling music. As a large ensemble work, replete with movements that invoke animals in joyful celebration, is ideally suited for engaging young minds.

For more than fifteen years, Ailey's Arts In Education & Community Programs has brought, *Revelations: An Interdisciplinary Approach* into classrooms in cities such as Atlanta, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, Newark, Washington, D.C., London, and Copenhagen.



Nasha Thomas teaching *Night Creature* Residency in Miami. Photo by Daisy Cabrera

Night Creature: An Imaginative Journey Through Dance is now available for elementary schools locally, nationally, and internationally. To develop age- and interest-appropriate movement activities for 3rd – 5th grade students, this curriculum-based initiative, created in conjunction with arts in education experts, uses dance to strengthen students' learning in other academic areas while offering educators suggestions in making connections to classroom studies.

Night Creature Curriculum

As with *Revelations*, *Night Creature: An Imaginative Journey Through Dance* provides in-depth study of age-appropriate subject matter woven together through and with dance. Throughout the curriculum, students will explore the history of jazz music and jazz dance, the basic elements of movement analysis, strategies for group collaboration and peer assessment as well as experience embodied learning through dance-making opportunities. The *Night Creature* curriculum uses imaginative thinking to provide connections to music, visual arts, socials studies, science and literacy through discussion, analysis, reflective response, and writing. Students will be encouraged to explore their own "night creatures" through learning excerpts of *Night Creature*, writing poems, drawing, and creating their own original choreography.

The *Night Creature* curriculum was designed by dance educator Catherine Gallant and guided by The New York City Department of Education's Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in Dance, the New York State Standards for the Arts, and the National Core Arts Standards.

Each residency is led by the National Director of AileyCamp/Spokesperson & Master Teacher for Arts In Education, Nasha Thomas, formerly a leading member of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and her team of teaching artists. On the first day of the residency, the program instructors meet with the school teachers to actively walk them through the curriculum and demonstrate how to most effectively use the curriculum throughout the residency and then integrate it within their everyday school instruction. Participating teachers come from a range of backgrounds, including Art, English, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Special Education.

Night Creature: An Imaginative Journey Through Dance (cont'd)



Nasha Thomas at Notre Dame Residency.
Photo by Kirk Richard Smith

Student Enrichment through **Night Creature: An Imaginative Journey Through Dance**

During the *Night Creature* residencies, students participate in a variety of activities which help them to not only learn the history of jazz music and jazz dance, but also the accomplishments of Alvin Ailey and the creation of his masterwork, *Night Creature*, a ballet that lives on in the Ailey repertory and continues to delight audiences year after year. Each day of the program begins with a physical warm-up, which then progresses to lessons in poetry, rhythm and music, and movement/choreography. The daily lessons conclude with a creative writing activity, allowing each student to actively analyze and reflect on his or her experiences in student journals. Through this residency, students learn discipline, self-esteem, creativity and how to imaginatively express their uniqueness. Each of the week-long residencies culminates with the students attending a special school-time performance of *Night Creature* by the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. After seeing the dance elements and concepts that the students practiced in their classrooms demonstrated for them on the concert stage by the Ailey company, students and teachers alike leave the performances in awe and truly inspired.

Your imagination costs you nothing but can cost you everything if you don't use it.

Robert Battle
Artistic Director, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Comments about the *Night Creature* Curriculum

What an amazing way for my dance students to explore their imaginations. This experience has opened up a wonderful way for my students to see their core subjects in a creative and imaginable way.

Rashamella Cumbo,
Dance Educator, Museum Magnet School at P.S. 191M

This residency exposes young students to the wonderful world of jazz music and allows them to stretch their creative minds while exploring a variety of movement styles and rhythms. It's fun and playful and challenges them to develop new concepts and ideas about dance, art and life around them.

Nasha Thomas
National Director of AileyCamp/ Spokesperson & Master Teacher for Ailey Arts In Education

AILEY

ARTS IN EDUCATION & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Alvin Ailey believed that “dance is for everybody.” Since its founding in 1958, the Ailey organization has honored this commitment to bring dance into the classrooms, communities, and lives of people throughout the world. AileyDance Kids SOAR furthers Ailey’s original vision by conducting residencies across New York City in District 75 schools and other independent schools dedicated to students with special needs and learning challenges.

AileyDance Kids (ADK) SOAR Success. Opportunity. Artistry. Respect.

This initiative provides opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in dance classes and other events. ADK SOAR residencies are structured in collaboration with school administrators and classroom teachers to meet the individual needs of students who have a variety of special needs. Experienced AIE dance teaching artists and musicians with training in teaching special populations conduct ADK SOAR residencies.

AileyDance Kids SOAR dance residencies connect to school curricula in English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Dance, Visual Arts, Literacy, and Music, using the New York City Department of Education Blueprint for Learning in Dance, NYS Standards for the Arts, and the National Core Arts Standards.



Students at P160M, Manhattan, enjoying a West African dance class taught by Ailey Teaching Artist Ethel Calhoun, April, 2016
Photo by Heather Byrce

“We danced together; we got to see each other scared and vulnerable. We were in it together and lifted each other up. The positive feeling of community, camaraderie and true friendship blossomed after the residency.”

- Betsy Mitchell, Teacher at P751M

RESIDENCY GOALS INCLUDE:

- Self-discovery through dance
- Gains in self-regulation and emotional expression
- Motor and language development
- Group collaboration
- Opportunities to see live performances
- History of Alvin Ailey and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater



High School Students from Manhattan School for Career Development at a 'Come & Dance at Ailey' workshop
Photo by Nicole Little

AileyDance Kids SOAR is a fun and enjoyable experience that also challenges students to explore their creative potential while fostering an appreciation for the joy of dance.

WHAT WE OFFER:

- A minimum of 8 instructional sessions for 2 classrooms of students, scheduled during in-school time; consecutive periods
- Choice of dance technique: Creative Movement, Modern, Jazz/ Hip Hop, West African Dance
- 2 teaching artists: 1 lead and 1 assistant (West African class is accompanied by a musician)
- 1 Planning meeting with school staff and assigned teaching artists to ensure that the needs of students and teachers are met
- 1 Percussion Lecture-Demonstration Assembly Program
- 1 culminating student sharing presentation following the final instructional session
- Tickets for students and their chaperones to see an Ailey performance

HOW WE DO IT:

- Create a clear structure for the dance classes and other related activities
- Make adaptations for students with mobility issues
- Use visual and auditory supports for students as appropriate
- Focus on self-regulation, confidence, team work, self-respect, and empathy
- Develop students' interpersonal and intrapersonal skills
- Develop skills such as personal space and appropriate physical proximities
- Offer opportunities for parent engagement
- Maintain strong communication between Ailey Arts In Education and school staff to ensure success for all students

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Contact Cathryn Williams at (212) 405-9157
or visit AlvinAiley.org/AIE

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ARTS IN EDUCATION & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Alvin Ailey believed that “dance is for everybody.” Since its founding in 1958, the Ailey organization has honored this commitment to bring dance into the classrooms, communities, and lives of people throughout the world. AileyDance for Active Seniors furthers Ailey’s original vision by reaching seniors in community centers and in residential homes for independent and assisted living.

AileyDance for Active Seniors

Ailey believes the transformative power of dance is applicable for all ages. Far too often, adults become prone to injury due to inactivity or isolation, and have limited opportunities to engage their imaginations and express their creativity. AileyDance for Active Seniors offers dance classes that support strength and flexibility training through a thoughtful and sequential progression of movement that promotes both cardiovascular and cognitive stimulation.

More than a fitness program, AileyDance for Active Seniors serves as an outlet for artistic expression by creating choreography which cultivates the imagination and fosters a sense of joy. These shared artistic experiences build a greater sense of community and social engagement among the participating seniors.



Residents at Carnegie East House
Photo by Nicole Tintle

What I enjoyed most about AileyDance for Active Seniors was the joy, laughter, friendship, euphoria, happiness, excitement!

-Participant from James Lenox House

RESIDENCY GOALS INCLUDE:

- Support the development of a stronger sense of community among participants through social engagement
- Learn basic dance skills and technique; develop memory by learning movement phrases taught by the instructor
- Deepen individual's ability to create and gain confidence in expressing oneself artistically, engaging the emotion of their memories and life stories
- Show improvement in flexibility, muscle integrity, gait, balance, strength and endurance
- Connect to personal memories and exhibit a sense of joy

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Cathryn Williams at (212) 405-9157
or visit AlvinAiley.org/AIE



Union Settlement - Seniors in Jefferson Park
Photo by Richard Henry, DFTA

I loved this class. It gave me something to look forward to. I loved expressing and working out life's complications through dance. The exercise was great and low impact.

-Participant from New Settlement Community Center

WHAT WE OFFER:

- Planning meeting with the Ailey Teaching Artist(s) and the administrative staff of the Senior Center or Residence
- Series of weekly dance classes (60 or 90 minutes)
- Outlet for artistic expression cultivating the imagination to express one's life stories
- Culminating sharing presentation with an invited audience
- Opportunities to see live performances
- History and background about Alvin Ailey and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

HOW WE DO IT:

- Create a clear structure for the dance classes that includes a warm up and cool down
- Make adaptations for participants with mobility or balance issues
- Use visual and auditory supports for students as appropriate
- Create movement phrases that include the expression of feelings
- Introduce basic dance elements and choreographic structure
- Utilize prompts that engage and stimulate memory and life stories
- Create a playlist of participant-suggested musical selections
- Offer opportunities for caregiver and family engagement
- Maintain strong communication between Ailey Arts In Education and organizational staff to ensure success for all participants
- Conduct ongoing assessment to garner feedback from participants and administrative staff

NASHA THOMAS

**MASTER TEACHER & SPOKESPERSON, AILEY ARTS IN EDUCATION & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS
NATIONAL DIRECTOR, AILEYCAMP**



Nasha Thomas oversees AileyCamps and designs the national outreach for Ailey's Arts In Education & Community Programs department. As a primary liaison between Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation and the national arts-in-education community, she plays a central role in working with local communities to develop and run AileyCamps across the U.S., as well as managing and teaching national residencies, workshops, and master classes, which reach over 1,000 young people each year. Ms. Thomas has led Ailey Arts In Education programs everywhere from public school classrooms, to Lincoln Center Plaza, to Gracie Mansion, to the White House. Chosen by Alvin Ailey, Ms. Thomas danced with the Company from 1986 to 1998. In 1980 she received the prestigious Presidential Scholar of the Arts award. Ms. Thomas is a graduate of New York's High School of the Performing Arts and Southern Methodist University.

PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

Mentoring Matters: Former AileyCamp Dancer Happily Giving Back To Younger Students

August 28, 2018



Watch here: <https://miami.cbslocal.com/2018/08/28/mentoring-matters-aileycamp/> (3 ½ minutes)

MIAMI (CBSMiami) – Standing on the stage where she first learned how to dance, 17-year old Dymon Smith softly describes her passion for the arts. “I found my heart in dance. It’s been my breakfast, lunch, and dinner every day. I can’t imagine my life without it,” she said.

Smith is a student at the New World School of the Arts but it was on this stage where she voluntarily spent six weeks of her summer mentoring and training younger dancers at AileyCamp Miami. Just a few years ago, Dymon was an Ailey camper. She was 10-years old when she was introduced to the power of dance.

“I never danced before AileyCamp. I started when I was ten years old. This was my first experience of being in dance and different techniques as jazz and ballet. I was all new to it and it really pushed me and challenged me because everyone around me they probably already had the dance training,” said Dymon.

Ailey’s Summer Camp led Dymon to train at the Polly Mays Conservatory of the arts for her middle school years and her training there got her admitted to New World where she is excelling and starting her senior year.

She says she didn’t hesitate when she got the call from AileyCamp to come back and mentor.

“It was really emotional because this is where I started, so to come back was like everything,” said Dymon.

This is the first year in its 10-year history that the program added mentors to its program.

Dymon adds that what motivated her to mentor was the opportunity to teach and share her experiences with younger aspiring dancers.

“They see a lot of me in them and they know like wow she was here she was here she was on this exact stage, so we can learn a lot from her and to just teach them to always push themselves and to never give up,” said Dymon.

This summer, AileyCamp at the Arsht Center celebrated 10 years of bringing the free 6-week program to local students ages 11 to 14 to learn dance and explore their creativity.

The camp is free and funded by private donations. The goal is to give students who could not otherwise afford it the opportunity to gain self-confidence, and connect with local artists who instruct the students during the camp.

Middle-schooler Trinity Cidell says AileyCamp has helped transform her over the last two years

“Yeah, they are like family here, it’s a lot of support and a lot of people that I have really like best friends with now, I grew here because I was really shy. Last year, I was really shy and then I came back and then all of my other friends were here and then I was so happy,” said Trinity.

Trinity says she was thrilled when she found out Dymon would be her mentor

“She is amazing, she is a wonderful dancer and then she’s really a really good spirit and she is really nice and I absolutely love her,” said Trinity.

Dymon describes her mentee Trinity as a triple threat

“Trinity is a beautiful soul. She is a triple threat. She likes to dance, sing, and act. She wants to go to FAMU and I told her just to be yourself and to always follow your heart. She’s very energetic. She makes me laugh. All the Miami mentees make me laugh, they are all energetic, and they all have something special that they can give,” said Dymon.

Trinity and Dymon are just one example of founder, dancer and choreographer Alvin Ailey’s vision, which is to use the power of dance to enrich and positively impact the lives of children.

Trinity says she walks away from the camp with one special takeaway and that is not to use the word “can’t” to define her possibilities.

The camp is funded by private donations through the Adrienne Arsht Center.

If you would like to donate please head to this website: <http://www.arshtcenter.org/Education-Community-Engagement/Programs/AileyCamp-Miami/Ailey-Camp-Miami/>



ABC 7 CHICAGO

Ailey Dance Camp provides positive outlet for West Side kids

By: Marissa N. Isang

August 2, 2018



The Alvin Ailey Dance Camp has been using the power of dance to positively impact the lives of children in the North Lawndale neighborhood for the last three years, offering a creative outlet and making ABC7 Eyewitness News Chicago Proud.

Kids like Ryan Southworth are wrapping up the free six-week Ailey dance camp sponsored by the West Side Cultural Foundation. "I've learned a lot of technique and how to respect myself and respect others," Southworth said.

"The program is for 100 students ages 11-14 and they teach West African, jazz, ballet dance and in addition to dance they have workshops on leadership, self-discipline and communication as well," said Natashee Scott, president and CEO of the Westside Cultural Foundation.

The Westside Cultural Foundation came together with the Chicago Park District, the Steans Family Foundation, the AUSL Network Schools, 24th ward alderman Michael Scott and Chicago LAMP (Lawndale AMACHI Mentoring Program) to make the camp happen.

Scott said no previous dance experience is required of the students; only the commitment of themselves and their parents. Having a program like this means more to the community than just a summer of fun.

"It means everything for me to have this in the West Side so we can change the narrative of the West Side of Chicago," Scott said. "Focus on it being a safe and peaceful community of people who care about one another and a destination for arts and culture."

Participants are learning from experienced Ailey-trained dancers about the art of movement and the history behind the dance.

"One of the things I think we do is we engage them to understand what the theme is, which is joy. Then we allow them to be themselves inside of that so they can feel comfortable enough that we can teach them what movement is," said Dereque Whiturs, an Ailey dancer and camp instructor.

Instructors hope dance builds confidence and provides a safe space for kids to be themselves. "Maybe take them away from some of the stuff that is happening in their community that is not so positive and give them an outlet to where they can be themselves and be positive. Then maybe learn that this is something they want to do on a regular basis," Whiturs said.

"People my age grow up around bad things and end up in gangs and stuff and I think that Ailey camp really prevents that," Southworth said. Students would like to invite all of you to their free final performance tomorrow at Collins Academy. You can catch a show at 1 p.m. or 7 p.m.

Watch here: <http://abc7chicago.com/entertainment/ailey-dance-camp-provides-positive-outlet-for-west-side-kids/3863459/>

The Miami Times

Camping With A Quilt

By: Kishanda Burns

July 25-31, 2018

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The Miami Times

MIAMITIMESONLINE.COM | JULY 25-31, 2018



AlleyCampers sign the quilt they made on July 18 at the Adrienne Arsht Center for Performing Arts of Miami-Dade

Miami Times photos/ Kishanda Burns

CAMPING WITH A QUILT

ALVIN AILEY MIAMI SUMMER STUDENTS UNVEIL THE 4,000-SQUARE-FOOT MURAL MADE FROM FABRIC

KISHANDA BURNS
digital@miamitimesonline.com

The campers came, sewed and stitched to create a quilt to celebrate AlleyCamp Miami's 10th anniversary.

The young dancers presented the quilt on July 18 in front of an audience of parents and relatives.

AlleyCamp Miami is a six-week, full scholarship program that is funded by the Adrienne Arsht Center

for Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County. During the time, campers work to boost their self-confidence and become fluent in West African, jazz, modern and ballet dance routines.

And now they know how to make a quilt.

Camp staff and faculty brainstormed the making of the quilt by their charges.

"It's something that we came up with as a team," said Assistant Vice President of

Education and Community Engagement Jairo Ontiveros as he spoke about the quilt. "Celebrating our 10th summer, we wanted to visualize and make visible the uniqueness of the program, but also the objective of the program and that is to help kids that are ages 11-14 boost them, their self-confidence and get them prepared before they go into their high school years."

The finished quilt will be displayed in the Knight Concert

Hall of the Arsht Center.

The camp usually culminates with a free performance, this year set for 7 p.m. Aug. 4 at the Adrienne Arsht Center.

Before the presentation of the 4,000-square-foot quilt, John Richards, the Arsht Center's president and CEO praised the camp and campers.

Richards is credited for bringing AlleyCamp to the Arsht Center.

"The center has raised, believe it or not, over \$3 million over this 10 year for a thousand kids to participate," said Richards.

Following Richard's speech was the presentation of the quilt.

As campers gently place the quilt down on stage, "oohs" were heard as they reacted to the quilt that was made by them.

The youth screamed "To Miami with joy" as they

placed their painted-white hands on the quilt. They were also able to sign the quilt.

Ontiveros explained the quilt's construction.

"The individual patches were made by each of the campers," said Ontiveros. "There are three different layers. When they first got to camp, it was one of their first activities. Each camper got a retraceable paper and they traced their face. They lined

SEE AILEY 6C



Two students in AlleyCamp sign the quilt they made on July 18 at the Adrienne Arsht Center for Performing Arts of Miami-Dade.



A camper at AlleyCamp Miami produces beats with a bucket.

AILEY

CONTINUED FROM 2C

up all the windows along the Knight Concert Hall. The natural light that comes into the Arsht Center was the perfect setting for them to be able to trace their faces. From there, they took the list of superlatives and affirmatives that they had created for themselves and then layered that on top, so there are two different pieces of drawing that each camper has that was then translated to the actual fabric of the quilt."

Julius Pascal, 13, a camper at AlleyCamp said that he felt special, especially since this is only his first year at the summer camp.

"I feel brought in. That quilt will be in this building for a long time. I feel committed to being at AlleyCamp," said Julius. "It's so crazy because everything I learn here, I have never learned before."

Parents say the camp has changed their children's lives.

Tasheba Poulainne, 35, and mother of camper Joy Poulainne, 12, said, her daughter has blossomed over the six weeks of camp.

"It has made a big impact on her life because she's very shy and timid at times, and I feel like it kind of brought her self-confidence to where it used to be," said Poulainne. "So I appreciate AlleyCamp for that."



NYC Dance Company Gives Back to Community With Camp

July 24, 2018



WNBC Anchor Jummy Olabanji goes behind the scenes at AileyCamp New York for an inside look on how the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater continues to give back to the community.

Watch here: https://www.nbcnewyork.com/on-air/as-seen-on/NYC-Dance-Company-Gives-Back-to-Community-With-Camp_New-York-489055521.html



AileyCamp celebrates 30 years of teaching kids to dance

July 11, 2018



THE BRONX - The prestigious Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's AileyCamp is celebrating its 30th anniversary.

About 1,000 kids citywide are participating in the weeklong, free summer program to learn the art of different types of dance, including ballet, modern, jazz and West African.

The kids will get to show off what they learned with a performance next month at the Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture.

This year marks 60 years since the dance company was founded. AileyCamp was the last foundation created by Ailey before his death in 1989.

Organizers say the camp is made possible by funding through Children's Aid.

Watch here: <http://bronx.news12.com/story/38624750/aileycamp-celebrates-30-years-of-teaching-kids-to-dance>



These 10 Humanitarians Are Our Heroes — And They're All Over 50

By: Melissa Walker

April 6, 2018

What will you do in this decade?

These phenomenal women are at #theperfectage to level the playing fields for everyone with experience, wisdom and heart – watch them work.



The Dancing Director

Nasha Thomas, 55, former ballet dancer and National Director of AileyCamp, an Alvin Ailey summer camp based in dance for underserved youth.

"At 55, I have patience, gratitude, and the ability to let things go. This year's program theme is 'joy,' so I've been thinking about everyday things that can connect the kids with joy. I like bacon, being in the sun, and not wearing shoes. Being able to tap into those simple joys with the kids is why I love mentoring even more than performing."

Wardrobe: Systematic Organic Tank, EILEEN FISHER, \$68; Jacket and Pants, WILFRED AT ARTIZIA; Addaz Sandals, ALIAS MAE, \$190



Alvin Ailey Dance Camp Helps Kids Find Their Voice
August 20, 2017



For 6 weeks, the Alvin Ailey dance camp provides 100 students from some of Miami's roughest neighborhoods with meals, transportation, and, most of all, a safe place for expression.

Watch the segment here: <http://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/video/alvin-ailey-dance-camp-helps-kids-find-their-voice-1028693059580>

So You Think You Can't Dance? The Alvin Ailey Company Has Other Ideas

By: Louise Kennedy

March 21, 2018

In my head, I am a lovely dancer: graceful, elegant, deeply attuned to the music. My feet, however, tend to disagree.

I was reminded of this tragic reality during a recent workshop with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. The company is back in town celebrating the 50th anniversary of its first performance in Boston, and a key part of that celebration was to offer two community workshops last month. The opportunity was irresistible: Join scores of other people, some trained dancers and some not, to learn some of the movements from the Ailey company's most famous piece, "Revelations."



Dance like an Ailey dancer! How could I say no?

So there I was, on a lovely Saturday afternoon, in Dorchester's Salvation Army Kroc Center Gym. With me was my 9-year-old daughter, TT, who can already dance circles around me -- as I was about to find out.

After a lively performance by the St. Paul AME Church choir, Nasha Thomas, a former Ailey dancer and current master teacher, invited us all down from the bleachers to the gym floor. More than 100 dancers walked down, leaving an assortment of parents, grandparents, friends and siblings to watch.

As Thomas introduced fellow teacher Cheryl Rowley-Gaskins and started to explain what we'd be doing, I glanced around at my fellow dancers, a little nervous to see quite a few professional-looking leotards and footless tights. (That's what they're called, right?) My own outfit I'd cobbled together in a mild panic that morning, with a sports bra that's older than TT, some stretched-out leggings and a tank top I picked entirely on the basis of its long, asset-concealing tail.

It was gratifying, however, to see a few bodies that looked more like mine — and, even better, to see people of all ages and many skin tones coming together for this experience. One of the depressingly unchanging realities of life in Boston is how racially segregated we remain, in the arts as everywhere else, and I'm always grateful for moments that break that pattern. This was one of them.

It was also, once we started moving, at once exhilarating and humbling. Oh, I did fine with the first few warmup exercises: stretching, reaching, wriggling, even striking a random pose on cue. (That last one was easy; I just did what I always do on the dance floor, which is to come up with the most ridiculous move I can think of in hopes that people will mistake any clumsiness for brilliant self-parody.)



And even the first few moments of the first dance felt just fine. Bow your head, then raise it, back, back, back, as your arms come up. I can do it! I'm dancing "Revelations"! Well, part of it, anyway: the beginning of the solemn, sorrowful movement, "I Been 'Buked," that opens the first of the piece's three sections.

But once we moved on to the second piece, "Wade in the Water," my newfound confidence took a hit. First you walk forward, slowly, hands clasped. No problem. But then comes this move that apparently involves joints and ligaments I simply don't possess — or, if I do, I have ignored them for so many years that they were not about to pay attention to me just because I asked.

I sneaked a look around. In unison, a hundred pelvises thrust forward, then back, in a single fluid motion, one apparently so simple that even a child could do it. My child! There she was, intently focused and moving right along with the crowd, as I jerked my hips along in a pathetically failed attempt to follow her lead.

Oh well. On to the next. Very exciting: We'd been given fans at the start of the day, and now we were going to get to use them, for the rousing "Rocka My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham." I love this song! I can do this dance! I can ... oh. I can do the first bit.



A little fanning, a little stepping – but then comes the moment that, I realize in a flash, I have been dreading since I first signed up for this workshop: As I confidently twirl around to my left, every single other dancer is twirling to the right.

Oh, the embarrassment. The shame. The horror. Except that no one is looking at me. Everyone is focused on the dance.

And finally, finally, I get it.

It's not about whether I'm doing it perfectly; it's about doing it the best I can, with my whole self, in a sea of people all doing their best, with their whole selves. It's not a test. It's a dance.

And what a dance. I shrug off my anxiety, my disappointment with my aging and awkward body, my incessant and irritating self-consciousness, and I hear the music, and I dance. Oh, I dance. You should have seen me.

Well, actually, it's probably best that you didn't. But you should definitely see "Revelations."

Even if you've seen it before — and you may well have, since the Ailey company says it's the most-performed modern dance in the world. It will be performed again, Thursday through Sunday, at the Boch Center Wang Theatre, along with other works old and new, including the Boston premiere of "Victoria" on Friday and Saturday nights, and a new production of "The Golden Section" on Thursday and Sunday.



Those performances are presented by Celebrity Series, the Boston institution that first brought Ailey to Boston a half-century ago. Ailey, and his "Revelations," are part of the city's history now — and worth making part of your own history as well.

As we were leaving the gym, still exhilarated from the dance, I asked TT what she thought.

"It was different from what I expected," she said, "but I liked it."

Me too.

The Miami Herald

AileyCamp Miami welcomes its first camper with Down syndrome

By: Brooke Henderson

August 4, 2017

AileyCamp boosts kids' confidence through dance. Here's how you can watch them shine.



Dance is what makes Kristina Lahoud come alive. Whenever she hears music, especially Rihanna, she can't help but move with the beat.

“Even at school, to get her to go up on stage to get her diploma, they said they should have turned on some music so she could walk across,” her mother Nicola Budham laughed.

To follow her passion, Kristina joined AileyCamp Miami, an annual summer camp presented the past nine years by Adrienne Arsht Center.

Kristina is Ailey's first camper with Down syndrome.

Her mother saw a program flier and knew they had to try. Other programs were too expensive, she said, or didn't coordinate with her work schedule.

“I wrote the director. I was asking different things about the camp, but what I was really asking was if they accept kids with disabilities,” Budham said.

And they did. Out of more than 300 applicants, Kristina was selected to dance. She and 104 other campers would become their own company, learning to rely on each other and put on a full scale production, said Jairo Ontiveros, director of education at the Arsht Center, where the camp takes place.

The finale is Saturday night at the Arsht Center, where the campers will put on a show with their very own set design team, sound designer and more.

At AileyCamp, kids ages 11-14 learn to dance from experienced teaching artists in popular styles such as West African, jazz and ballet. The six-week program uses workshops to build their confidence and promote personal and creative development.



“I think programs tend to get scared because the child is different or has a disability. It's our job to address the person first and keep pushing ourselves to understand what inclusivity means,” Ontiveros said.

This year's theme is unity. Using dance and spoken word, campers at Saturday's performance will express what unity means to them in their lives and community.

“The program is not to find the next great dancer, but using the art of dance to shape and mold these young talented minds,” Ontiveros said.

Now when Kristina comes home, she has new dance moves to show her mom. Sometimes West African dance steps. Sometimes, jazz hands.

“She wants to be accepted. She's just like another kid. When she's with her sister, she's like, ‘Oh, she's the bright one.’ She picks up on the fact her sister would know what to do and say in a certain situation when maybe she wouldn't. And maybe that's why she's a little shy. I think the dance is really bringing her out of her shell,” Budham said.



With her counselor, Dallas Rivers, Kristina is not shy at all. The two sat together for lunch. Rivers, a Miami-Dade Schools' guidance counselor for Students in Special Education, danced in her seat as Kristina ate quietly.

"Work, work, work, work, work," Rivers sang, swaying with the the lyrics to Kristina's favorite song.

Without looking up from her meatball sub, Kristina put her hand on her counselor's arm.

"Don't embarrass me," she said playfully.

"Well, if you don't do the dance I'll just have to keep singing" she replied.

The relationship with Rivers is just one of many bonds Kristina has formed in the camp. She's also close to friend Brianna Rondon, 13, who said the camp has taught her how to feel confident and better treat others.

"I'm not scared anymore to dance in front of people," she said.

AileyCamp was the first time she ever wore a leotard. Besides helping youth develop their self-confidence in a positive atmosphere, the program also provides everything from transportation to backpacks to food.

"[Kristina's] a joy to work with and she's made some great friends," Ontiveros said. "And yes it may take her a little longer to catch up to a move, but she still strives for being a team member. She's not giving up, and she's not the type to give up."



AILEY CAMP FINALE

- **Where:** Knight Concert Hall, Adrienne Arsht Center, 1300 Biscayne Blvd., Miami
- **When:** Standby line forms at 6 p.m. Saturday
- **Tickets:** Admission is free and on a first-come, first-served basis based upon seat availability

Watch the video here: <http://www.miamiherald.com/entertainment/performing-arts/article165435262.html>

Alvin Ailey's dance camp provides second home for at-risk youth in Newark

By: Briana Vannozi

July 24, 2017



Few, if any of a specially selected group of 103 Newark students have ever stepped foot on a stage. But with each new position, leap and plie the magic of Alvin Ailey's American dance camp weaves in each of them a powerful new story through movement.

"AileyCamp gives these young people a place where they can feel like it's home," said the National Director of AileyCamp, Nasha Thomas. "They are loved and respected. Their voices are validated and they're cared for. And it gives them a chance to blossom."

The six-week program is celebrating its seventh year in

Newark. AileyCamp is an innovative summer program for 11- to 14-year-olds that uses dance and arts to encourage self-awareness and build self-esteem.

"AileyCamp is for inner-city children whose parents don't have the resources for them to participate in a program like this and experience the arts. We're looking for young people who want to be here, young people who want to work hard, who want to learn new things and better themselves and have some hardships," explained Thomas.

The camp is offered by the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Now in 10 cities nationwide, the camp reaches more than one thousand underserved youth. In Newark, Prudential Financial is the lead funder. The program is hosted in collaboration with Newark Public Schools and NJPAC. Classes are offered in ballet, jazz, modern and West African dance.

"When I go home I practice and then tomorrow I can't wait to show what I did at home," said first-year camper Yathukshika Kandeepan.

"You know this is the 'selfie' age phase, these young people are trying to figure out who they are, what they like, what they don't like and navigate their lives," said Thomas. "AileyCamp is the place that allows them to do that."

Ask anyone and they'll tell you: the foundation of AileyCamp is built from personal development courses. Each day starts with an affirmation.

Campers learn conflict resolution and how to deal with peer pressure. They also learn health and nutrition along with critical thinking skills.

Third-year camper Michael Fuks explained, "It can be like an outlet to certain issues in life. I've always used dance as an outlet, but this shows it's not just me, it's other people, too."

Newark offers a percussion class, too. Make no mistake, the students may have the synchronicity and rhythm now, but they started from scratch. Thomas sees the growth with each passing week:

"Dealing with a family member who might be incarcerated, or being raised by a guardian not a parent, or having siblings who aren't good role models or examples. Just struggling in school and life, children that don't have the opportunity to do something fun."

The mission is to become better people, not just dancers.

The 103 campers were selected out of a pool of 160 Newark students and participate for free. The camp culminates Aug. 11 with a performance at NJPAC.

Watch the video here: <http://www.njtvonline.org/news/video/alvin-aileys-dance-camp-provides-second-home-risk-youth-newark/>



AileyCamp Offers Dance Classes and Confidence Boost For Kids in Need

By: John Muller & Kim Pestalozzi

July 21, 2017



WASHINGTON HEIGHTS, NY- "I always tell my mom, hurry up I have to go to camp!" Christian Herrera exclaimed. Dance is the destination for kids across the city this summer. "This is basically the only thing that I want to be doing," Herrera smiled. Every step, plié and pose means something different for these young artists. "Dance means to me like telling a story through moving," Chloe Dunbar said. "For me dance means like freedom," Jayson Acosta added.

From ballet and tap to modern and jazz, Aileycamp offers classes for free. "AileyCamp gives them an opportunity to express themselves to have a platform for creative expression," Nasha Thomas explained. The six-week program, in partnership with the Children's Aid Society, is celebrating its 27th year in New York serving more than 100 students. Nationwide, 1,000 kids in ten cities also have access to this program. "Our young people here don't get exposure to the arts," Thomas described. "Some of these children are foster children and quite frankly they have a lot of challenges that they're dealing with."

For some, this is their only option as dance programs dwindle inside schools. "I was kind of upset about that because it's not fair," Dunbar said. "Even though school is important they had [dance] so people can enjoy themselves and they cut it off short." At AileyCamp not only do they get the chance to expand their technique but also to evolve as a person. "The foundation of the program is really personal development and that is where they deal with those different issues of self-esteem, conflict resolution, health, nutrition, peer pressure and decision making," Thomas said.

Engrained in the curriculum are affirmations: "*I am a winner, I am in control, etc.*" which they repeat every day. "It's going to help me because like Miss Nasha said you're not here to become a better dancer, you're just here for yourself and to have fun and I'm definitely going to take this with me when I get older," Herrera said. In addition to free classes, the kids are also given dance apparel and shoes.

Watch the video here: <http://pix11.com/2017/07/21/aileycamp-offers-dance-classes-and-confidence-boost-for-kids-in-need/>



Alvin Ailey Camp Baltimore helping kids get skills they need to succeed

By: Cassie Carlisle

February 21, 2017



The Alvin AileyCamp Baltimore is gearing up for it's fifth summer at Towson University.

The program inspires kids 11-14-years-old through dance, art and personal development classes.

"They work on self esteem issues, they talk about nutrition, they talk about bullying, all the things that are going on on the internet, so that they are able to work through and get tools so that they can succeed in the future," Director of AileyCamp Baltimore Linda-Denise Fisher-Harrell said.

The camp last six weeks and this year Fisher-Harrell can only take 64 kids. She said it doesn't matter what dance skills they have, but more that they wouldn't have the opportunity to participate in a similar program otherwise.

Everything in this program is funded through donations and grants, which keeps Fisher-Harrell busy throughout the year, but is invaluable for the children who get into the camp.

"Getting dance instruction, which means ballet, modern , jazz, West African, personal development, creative communication which is art. I feed them breakfast lunch, snack, they get leotards, tights, ballet slippers, t shirts, shorts, you name it. I even have bus tickets to get them here," Fisher-Harrell said.

The camp is modeled after choreographer and activist Alvin Ailey who believed dance was for everyone and enriches people's lives.

Fisher-Harrell is collecting applications now and said interviews will happen in March. Her students have gone on to be very successful. Several attend local dance colleges, while others are on Broadway.

Next year, she hopes to have enough money to support 100 kids in the camp.

Watch here:

<http://www.abc2news.com/news/region/baltimore-county/alvin-ailey-camp-baltimore-helping-kids-get-skills-they-need-to-succeed022117>



JESSICA CAMPISI jcampisi@mclatchy.com

Janasia Johnson, 14, and Jairo Ontiveros, the Arsh Center Arts education director, display the 2016 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award after meeting first lady Michelle Obama at the White House.

THE ARTS

Teenager accepts award at White House for AileyCamp Miami

■ Janasia Johnson, 14, visited the White House and met first lady Michelle Obama on Tuesday on behalf of AileyCamp Miami, a program that works with local middle schoolers and which received a national award for its work.

BY JESSICA CAMPISI
jcampisi@mclatchy.com

WASHINGTON

While other kids her age were learning new vocabulary words and basic math skills, Janasia Johnson was learning how to live without her mother.

At age 8, Janasia's mother was convicted of second-degree murder and sent to prison, leaving the now-14-year-old to live with her three siblings, grandmother, aunt and two cousins.

"I grew up without a dad, and my mother was incarcerated; I didn't know how to express myself," Johnson said. "I was always

angry."

Last summer, Johnson attended AileyCamp Miami, a six-week summer program that works with middle school students, teaching them to express themselves through dance, writing and the arts rather than verbal altercations. The camp, now in its eighth year, is run by the Adrienne Arsh Center for the Performing Arts and the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater —

SEE AWARD, 6A

FROM PAGE 1A AWARD

headed by Liberty City native Robert Battle.

Johnson represented AileyCamp at the White House on Tuesday as the organization received the 2016 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award, along with 11 other programs nationwide. First lady Michelle Obama congratulated Johnson, an eighth grader from North Miami Beach.

"We believe every single child has boundless promise, no matter who they are, where they come from

or how much money their parents have," Obama said. "These kids represent the very best of America."

Being honored at the ceremony and meeting Obama was very exciting, Johnson said, adding she hopes to be as "open-hearted" as the first lady.

"It was very exciting; it showed me that there's more out there," Johnson said. "I can be anyone I want to be."

Obama praised the youth program leaders for giving students a chance to succeed, even though many kids "think that places like this are not for them."

"Through our programs, students have become poets and dancers and filmmakers and photographers, but more importantly, they've become leaders in their communities," Obama said. "Together, they've learned the power of discipline, of hard work and teamwork."

At AileyCamp, students learn about West African drumming, jazz, modern and ballet dancing, while taking classes in conflict resolution, drug prevention, creative communication and other areas of personal development.

Johnson has used a specific creative outlet — poetry — since she was 8 to express her feelings. In particular, there's one quote, which came from author Robert Te'ew, which she said she'd always remember:

"Don't let negative and toxic people rent a space in your mind," she said. "Raise the rent and kick them out."

Former AileyCamper, now Ailey member Solomon Dumas affirms program's value

August 11, 2016

By: Zita Allen



Christopher Taylor (far right) joins Ailey Campers for run-through as Ailey Camp Director Nasha Thomas conducts rehearsal for Aug. 11 performance. CONTRIBUTED

Thursday, Aug. 11, more than 100 youngsters will take the stage at Hostos Center for Arts & Culture for a festive performance that caps their six-week summer at CAS/AileyCamp New York. They will showcase skills nurtured by the innovative program that combines dance and classes in creative communication and personal development to give kids ages 11 to 14 tools that help them reach their full potential by encouraging self-awareness, self-esteem and discipline. One of the youngsters who will take center stage during the program is 16-year-old Christopher Taylor. Taylor is a former AileyCamper in Newark who has spent the summer participating in an Ailey School summer intensive training program.

Recently, Taylor sat down for a brief conversation about the AileyCamp experience with Solomon Dumas, a new member of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, who got his first taste of dance at AileyCamp in his hometown of Chicago. Both were on a brief rehearsal break—Taylor from preparing for the AileyCamp New York's Aug. 11 final performance for the summer and Dumas from rehearsals for the AAADT 2016 season that kicks off with a national tour and culminates in December with its New York City Center season.

The skill, discipline and joy of dance nurtured at CAS/AileyCamp manifests itself in kids lives in a variety of ways. For Dumas, it ignited a laser-focused determination to become a professional dancer. Taylor's path is still unfolding, but his attention-grabbing performance during the AAADT 2015 Lincoln Center gala in a piece d'occasion featuring AileyCampers, Ailey School students and Ailey II company members captured attention. Now, he's taking part an Ailey summer intensive and rehearsing for the Aug. 11 CAS/AileyCamp performance while doing all he can to follow in Dumas' footsteps.

AileyCamp was clearly a good place to start. National AileyCamp Director Nasha Thomas has described this remarkable program as part of choreographer Alvin Ailey's brilliant vision decades ago. Since its inception in 1989 in Kansas City, Mo., AileyCamp has evolved into a year-round program reaching thousands of youngsters in cities across the country, as far away as Berkeley, Calif. and as close as Newark, N.J. Some young campers have even gone on like Dumas to become professional dancers.

Taylor said he has attended AileyCamp for three summers, beginning in 2011. When he sat down with Dumas to discuss his dream of a career as a dancer, it is possible to hear echoes of sentiments expressed by Ta-Nehisi Coates open letter, "Between the World and Me." Sure, Coates open letter is to his son, but this intergenerational exchange, these words of wisdom between the 27-year-old Dumas and 16-year-old Taylor—two young Black males at different points in their journey—resonates. These two are, after all, young African-American men who could, like so many, encounter what calls "an array of lethal puzzles and strange perils that seem to rise up from the asphalt itself" on streets that "transform every ordinary day into a series of trick questions, and every incorrect answer risks a beat down, a shooting or a pregnancy." Following their dreams is no easy journey, as Langston Hughes pointed out years ago. Every inspiration and affirmation is invaluable, and institutions such as AileyCamp can make a profound difference.

February 4, 2015



An instrument of knowledge

BY PAULINA FIROZI

Daniel Harder was surrounded by 30 high school students — nearly two dozen girls dressed in black leotards and black or nude tights rolled up to their ankles, eight boys dressed in white tank tops and black leggings. They looked at Harder in awe.

They cheered when he said he was a native of Bowie, Md. They cracked little smiles when Harder said to “wake up your faces.”

“Dance is not just about the body,” he said. “It’s about the instrument.”

Harder is in Washington this week to perform at the Kennedy Center with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater; it’s his fifth season as a member of the company. But one of his first stops was to teach a master class on Monday at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts. He

spent the class connecting with dancers in a classroom not far from where he grew up. He had friends who studied at Duke Ellington and knew the talent it could produce.

“One day I’ll be paying to see y’all,” he told the students.

The 27-year-old said his own education began when he was “a student of Michael and Janet Jackson.”

“I was a music video kid. I would emulate the dances that I saw,” he said.

After his first concert — his mom got tickets to see Janet Jackson for his 9th birthday — he knew he wanted to dance professionally.

Suitland alumnus returns to perform at Kennedy Center with the Alvin Ailey company — and to teach young dancers

Daniel Harder leads a class at the Duke Ellington School in Washington.

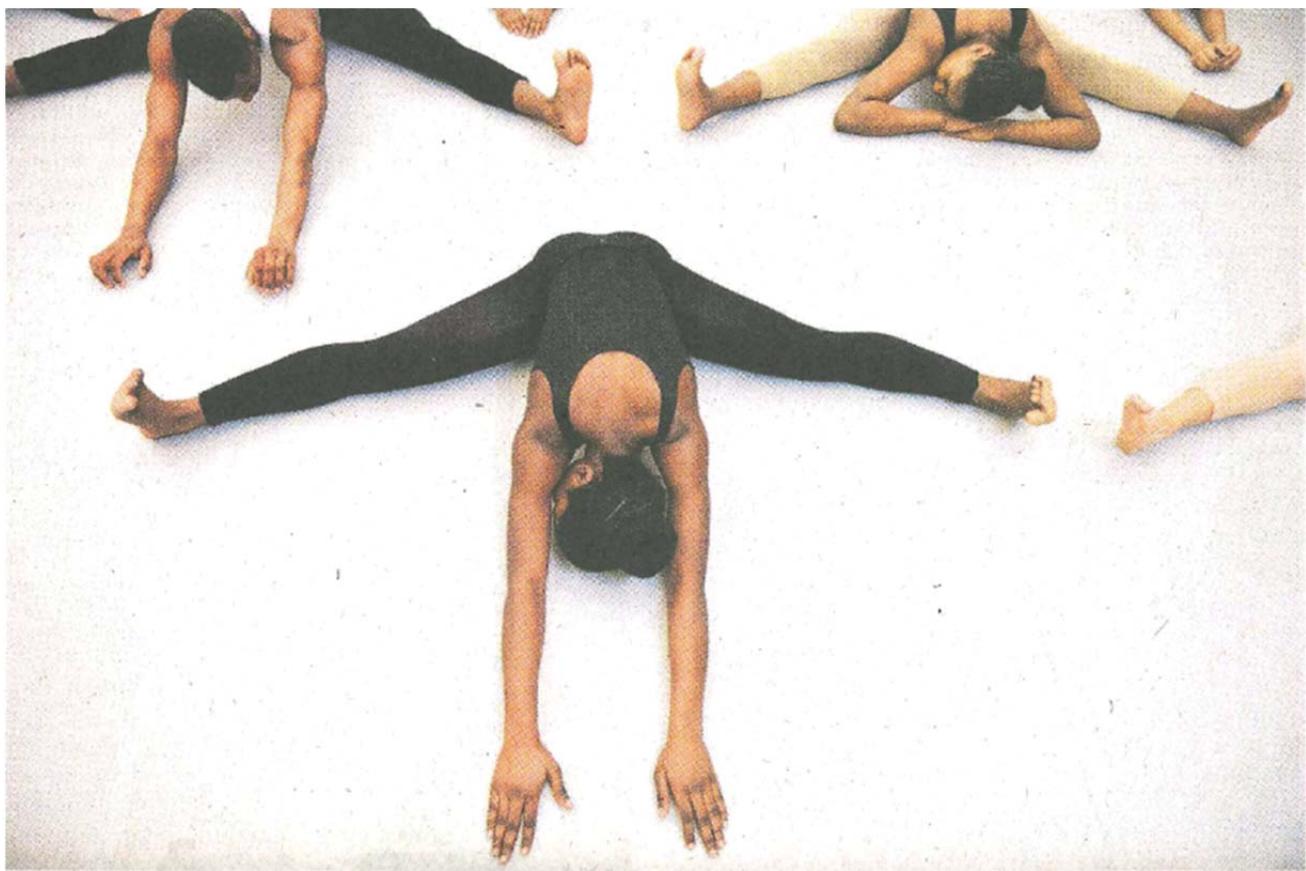
“He just looked at me and said, ‘I know what I’m going to do when I grow up,’” said his mother, Alana Washington. She laughed, then realized he was serious.

Years later, Washington would try to discourage her son from dance.

“Both his father and I told him it’s hard to make a living in the arts. You should consider a more traditional education.” But, she said, “I could see that he was not to be deterred.”

That determination may help explain how a young man who didn’t take his first dance class until his mid-teens now finds himself a member of the storied

HARDER CONTINUED ON B2



MATT MCCLAIN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Dance students at Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington participate in a class led by Daniel Harder of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Harder, a native of Bowie, Md., and the acclaimed company are in town for performances at the Kennedy Center.

The student becomes the teacher

HARDER FROM B1

Ailey dance company.

A path of formal training

Harder took his first steps toward a dance career at 14, when he went to an audition at the Kennedy Center for a production by choreographer Debbie Allen. Not familiar with the technique and vocabulary of dance, Harder did what he had always done: emulate the other dancers.

"I remember her coming up to me," he said of Allen. "And she said, 'You know, have you ever taken any formal dance class?' I said no."

He was cut. But Allen invited Harder to attend her summer intensive program in Los Angeles and get his first shot at formal training.

"He came back changed," Washington said.

He started taking classes at Suitland High School's Center for Visual and Performing Arts. He was one of three boys out of 74

students in the dance department.

At Suitland, Harder was running back and forth between pre-calculus and ballet. As he got settled, ballet teacher Barbara Marks let him wear basketball shorts until he got the proper attire.

"She could tell I was self-conscious about wearing the tights and being so exposed," he said. "But eventually she said, 'This is what you have to do if you're going to be a dancer.' ... Once I got over that, it was on."

There were hours of class and rehearsal, but Harder made academics a priority. Yet, as he did his homework, he stretched or sat in a split. He practiced pirouettes in the kitchen.

"If we were cooking dinner," Washington said, "he was twirling in front of me."

Harder said it never felt like work.

"I never remember feeling down," he said.

During Harder's senior year, his mom was diagnosed with Stage 3 breast cancer. Teachers said his

focus — if possible — got stronger.

"There was a seriousness about him," said Maria Saldana, the center's director at Suitland. "One of two things happens when students have to deal with something like this. They fall off, lose interest in things, or they become extremely focused."

It was his mother, in fact, who kept him going.

"It was very inspiring for me . . . to watch my mother, who would go through treatments, and come Monday, she was right back at work."

The quick study

By the end of Harder's last year of high school, he landed a full scholarship to Fordham University in New York.

The college's joint program with Alvin Ailey allowed Harder to earn a bachelor of fine arts in dance while preparing for a professional career; Washington said she and Harder's father insisted on a college education.

After a year with the junior company of Alvin Ailey, Harder

was one of four dancers accepted into the first company in 2010.

"It's almost unheard of that a young person can go from high school to being a full-time Alvin Ailey dancer in five years," Saldana said.

But ask Harder about his fast climb through the competitive dance world, and he chalks it up to luck — and to fulfilling a purpose through dance that is bigger than any individual.

He goes back to Suitland whenever he can, teaching workshops and instilling in students the discipline to pursue their passions at any cost.

In 2011, Harder recalls waiting for the curtains to rise for his first performance at the Kennedy Center as a member of the main Alvin Ailey company. He remembered in high school coming to see them perform on that stage with his mother and thinking, "I want to do that."

"To have that moment come to fruition," he said, "it was very surreal."

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AileyCamp helps kids tackle challenges through dance

August 21, 2014

Video: Thursday's installment of TODAY's series, "Hope to It," spotlights AileyCamp, a six-week program from Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater that serves kids ages 11 to 14, helping them face personal challenges through dance.



TODAY



Watch video [here](#)

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Video: So You Think You Can Dance Ailey's 'Revelations'?

By Pia Catton | June 16, 2014

Alvin Ailey's 1960 modern dance masterpiece "Revelations" has been performed in 71 countries, and it reliably brings audiences to their feet, even dancing in the aisles. The combination of modern dance and spirituals creates a sense of uplift so infectious that most people leave the theater either singing the music or trying to dance the steps.

Last week, they got a chance to learn those steps for real.

In a free public workshop, fans gathered on Lincoln Center plaza to learn portions of the "Revelations" choreography. Led by former company dancer Nasha Thomas-Schmitt, about 300 people joined to try out three short passages of movement from the sections titled "I've Been 'Buked," "Wade in the Water" and "Rocka my Soul."



Former Ailey company dancers Nasha Thomas-Schmitt, left, and Renee Robinson, are pictured leading the workshop. Photo: Jennifer Weiss for The Wall Street Journal

The company presented similar workshops previously in Houston, Los Angeles and Chicago, where former dancer Renee Robinson said the crowds reacted just as they do when watching the work onstage: "They had all the enthusiasm that happens in the performances."

New York's first "Revelations" workshop drew dancers of all ages, from Jordan Lange, 12 years old, wearing ballet shoes and neon-green shorts, to Lois Kaufmann, 58, who came with friends from her dance class. Even a few folks in their gala finery tried a few moves before heading into the Koch Theater, where the company is onstage through June 22.



Watch video [here](#)



AileyCamp Miami Enlightens At-Risk Students

August 2, 2012



MIAMI (CBSMiami) — The Adrienne Arsht Center is offering a summer program called AileyCamp Miami that teaches at-risk Miami-Dade students about art and life.

This year's six-week camp fielded 100 students, all of whom are preparing for their final performance Saturday night.

Manager of Education and Outreach Jiro Ontiveros says the program is funded both privately and publicly, adding that it is free to

the students.

Says Ontiveros: "We take students that may have academic challenges, socioeconomic challenges or have problems at home. We give them a safe comfortable environment to stretch their minds and bodies."

Anthony Jackson, 12, attended Hialeah Gardens Middle School. He says he has learned affirmations that help him with his self-esteem. In fact, he recently helped a friend resolve a conflict. It is a skill organizers say students learn to use in their lives.

Camp Director Ethel Calhoun says the program gives children a way to express themselves.

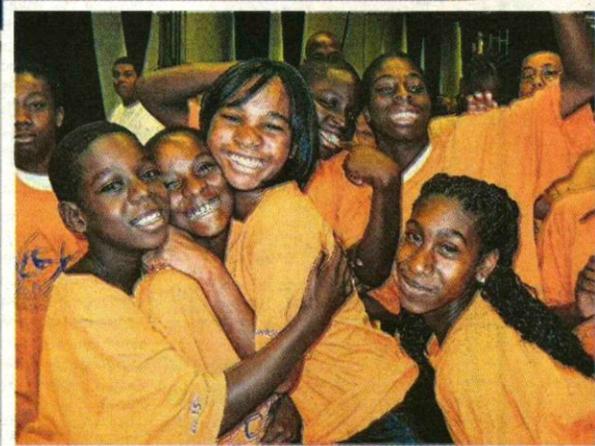
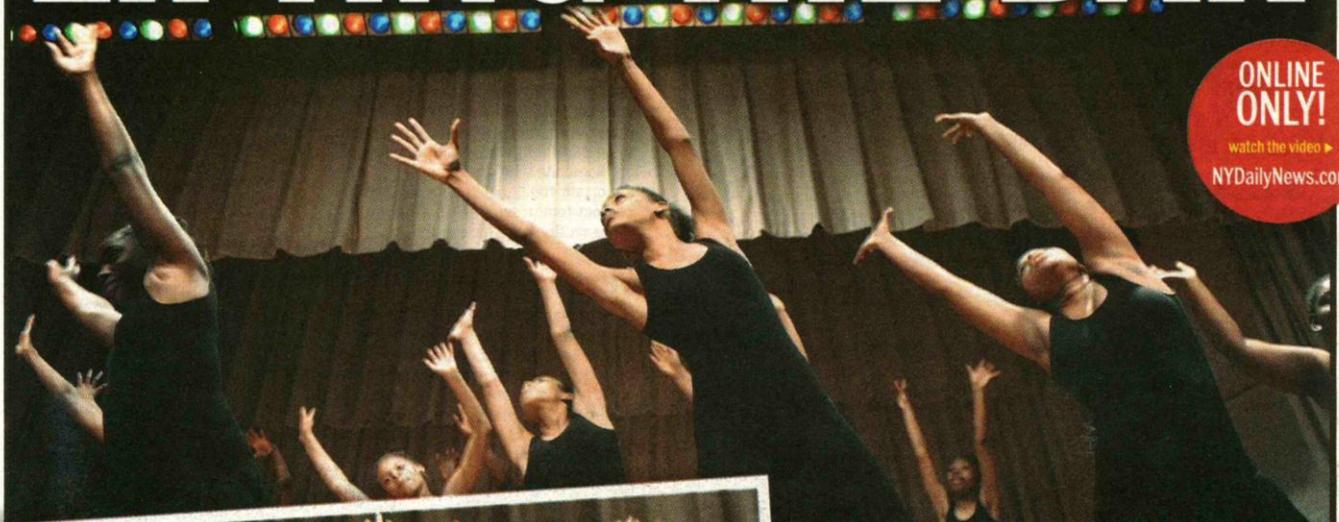
"It's a way to channel their anger and frustration and make them feel good," says Calhoun.

"Colors", the group's final performance, will be held on Saturday, August 4th. The performance kicks off a three-month, countywide campaign called Light/The Holocaust and Humanity Project, which promotes diversity and the protection of human rights.

Watch the video here: <http://miami.cbslocal.com/2012/08/02/aileycamp-miami-enlightens-at-risk-students/>

LIFTING THE BAR

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 NYDailyNews.com



Students are in sync (top & above) during and in joyous mood (r.) following AileyCamp class at Intermediate School 90 on W. 168th St. in Washington Heights Tuesday. They're learning ballet, jazz, modern and West African dances. Photos by David Handschuh/Daily News

Ailey dancers teach city kids the moves

BY MICHAEL J. FEENEY
 NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

FOR SIX WEEKS this summer, more than 100 city kids will learn dance techniques in Washington Heights from some of the best trained dancers in the country.

AileyCamp, a program of the world-famous Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, kicked off last week, transforming IS 90 into a dancer's playground.

Jaleen Henderson, 12, of East Harlem, said she has been dancing since she was 3 and knows exactly what she wants to do.

"I want to be a contemporary dancer," said Henderson, who's in her second year at the free camp and describes herself as a "street dancer" who had little formal training before coming to AileyCamp.

"It's fun and educational," she told the Daily News. "Ailey-Camp is not like the other camps. I tell all my friends to come here."

The 112 campers — including 17 boys — are learning ballet as well as modern, jazz and West African dance through the program, which is taking place in 10 cities across the country this summer.

"High necks, long necks and smile a little bit," one instructor

called out during ballet class. In addition to executing dance moves, the campers have sessions in which they discuss everything from conflict resolution to nutrition.

During a visit to the camp on Tuesday, the boys played the drums, the girls displayed their *pas de bourrée* in ballet and showed off jazz and modern dance routines.

The campers also recited affirmations such as: "I will not use the word 'can't' to define my possibilities."

Jacqueline Martinez, 11, of Washington Heights, wasn't sure she'd be able to learn all of the dances. But she credited her instructors with making it easy.

"They teach you step by step," said Martinez, who started dancing when she was 8. "I like it because you get to follow your dreams."

Not everyone wants to be a dancer, of course; and that's okay, said Nasha Thomas-Schmitt, the national director of the camp.

"It's a program for inner-city kids who have not had access to the arts," she said of the camp, which partners with the Children's Aid Society.

"They can express themselves. They can be themselves. It's about building self-esteem." mfeeny@nydailynews.com

Alvin Ailey's Mission Inspires Dance Camp

By TAMMY LA GORCE

NEWARK

WHEN Nehprie Amenii of Brooklyn walked into Newark Arts High School for the first time this summer, she was prepared to be hit with what she called "full cannons of attitude."

Since then, she has been spending weekdays teaching creative communication to 11- to 14-year-olds as part of AileyCamp, a full-day summer program offered by the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and financed, in Newark, entirely by the Prudential Foundation.

Two weeks into the camp, Ms. Amenii, 31, recalled, "I used humor" to counteract uncooperative attitudes. "Then all that hardness starts to fall off," she said, and the camp's mission, which is not just to teach dance but also to help

Newark youths, some with hard lives, get cultural training.

campers navigate adolescence, can take center stage.

The camp is free to its 96 participants, who were selected after personal interviews this spring from a pool of 250 candidates in Newark public schools. It will end Aug. 12 after a performance on Aug. 10 at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark, intended mainly for campers' friends and families.

AileyCamp is new to Newark and to New Jersey. The program was introduced in 1989 in Kansas City, Mo., by the dance company in partnership with the Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey. By 1999, when Nasha Thomas-Schmitt of Maplewood became director of Ailey's Arts in Education program as well as national director of AileyCamp, it had spread to Manhattan, Chicago and Bridgeport, Conn. During Ms. Thomas-Schmitt's tenure, camps have been added in Atlanta; Kansas City, Kan.; Berkeley, Calif.; Boston; Chicago; Miami; and now Newark.

"This program is my baby," Ms. Thomas-Schmitt, 48, a former Alvin Ailey dancer, said during a news media tour of the camp in mid-July. "When we open a camp, we're looking for a part-

ner that can sustain us. Hopefully this is staying in Newark for a long time."

Stops along the way in the bustling high school, which was hosting two other summer programs for children at the time, included classes in ballet, jazz, modern dance, West African dance, percussion and personal development.

Seven instructors — all but one have experience teaching other Ailey Arts in Education programs — lead the classes. In West African dance, children traversed the dance floor flailing their arms and stamping their feet to live accompaniment on a djembe drum; in ballet, a pianist played through a series of ports de bras and leaps.

Not only did AileyCamp Newark get financial support from the Prudential Foundation, but it also received help from the high school, which donated its dance-ready spaces and classrooms, and from the performing arts center, which is providing its 514-seat Victoria Theater for the performance.

Despite the absence of professional dancers, that performance is likely to have plenty of Ailey flavor.

"One of the first things we did here is show the kids Ailey history," said Felicia Swoope, 42, of Brooklyn, the director of the Newark camp. "We showed them videos of Ailey performing and explained the reason why he created the company."

Alvin Ailey, who died in 1989, founded his troupe in 1958 to promote African-American cultural expression and American modern dance. AileyCamp welcomes children of all races.

Though dance experience is not a prerequisite for campers, several children applied to the program because of their interest in becoming professional dancers. By the end of camp, as many as a dozen may receive scholarships to dance with Ailey's Junior Division at the Ailey School this fall.

As for the camp, Ms. Swoope said there were no "real criteria for getting in."

"What we want them to understand most is that Ailey was a remarkable person, but he was also a person just like them," she said. "He created work from his own experience, and we encourage them to do that also."

That may be more of a challenge in Newark than at the other AileyCamp sites, Ms. Thomas-Schmitt said. Though it is the camp closest to her home in Maplewood, and the easiest for her to visit, "I was a little nervous when we started

here," she said.

As Ailey's Arts in Education director, she has led several residencies in Newark's public schools. "I knew about the negative hardships a lot of these young people are dealing with on a daily basis," she said. "We don't have as many daunting situations in other camps." Those include incarcerated parents and drug-addicted ones, as well as unsafe

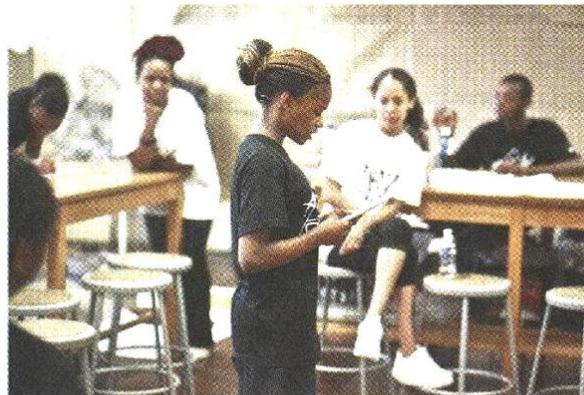
neighborhoods, she said.

"When we did our interviews for this camp," Ms. Thomas-Schmitt said, "one of our questions was, 'If you could change something in your life, what would it be?' Ninety percent said, 'Where I live.'"

By the end of camp, they may feel differently about that. As part of Ms. Amenii's creative communication class,



PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRED R. CONRAD/THE NEW YORK TIMES



GRACE Nasha Thomas-Schmitt, top right, national director of AileyCamp, in Newark. A student, left, reads her poem in creative communications class.

campers are taking pictures of their neighborhoods and writing poems about them; the poems will accompany a show of the photographs as part of the performance.

"When I think about them getting up on that stage, how important it makes them feel, it makes me teary-eyed," Ms. Amenii said. "It will be one of the biggest moments of their lives."

By mid-July, some campers were already showing signs that the camp had been an enriching experience. "What they want us to remember is that all kids can dance, and no one is special or more important than anyone else," said Briana Thomas, an 11-year-old from Newark who will enter Newark Early College High School as a sixth-grader in the fall. "I used to catch an attitude, but not so much anymore. It takes two to argue, and I have to think about being responsible for myself.

"I learned that from AileyCamp," she said.