

# ANNUAL REPORT | 2016



**OVERTURE WITH THE ARTS**

<http://owta.org>

## MESSAGE FROM FOUNDER

We're happy to report that things have been moving full steam ahead! Let's take a moment to look back at all of the amazing events, generous donors, and accolades that OWTA received in 2016.

We were awarded the following grants and contributions:

- An increase in funding from the City of Pierrefonds to run A.S.A.P and offer free group guitar lessons and dance classes for youth.
- Citizenship & Immigration Canada's Multiculturalism Program awarded us with over \$10,000 in funding.
- The Jewish Community Foundation of Montreal presented us with a grant to continue running programs for Holocaust Education Month.
- Our 4th Annual Winter Wonderland Brunch was sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Lakeshore Montreal Foundation and Foundation Bon Départ.
- Our Girls Unite program received funding from the SOCAN Foundation and the Arbonne Charitable Foundation.
- The Girls Action Foundation provided funding for our 2nd Women in the Arts Conference.



**Akilah Newton**  
OWTA Founder &  
Executive Director



**Jim Beis, Mayor, Akilah Newton,  
Frank Baylis, MP & Justine  
McIntyre, City Councillor at  
OWTA's 4th Winter  
Wonderland Brunch**

With the help of generous donors and the support of our tireless volunteers we were able to continue running programs and events that support the community on a municipal, provincial, and national level!

Here is a list of the programs and various other events we were able to accomplish as a result of your continued support:

- Hosted weekly A.S.A.P. group guitar and dance workshops
- Black History Month (February): For a 6th consecutive year we delivered educational and entertaining presentations in schools in Montreal, Calgary and Edmonton.
- Holocaust Education Month (November) - Echoes of Anne Frank: Spoken word artist Lisa Shalom hosted a series of spoken word workshops using the Diary of Anne Frank as the central focus. In addition, we introduced a new presentation called "Erasing Hate" hosted by local social justice activist, Corey Fleischer.
- Students in our Girls Unite program recorded a three song EP titled "Origins" and they were invited to perform "O Canada" at the City of Pierrefonds' Canada Day celebration. They were also invited to perform in front of an audience of 6,000 people at a conference in Niagara Falls, ON.
- We hosted our 1st Annual Countdown to Christmas Vendor Fair and had over 50 vendors participate.
- Hosted our 4th Annual Winter Wonderland Brunch and treated 89 children to a joyful holiday party.
- Hosted our 7th Anniversary fundraiser with a silent auction, a live music performance, magician, caricature artist and photo booth.
- Hosted the 4th Summer Breeze: Acoustic Music Concert Series in partnership with Chapters Pointe-Claire and Starbucks and delivered 8 free concerts.
- Hosted numerous children's Sing-A-Longs in partnership with Chapters Pointe-Claire lead by singer/ songwriter Tricia Fitz.

2017 is off to a fantastic start and we can't wait to bring even more exciting workshops and events to the community.

On behalf of the team at OWTA and the communities we serve: Thank you!

*Akilah Newton*

## MISSION

Overture with the Arts (OWTA) is a non-profit organization based in the West Island, offering education in music, dance, drama and vocal training. Our free and low-cost programs enable young people to pursue their passion in the performing arts when they wouldn't otherwise have the financial means to pursue their passion.

## VISION

OWTA encourages youth to express themselves creatively and use the arts as a tool to empower their artistic inspirations and communicate in the areas of social justice.

## VALUES

- Professionalism
- Youth
- Community
- Diversity
- Respect

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Modupeh Taylor-Cline

Treasurer: Kelvin Newton

Administrator: Nan Beaton

Administrator: Aline Zafirian

Administrator: Justine McIntyre (Non-Voting)

## PROGRAMS

To carry out our goal of engaging youth, OWTA runs several programs throughout the year. The programs are diverse in nature, including music, dance and radio broadcasts. Additionally, we focus on building partnerships with local organizations. This allows us to create a strong network of committed volunteers, partners and participants who continue to benefit from our activities.

### A.S.A.P. (AFTER SCHOOL ARTS PROGRAM)

Each year we have over 200 youth participate in our free after-school program. This year we offer dance workshops and group guitar lessons allowing students to explore their creativity.

<http://owta.org/after-school-program/>



### GIRLS UNITE

Girls Unite is a female empowerment music program that gives youth the opportunity to work with music industry professionals. In celebration of the International Women's Day (March 8), youth recorded original songs produced by singer/ songwriter Brittany Kwasnik.

<http://owta.org/girls-unite/>



### WORDS, MUSIC, POWER!

For a 6th consecutive year we visited secondary schools with an edutainment (education and entertainment) presentation in celebration of Black History Month. We visited schools in Quebec and Alberta and delivered 40 presentations. Approximately 7,500 youth benefitted from the presentation.



### ERASING HATE

In partnership with the Jewish Community Foundation of Montreal and local activist, Corey Fleischer, we introduced schools to the "Erasing Hate" presentation. The presentation gives students an overview of the varieties and prevalence of hate crimes, with a particular focus on the who, what, where, why, and how of discriminatory and anti-Semitic graffiti. Corey runs his own graffiti removal company in Montreal and on his down time he scans the city streets in an effort to eliminate racial, homophobic, and anti-Semitic hate markings.



## EVENTS

### 7-YEAR ANNIVERSARY FUNDRAISER

On Saturday, April 23rd we celebrated our 7-year anniversary at the Pierrefonds Cultural Centre. Guests sipped on wine, enjoyed hors d'oeuvres, took photos in a photo booth and enjoyed a music performance by youth who participated in our Girls Unite program. Local magician David Lion had guests on their toes with his entertaining magic tricks. Additionally, Jimmy Baptiste created a painting in 30-minutes, which was then included in our silent auction for guests to bid on. All of the proceeds from the night will go towards funding our programs.



### SUMMER BREEZE: ACOUSTIC MUSIC CONCERT SERIES

Due to popular demand we hosted a free concert every Friday in July and August at Starbucks in Chapters Pointe-Claire. The shows were family friendly and all ages were welcome. Starbucks donated a fantastic gift basket to raffle off at each show and approximately 350 guests enjoyed the concert series.



### 4TH ANNUAL WINTER WONDERLAND BRUNCH

For a fourth consecutive year we treated 25 families in need in the West Island to an afternoon of free activities at the Pierrefonds Cultural Centre. Guests enjoyed a warm brunch prepared by Obsession Bakery, local band and OMTA supporter The Record Breakers performed, Junior Jams ran a dance workshop, guests received a framed family portrait as a keepsake and every child in attendance received gifts. Hatley, Winners, Beaver Books, Hasbro Toys, Costco, Loblaws, Peter Pauper Press, Regal Confections, Starbucks Pointe-Claire, Wilton, Chapters, Wow Wee Toys and Sami Fruits donated products and food for the event. The event was sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Lakeshore Montreal Foundation and the Bon Départ Foundation.



## WOMEN IN THE ARTS CONFERENCE

Our 2nd Women in the Arts Conference gave Riverdale High School students the opportunity to learn about different career options in the arts and entertainment industry. Four professional female artists shared their story with students and discussed what inspires them; how to stay motivated in such a competitive field and the challenges females face working in the arts and entertainment industry. At the end of the conference panelists started a dialogue about the realities women face working in a male dominated industry.



## 1ST ANNUAL COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS VENDOR FAIR

On Sunday, December 11 we hosted 50 local vendors and artisans at Riverdale High School in the cafeteria. Cosmetics, Health & Wellness, Jewellery, toys and cash for gold were some of the exciting booths that will be onsite at the event. This free event was family friendly and children enjoyed a dance workshop, a Christmas Sing-A-Long, face painting, a workshop with Princess Birthday Parties Montreal, music performances and more! The event served as a fundraiser for OWTA.



## IMPACT

Through various fundraising activities OWTA cultivated new donors, reached new supporters and raised some much needed funds. As a result of this we were able to continue running our regular programs and introduce new programs.



## SUPPORT AND NETWORKING - MEMBERS AND PARTNERS

- Riverdale High School Community Learning Centre
- Pearson Educational Foundation

## SUPPORTERS

- City of Pierrefonds, Jim Beis, Mayor of Pierrefonds and City Councillors
- Frank Baylis, MP for Pierrefonds/ Dollard-des-Ormeaux
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- The Lester B. Pearson School Board Entrepreneurship Grant Program
- Jewish Community Foundation of Montreal
- Alberta Association for Multicultural Education
- Arbonne Charitable Foundation
- Kiwanis Club of Lakeshore Montreal Foundation
- Bon Départ Foundation
- SOCAN Foundation
- Girls Action Foundation
- Martin Coiteux - MNA, Nelligan
- Carlos Leitão - MNA, Robert-Baldwin
- Geoffrey Kelley - MNA, Jacques-Cartier
- François Blais - Minister responsible for Recreation and Sport
- Kathleen Weil, Minister of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion
- Sébastien Proulx, Minister of Families, Education, Sports & Leisure
- Luc Fortin, Minister of Culture and Communications
- Lise Thériault, Minister responsible for the Status of Women

## 2017 OBJECTIVES

- Increase number of participants
- Continue fundraising initiatives
- Create Membership Program to keep OWTA supporters engaged

## WE NEED YOUR HELP!

While we receive some government support, we depend on the generosity of individuals and corporations to continue to run our programs. We are a non-profit organization supported primarily by donations. To keep running programs, we need your help. We kindly ask you to consider donating to OWTA. No amount is too small.

## VOLUNTEER

Not everyone can make a financial contribution, but there are other ways that you can help OWTA. We are grateful for any involvement as it helps us to achieve our goal of providing free and low cost arts workshops to our community's youth. Please contact us if you would like to volunteer for OWTA, plan a fundraiser event, etc.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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