



Overture

WITH THE ARTS

BRINGING ARTS & CULTURE
TO MONTREAL'S YOUTH



PRESS KIT

WWW.OWTA.ORG

ABOUT



AN INTRODUCTION TO OVERTURE WITH THE ARTS

In a musical or stage performance, the overture is the opening, the introduction. Its aim is to capture interest and set the scene for what is to come.

So too is the mission of OVERTURE WITH THE ARTS: to introduce the performing arts to youth from all walks of life through low-cost programs, enabling them to pursue their passion in the arts when they wouldn't otherwise have the financial means to do so.

OVERTURE WITH THE ARTS (OWTA) is a non-profit organization based in the West Island of Montreal, offering education in music, dance, drama and vocal training. Through in school and after-school programs and school tours, OWTA helps kids and teens find a creative outlet for self-expression and builds confidence and poise. Using the arts as a vehicle for education, OWTA incorporates multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary elements to foster an environment of learning, sharing and, of course, fun.

Drawing on the passion and talents of our team of instructors, OWTA furthermore provides engaging workshops, guest speaker sessions, industry mentorships and performance showcases.

In 2014, OWTA was the proud recipient of the Montreal Community Cares Award (Community Organization Category) from the Fondation Communauté Montréal à Coeur and the Award of Excellence (Honourable Mention) from the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

OWTA's activities are funded through grants, sponsorships and donations.

Watch our promo video online:

<https://youtu.be/vTuslNEWliU>

OWTA VALUES

Professionalism
Youth
Community
Diversity
Respect

WHY ARE THE ARTS SO IMPORTANT?



While there have been countless studies done to prove the importance of arts education, it remains a category often overlooked or diminished in many school curriculums. In fact, giving children and youth the opportunity to explore the arts helps to nourish their minds and their imagination, leading to improved academic results and yielding more responsible, engaged members of society.

Why? Because studying the arts helps us to think outside the box, see things from a different perspective and experiment with various forms of expression. This type of stretch thinking provides a valuable complement to traditional academic studies and arms kids with the skills they need to succeed in life.

Students involved in arts education also tend to be more tolerant of different ethnic groups, have a greater commitment to their community, and spend less time watching TV or playing video games.

“Performing arts provide a way to express ourselves. It allows us to tap into our creative side, and let ourselves shine in a new way. We can let our true feelings show using the arts... the arts makes it easier to feel good about ourselves, to gain confidence and even people skills.”

- Cassandra Bush, Riverdale High School Student

MEET THE FOUNDER

AKILAH NEWTON has a deep appreciation for performing arts.

Early in life, she discovered a fascination with dramatic arts while performing in an elementary school production of Annie. She continued to nurture her interest with training in music, drama, dance, and stage production.

After earning her Bachelor's degree in Arts, Music & Entertainment Management, she felt a need to give back to the community that had helped foster her own dreams and aspirations in performing arts.



“It’s all about the kids. It’s so rewarding to see the smiles on their faces. The arts has a way of bringing out joy in all of us.”

- Akilah Newton

Recognizing that not all kids have the means to participate in arts programs, she set out to make training accessible to young people from all socio-economic backgrounds. She founded OWTA in 2009 to share her passion and experience with the youth in her community.

Reaching out to her network of talented artists and friends, Akilah assembled a team of dedicated instructors to deliver fun, power-packed educational sessions. The first program offers by OWTA provided an 8-week summer session of Jazz and Hip Hop dance classes for youth ages 12 and up. Since then, new programs have been added to OWTA's arts education, responding to the creative needs of Montreal's youth.

PROGRAMS

OVERVIEW (CONTINUED)

BLACK HISTORY MONTH SCHOOL TOUR

Each February in celebration of Black History Month, OWTA visits secondary schools across Canada with a presentation to enlighten students about racism and the heroic contributions black men and women have made in the struggle for liberation throughout history. Approximately 25,000 youth have benefitted from our tour.

OWTA.ORG/TRIPLE-A/

GIRLS UNITE

Girls Unite is a female empowerment music program that gives youth the opportunity to work with music industry professionals. Youth have the opportunity to record original songs that have been co-written and produced by industry professionals. Our participants have even had their music played on Top 40 radio.

OWTA.ORG/GIRLS-UNITE/

ECHOES OF ANNE FRANK

Echoes of Anne Frank is a series of workshops for high school students that educate youth about Holocaust Education Month (November). Students are challenged to explore the depths of human struggle by examining the first person narrative of Anne Frank through creative writing and Spoken Word..

OWTA.ORG/ECHOES-OF-ANNE-FRANK/

6/11



SUMMER PROGRAMS

In 2018 OWTA launched a Youth Musical Theatre intensive summer program for aspiring triple-threats. Kids and teens receive training in acting, dancing and singing while honing their skills in the performing arts. Participants also have the opportunity to perform in a musical production at the end of the summer.

OWTA.ORG/MUSICAL-THEATRE-SUMMER/

EVENTS

OVERVIEW



SUMMER BREEZE CONCERT SERIES

FRIDAY JULY 6, 13, 20, 27 & AUGUST 3, 10
7:00PM TO 8:00PM

STARBUCKS @ CHAPTERS POINTE-CLAIRE

SUMMER BREEZE: CONCERT SERIES

For 6 consecutive years, OWTA has hosted free concerts on Friday evenings in July and August at Starbucks in Chapters Pointe-Claire. The family-friendly performances showcase emerging local artists of different genres - including pop, rock, R&B, jazz and country. Starbucks donates a fantastic gift basket to raffle off at each show.

OWTA.ORG/SUMMER-BREEZE/



SUMMER SING-A-LONGS

Tuesday mornings in July and August OWTA hosts a free children's Sing-A-Long at Chapters Pointe-Claire. From 11:00am to 11:30am, kids (and parents!) sing along to their favourite songs led by a local artist. A fantastic prize is also raffled off at the end of each workshop.

OWTA.ORG/2018-SUMMER-SING-LONG/

EVENTS

OVERVIEW (CONTINUED)

SPRING INTO SUMMER FAMILY FUN FAIR

In May 2018, OWTA hosted our first annual family fun fair at Riverdale High School. The free outdoor event featured local vendors, food, music & dance performances, a petting zoo, face painting and more for the whole family.



COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS VENDOR FAIR

Each November, OWTA hosts over 40 local vendors and artisans at Riverdale High School for a fundraising holiday fair. This free family event also offered dance workshops, face painting, a magic show, and live performances.



WINTER WONDERLAND BRUNCH

Since 2013, OWTA treats 25 families in need in the West Island to an afternoon of free activities at the Pierrefonds Cultural Centre. Guests enjoyed a warm brunch, live performances, and dance workshops. Every child in attendance receives brand new books, toys, confections and a pyjamas.

ANNIVERSARY FUNDRAISER

Each April, OWTA hosts an anniversary fundraiser to celebrate a yet another new milestone year of success. All of the proceeds from the music and comedy affair go towards funding our programs for youth.



OVERVIEW (CONTINUED)

DIVERSITY IN THE ARTS CONFERENCE

In March of 2017 we hosted our 1st Diversity in the Arts Conference in celebration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and Action Week Against Racism. Invited panelists spoke about their experiences as visible minorities working in arts and entertainment, prompting a much needed discussion on racism and the lack of cultural diversity represented in the industry.



WOMEN IN THE ARTS CONFERENCE

This vital event provides youth with the opportunity to learn about the different career options in the arts and entertainment industry. As part of the conference programming, female professional artists share their success stories with high school students and discuss topics including what inspires them, how to stay motivated in a competitive field, and following your dreams – among other challenges females working in the industry face.

CALENDAR

OVERVIEW OF ANNUAL PROGRAMS & EVENTS

| | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| PROGRAMS | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A.S.A.P. (After School Arts Program) | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Girls Unite | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Summer Programs | | ■ | | | | | ■ | ■ | | | | |
| Black History Month School Tour | | ■ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Echoes of Anne Frank | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | |
| EVENTS | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Diversity in the Arts Conference | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | |
| Anniversary Fundraiser | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | |
| Spring into Summer Family Fun Fair | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | |
| Summer Breeze: Concert Series | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | | | | |
| Summer Sing-A-Longs | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | | | | |
| Women in the Arts Conference | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | |
| Countdown to Christmas Vendor Fair | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | |
| Winter Wonderland Brunch | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |



CONTACT INFORMATION

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Website: www.owta.org

Social Media: Find us on Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, and LinkedIn

To register for programs or for more information: check back on OWTA's website and sign up for our newsletter at www.otwa.org.

OWTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTING PARTNERS:

City of Pierrefonds, Jim Beis, Mayor of Pierrefonds and City Councillors

Frank Baylis, MP for Pierrefonds/ Dollard-des-Ormeaux

The Department of Canadian Heritage

The Lester B. Pearson School Board Entrepreneurship Grant Program

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