

# ANNUAL REPORT | 2019



**OVERTURE WITH THE ARTS**

**<http://owta.org>**

## MESSAGE FROM FOUNDER

Dear OWTA supporters,

2019 was a year to celebrate, as we rang in our 10th anniversary. To mark this milestone, we hosted 10 events to commemorate each of our 10 years, which included the following:

- Black History Month Caribbean Lunch (February)
- Triple AAA Conference (February)
- Ovation - Sonia Balazovjeh Dance Company Fundraising Show (March)
- 10 Year Anniversary Fundraising Gala (April)
- Spring into Summer Family Fun Fair (May)
- Teen Songwriting Competition (June)
- Summer Sing-A-Longs (July)
- Aladdin JR - Youth Musical Theatre Summer Production (July)
- Summer Breeze Concert Series (August)
- 7th Annual Winter Wonderland Brunch (December)



**Akilah Newton**  
OWTA Founder &  
Executive Director

This year we have also moved out of Riverdale High School and set up shop at Pierrefonds Community High school, and have additionally acquired an office space at Maison des Jeunes Pierrefonds. The dream to have our own arts centre is still at the forefront of our minds and continues to be a priority.

The 10 years that we have been operating have brought us so much joy and pride in not only ourselves, but in our community and all the people who have made these years so rewarding. From our youth participants to our dedicated staff and volunteers, to the schools and community centres who have opened their doors to us - Thank you for believing in us, we are so incredibly grateful for your unwavering support. We never could have envisioned our dream of making the arts accessible in the West Island would flourish into a national organization that has seen over 50,000 participants.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Akilah Newton". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Akilah Newton  
Founder & Executive Director

## 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: Agnes Katsouros  
Vice President: Tina Wentzell  
Treasurer: Diane Bates  
Secretary: Alessia DiGiorgio  
Director: Kelvin Newton  
Director: Sophie Haynes  
Director: Modupeh Taylor-Cline

## 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 spoken word workshops. Additionally, we focus on building partnerships with local organizations, which allows us to create a strong network of committed volunteers, partners and participants who continue to benefit from our activities.

## B.R.A.W.L

For the 9th consecutive year we visited secondary schools with an edutainment (education and entertainment) presentation in celebration of Black History Month. The 2019 presentation focused on the contributions of artists, athletes and activists. We visited schools in Quebec, Ontario and Alberta and delivered 40 presentations. Approximately 7,500 youth benefitted from the presentation.



## MUSICAL THEATRE SUMMER CAMP

From June 25 to August 16 youth between the age of 5 to 12 acted, danced and sang as they honed their skills in the performing arts. Kids had a fun filled summer becoming confident performers while making new friends. Participants also had the opportunity to perform in an original musical theatre production and Aladdin JR at the end of the summer for their family and friends.



## EVENTS

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH CARIBBEAN BRUNCH

On Saturday, February 2nd guests enjoyed a Caribbean meal, live music and a spoken word performance. Hosted by Breakfast Television Montreal's Catherine Verdon-Diamond, guests got a sneak peek of our 2018 Black History Month school presentation, B.R.A.W.L., hosted by Omari Newton and Senator Anne Clare Cools shared her story with guests.



### 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY FUNDRAISER

On Saturday, April 13th we celebrated our 10-year anniversary at the Olympia Reception Halls. Guests sipped on wine, enjoyed hors d'oeuvres and a music performance by youth who participated in our Girls Unite program. Additionally, 4 local comedians had us in stitches! All of the proceeds from the night went to funding our programs.



## 2ND SPRING INTO SUMMER FAMILY FUN FAIR

On Saturday, May 25th we hosted a family fun fair at Riverdale High School. We had vendors, food, music and dance performances, a petting zoo, pony rides, face painting and more! The weather didn't work in our favour so the event was indoors, but we still had a fun filled afternoon with approximately 500 guests in attendance.



## SUMMER BREEZE CONCERT SERIES

We hosted 2 free concerts on Friday, July 5th and Friday, August 2nd 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 150 guests enjoyed the concert series.



## SUMMER SING-A-LONGS

Every Tuesday in July and August we hosted a children's Sing-A-Long at Chapters Pointe-Claire. From 11:00am to 11:30am children sang along to their favourite songs with Christina Koikaran. There was no cost to participate and we had a fantastic prize, courtesy of Chapters Pointe-Claire, to raffle off at the end of each workshop.



## 7TH ANNUAL WINTER WONDERLAND BRUNCH

On Sunday, December 8 we treated 25 families in need in the West Island to an afternoon of free activities at the Centre Marcel Morin. Guests enjoyed a warm brunch, a dance workshop and received a framed family portrait as a keepsake. Every child in attendance received a brand new pair of shoes, many toys, books as well as some confectionery. The event was sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Lakeshore Montreal Foundation.



## OVERTURE FILM

Overture Film is a program that introduces youth to film production through videography, video editing, storyboarding and more. Led by a professional filmmaker, this new program allows youth to learn new skills as they work in teams to create original short films and documentaries. Participants conceptualize their film ideas, create original scripts, research and secure locations to film and cast talent.



## YOUTH ARTS RETREAT

From May 17th to 20th (Victoria Day Long Weekend), youth ages 15-18 spent the weekend disconnecting and creating art. There were guest speakers, interactive workshops in songwriting, music production and visual arts, as well as outdoor activities, campfire and music jam sessions.



## 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 introduced a new program.



## SUPPORT AND NETWORKING - MEMBERS AND PARTNERS

- Riverdale High School Community Learning Centre
- Pearson Educational Foundation

## SUPPORTERS

- The City of Pierrefonds-Roxboro
- The City of Montreal
- Frank Baylis/Sameer Zuberi, MP for Pierrefonds/Dollard-des-Ormeaux
- Francis Scarpaleggia, MP for Lac-Saint-Louis
- The Department of Canadian Heritage
- Alberta Association for Multicultural Education
- Arbonne Charitable Foundation
- Kiwanis Club of Lakeshore Montreal Foundation
- Monsef Derraji - MNA, Nelligan
- Carlos Leitão - MNA, Robert-Baldwin
- Geoffrey Kelley/Greg Kelley - MNA, Jacques Cartier

## 2020 OBJECTIVES

- Increase funding by 50%
- Hire two full time employees

## 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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