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ANNUAL REPORT

OWTA.org

Message From President

15,000! That's how many youth have benefitted from OWTA's programs in a few short years. 2014 was an exciting and productive year. We introduced new programs, received accolades, and most importantly reached out to even more youth in our local community and internationally. In May we were given a Montreal Community Cares award in the Community Organization category. This award recognizes the unsung heroes that work to better the lives of people within the community. Our efforts and years of working with marginalized youth through the arts, continues to be an integral part of our mandate. In addition, in November we were recognized by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation for building awareness and understanding of Canadian values that are reflective of Canadian diversity for our in-school program, Songs of Freedom.



In October the Songs of Freedom tour was invited back to the UK for a second year to celebrate Black History Month in Europe. The tour continues to educate and empower youth by providing them with knowledge of cultural history of the African diaspora. We saw the participation of approximately 7,500 youth for all of our programs. There were new programs launched in 2014 that we look forward to continuing this year. The first is A.S.A.P. (After School Arts Program) which offers free visual arts and breakdance workshops to youth age 12-17. The second program is Overture Radio, which is a student run radio program (podcast based) that encourages youth to find their voice, promotes creative thinking and inspires self-expression.



As we take a final look back on 2014 we were very proud to reach a milestone; April marked our 5-year anniversary. To celebrate this occasion we hosted an event that drew a crowd of active community members and guests from both the municipal and federal level.



Akilah Newton
Founder & President



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: Akilah Newton
(Non-Voting Member)
- Vice-President:
Catherine Roch-Hansen
- Treasurer: Kelvin Newton
- Secretary: Marie-Claire Charlton
- Communications Manager:
Emma Hancox
- Administrator: Modupeh Taylor-Cline

Vision

To carry out our goal of engaging youth, OMTA 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

A.S.A.P

(AFTER SCHOOL ARTS PROGRAM)

From January to May 60 youth participated in this free after-school program. Break Dancing and Visual Arts workshops were offered allowing students to fully explore their creativity.



Songs of Freedom

For a 5th consecutive year we visited secondary schools with an edutainment (education and entertainment) presentation in celebration of Black History Month. For the 5th anniversary of the tour we went on a national and international tour. We brought 50 presentations to schools in Montreal, Sherbrooke, Toronto, Brampton, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, as well as cities in Europe including Manchester, Liverpool, London and Frankfurt. Approximately 6,000 youth benefitted from the presentation.

S.P.E.A.K.

New in our program catalogue the S.P.E.A.K workshops give teens the opportunity to discuss their thoughts and concerns on a variety of topics in an open and supportive environment. Youth participated in interactive trust-building activities, created music, engaged in visual arts projects and talked about issues that teenagers face today. Approximately 750 youth benefitted from 5 workshops.



Overture Radio

10 participants took part in our student run radio program (podcast based). Youth were provided with the tools and training to produce six hour long radio shows. Click the below link to hear the podcasts:

soundcloud.com/overture-radio

Songs & Stories

In its inaugural year students learned about the diverse history and culture of the African-Canadian experience through music with a 45-minute interactive presentation. The presentation celebrates Black History Month and approximately 600 youth benefitted from the presentation.



Events

1st Annual Winter Wonderland Brunch

We treated 25 underprivileged families in the West Island to an afternoon of free activities at the Pierrefonds Cultural Centre. Guests enjoyed a warm brunch prepared by staff from Marlowe Restaurant, entertainment, gifts and more. Puma, Lindt Chocolate, Hatley, Starbucks, Danawares Toys, Camino, Dollarama, Costco, Loblaws, Peter Pauper Press, Pharmaprix, Annabelle Cosmetics were among the sponsors that donated products to the event. The 1st Annual Winter Wonderland Brunch spread love and joy while bringing holiday cheer to those in need.

Impact

Through various fundraising activities OMTA 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.

Heart Fundraiser

We hosted a fashion show fundraiser to celebrate our 5-Year anniversary. 60 guests enjoyed a fashion show, a music performance, sipped on wine and bid on a silent auction. All of the funds raised went towards our A.S.A.P. program.

Summer Breeze: Acoustic Music Concert Series

Every 2nd Friday in July and August guests enjoyed 5 free concerts 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 200 guests enjoyed the concert series.

Support And Networking - Members And Partners

- Riverdale High School Community Learning Centre
- Comité aut'gang
- Regroupement PRENFORME
- Pearson Educational Foundation

**ACHIEVED
FUNDRAISING
GOALS**

**NEW
PROGRAMS**

**7,500 YOUTH
IMPACTED**

Supporters

- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- The Lester B. Pearson School Board Entrepreneurship Grant Program
- Yolande James - MNA, Nelligan
- Geoffrey Kelley - MNA, Jacques-Cartier
- François Ouimet - MNA, Marquette
- Maka Koto - Minister of Culture and Communications
- Jean-François Lisée, Minister Responsible for the Montréal Region
- Marie Malavoy, Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports

2015 Objectives

- • Increase number of participants
- • Continue fundraising initiatives
- • Develop programs that respond to the community's needs
- • Employ a student intern to help carry-out social media outreach and events
- coordination

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 donation 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.



Thank You!

To all our partners, board members, sponsors and volunteers for your continued support. Every year we will reach new heights with the energy, passion, and the commitment to change the lives of youth through art.

Contact Information

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