



Overture  
WITH THE ARTS

2022



## Message From Founder

Dear OWTA supporters,

2022 was a beautiful year for OWTA as we introduced a new program, brought on new funders, welcomed a new member of staff to our team, and we officially have our own centre! This year marked new beginnings and a lot of growth for OWTA.

We launched a new program called UNITY, which offers a series of dance, music, visual arts and drama workshops on Saturdays, and unites youth through art. We brought on TD Bank as our new corporate sponsor to support the important work that we do to promote diversity and inclusion. We hired a Programs Manager to run our UNITY program, and support our various workshops and events. Then, a final highlight during the year was the opening of our new Overture Arts & Culture Centre. We held a ribbon cutting ceremony in the fall, and hosted dozens of workshops, meetings, and events at our centre.

After 2 years of virtual workshops, we were thrilled to be able to safely return to in person activities. From our Youth Musical Theatre Summer Camp to an in person Winter Wonderland Brunch; we made up for lost time and hosted hundreds of guests at various in-person activities.

Thank you to our donors, employees, board members, and volunteers for continuing to believe in OWTA and for helping to bring our mission and vision to life. Your contributions are essential and your unwavering support does not go unnoticed. I am confident that the organization will continue to grow and prosper, and I look forward to many more years of community initiatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Akilah Newton".

**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 do so.

## **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:** Alessia DiGiorgio
- **Vice President:** Tina Wentzell
- **Treasurer:**  
Guillaume Dumais (October 2022)
- **Secretary:** Erin Tedford (July 2022)
- **Director:** Kelvin Newton
- **Director:** Danielle Leggett
- **Director:** Allison Saunders
- **Director:**  
Wendy Bullion-Winters (July 2022)

## 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.

### Tracking Black Canada

For the 12th consecutive year we visited schools with an edutainment (education and entertainment) presentation in celebration of Black History Month. The 2022 presentation once again focused on the often forgotten histories of early Black communities across our country. We presented for schools, community groups/ associations, as well as corporations in Quebec, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia. We delivered over 130 virtual presentations.

### Unpacking The N-Word

"Unpacking the N-Word" is an Anti-Racism presentation for High School students, staff and administration. OWTA created this presentation to help students and educators address the often uncomfortable, but necessary topic of racism. The virtual presentation explores the origins and evolution of the N-Word. Through an edutainment style that combines slam poetry, video content, audience participation and Interaction, participants will learn to put one of the most loaded words in the English language into proper historical context.

## Programs



### P Is For Privilege

"P is for Privilege" is a new Anti-Bullying presentation for High School students that encourages students to recognize and understand their own privilege. By defining what privilege, unconscious bias, racism and intersectionality means, students will better understand the challenges that marginalized groups face. Using OWTA's trademark edutainment style that combines video, slam poetry, and audience participation and interaction, students will learn how to be allies and feel empowered to speak out against injustices.



### I Is For Inclusion

"I is for Inclusion" is an Anti-Bullying presentation that helps participants understand the dimensions of diversity that make us all unique. OWTA is proud to present "I is for Inclusion", a virtual workshop that helps participants explore the unearned privileges, and undeserved challenges that we all experience based on the elements that contribute to our identity. Using OWTA's trademark edutainment style that combines video, slam poetry, and audience participation & interaction, participants will learn how to be more inclusive. The workshop is a call-to-action that will help participants on their journey towards active allyship.



### Youth Musical Theatre Summer Camp

After a 2 year hiatus, we brought back our Youth Musical Theatre Summer Camp! From June 27 to August 19, dozens of children ages 5-12 of all experience levels had a fun-filled summer of acting, dancing, singing, and performing. Campers had the opportunity to perform in two shows: "Cinderella", and "Hilarity Ensues", which is an original show written by our very own Artistic Director, Stephanie Murphy. At a cost of only \$75.00 per child per week, our camp is one of the lowest cost summer camp programs in the greater Montreal area, offering safe and affordable childcare for families while providing campers with arts and cultural activities they might not otherwise have access to.



### Unity Program

Our UNITY program provides opportunities to youth ages 5 to 12 to explore cultural identity and diversity through the arts. The program launched in October and runs from 10:00AM to 2:00PM on Saturdays, and is free for participants.

## Programs



### Sing-A-Longs

In April, May, November, and December, we hosted free Sing-A-Longs at the Pierrefonds Library. Children sang along to their favourite songs with OWTA's former youth participant, Christina Koikaran.

## Events



### Grand Opening of OWTA Arts & Culture Centre

On Wednesday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, we held a grand opening ceremony for our brand new centre. After 13 years of using shared spaces, we're very happy to have secured our very own space! The OWTA Arts & Culture Centre is 850 square foot and is located at 7B Rue Centre Commercial in Pierrefonds. We will run all of our arts programs onsite, throw small scale events for our youth, host our board meetings, and run our operations out of our newly renovated centre.

### Vendor Fair

On Saturday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, we hosted 25 local vendors and artisans at the Gerry Robertson Community Centre. Cosmetics, hand poured candles, jewellery and toys were some of the exciting booths that were onsite at the event. This free event was family friendly and children enjoyed face painting, taking photos with Black Santa, a visit from mascots from Paw Patrol and Frozen, and more! The event served as a fundraiser for OWTA.



### HALLOWEEN PARTY

On Friday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, we had a spook-tacular time at our very first Halloween party. A dozen participants from both our summer camp and our UNITY program joined us at the Centre for pizza, a Halloween themed craft, and a monster mash dance-off with glow sticks! The party was free for all participants.

## Events

### **11th Annual Winter Wonderland Brunch**

On Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup> we were finally able to bring back our in person Winter wonderland Brunch. Over 30 West Island families in need, including more than 100 children, were treated to a hot brunch, books, toys, brand new shoes and more. The event was sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Lakeshore Montreal Foundation, Wolverine Worldwide, the Kurtz Family Toy Drive, the Afro Canadian Philanthropic Initiative, David's Tea and Starbucks.

### **Screening Of Black Panther: Wakanda Forever**

On Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, we hosted a private screening of Black Panther: Wakanda Forever at the Colisée Kirkland in order to promote culturally diverse superheros and superstars to the community. We invited over 60 youth from OWTA, the African Canadian Development Prevention Centre, Youth Stars Foundation, the West Island Black Community Association and Maison des Jeunes Pierrefonds to take part in this free event. Due to the generosity of the Federation for African Canadian Economics, Francis Scarpaleggia, and the Timberlea Veterinary Clinic, we were able to cover the cost of the tickets and snacks for all of the guests in attendance.

# 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

- Pierrefonds Community High School Community Learning Centre
- Pearson Educational Foundation

## 2023 Objectives

- Increase funding by 50%
- Apply for charity status

## Supporters

- The City of Montreal, Borough of Pierrefonds-Roxboro
- Sameer Zuberi, MP for Pierrefonds/Dollard-des-Ormeaux
- Francis Scarpaleggia, MP for Lac-Saint-Louis
- The Department of Canadian Heritage
- Kiwanis Club of Lakeshore Montreal Foundation
- Monsef Derraji - MNA, Nelligan
- Carlos Leitão/ Brigitte Garceau- MNA, Robert-Baldwin
- Greg Kelley - MNA, Jacques Cartier
- Lester B. Pearson School Board
- Baylis Medical
- The City of Pointe-Claire
- The DGDM Family Foundation
- Wolverine Worldwide (Saucony & Merrell)
- Kurtz Family Toy Drive
- Afro Canadian Philanthropic Initiative





## **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.



## 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 the arts.

## Contact Information

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