

Deanna Atchley

Arts Programming Overview + Teaching Artist(s) Bio

WORKSHOPS

As I have previously worked in positions where my day availability was severely limited, I've primarily provided arts programming in the evenings and weekends. I was a teaching artist with Kidsview this past summer. I previously taught a West African dance series as B.A.Y.A. Center in Clarksville. I have choreographed and served as a volunteer advisor for the upcoming winter dance concert at Grace James Academy.

Project Uplift

Utilize dance to empower and emphasize self-love and acceptance. This offering is geared towards female-identifying (middle/high) students but can be modified as needed.

Song examples: Beautiful (by Christina Aguilera), Strength, Courage, and Wisdom (India.Arie), Golden (Jill Scott), Me Too (Meghan Trainor), Shake It Off (Taylor Swift), A Deeper Love (Aretha Franklin), My Power (Beyonce), Scars To Your Beautiful (Alessia Cara).

Customized theme workshop(s)/residencies Popular offering especially in conjunction with celebrating Black History Month.

Theme examples: Motown, Missy Elliott mega mix, The Wiz, Strange Fruit, and music of the Civil Rights Movement

Africa/African Diaspora

Interactive Lecture Demonstration with Live Drumming Students will learn about Africa, some of the cultural traditions of Africa, names of African drums, and experience a sample of different African dances/rhythms. This program is a mixture of an assembly with 20-30 minutes of the time reserved for hands-on experience with drumming and learning a dance.

Craft ideas as well book recommendations can be provided.

This offering is geared more towards elementary school aged students.

Estimated time length: 1 hour

Traditional West African Dance Workshop(s) with Live Drumming

Participants will be given a brief introduction to the names of the drums, history of the specific rhythm/dance for the workshop, and then spend the majority of the time learning a series of steps. Craft ideas as well book recommendations can be provided.

Suggested age range: ages 11+ to adults

Estimated time length: 1 hour-1.5 hours each session

Recommend at least 3 - 4 sessions for participants to truly get a feel of various movements and adjust to listen to the drums for the signal to stop/start/ change movements (instead of Westernized counting). Multiple sessions also permits time to teach a chant/song associated with the dance/rhythm (if applicable). This offering is also available as a residency where after learning the movements over several sessions, the choreography is staged for a brief performance.

Teaching Artists Bios

Lead Instructor, Deanna Atchley, has over 20 years of cheerleading and dance experience. At a young age, Deanna became interested in dance. She took recreational dance classes throughout elementary and middle school. As a Louisville native, Deanna grew up in a competitive cheerleading environment and started taking tumbling lessons at the internationally known GymTyme for several years. As a Louisville Male High School cheerleader, Deanna won an Americheer National Championship, followed by an NCA National Championship in the Medium Varsity Division. Deanna was also named an NCA All-American. Deanna was fortunate enough to be coached by Brad Habermel (Cheer Athletics) while at Male. In addition, she was a member of Male's Award-Winning Show Choir for all four years.

After cheerleading her first year at Duke University, Deanna re-discovered her love of dance and pursued a dance minor, focusing primarily in West African dance. She was a member of the Duke African Repertory Ensemble for nearly five years under the direction of Ava LaVonne Vinesett, one of the founding members of the African American Dance Ensemble. Deanna served as a teaching assistant for several semesters, while also participating in a student-run group, Dance Black, which provided an additional creative outlet.

After some soul searching and encouragement, Deanna decided to pursue a dual JD/MSW program at Washington University in Saint Louis. During law/graduate school, Deanna continued on her dancing journey. She danced for one season with Afriky Lolo and for three years with Banyan Dance Theatre (Afro-Caribbean). In addition, she was an annual performer and choreographer in the Brown School of Social Work's International Festival.

After graduation, Deanna moved to Kansas City, where she practiced primarily employment law. During this time, she also became the co-leader and choreographer of her church's praise dance ministry (for 5 years) at Saint Monica's Catholic Church. In addition, Deanna was the owner/choreographer for Hipnotic All-Stars, KC's competitive hip hop all-stars program for youth ages 4-18. Hipnotic won numerous national titles in a very short time, including specialty awards for innovative choreography and excellence in coaching. Deanna is most proud of the energy and showmanship her hip hop crews displayed at every competition and witnessing their individual growth in the process.

Throughout the years, Deanna has worked for several all-star cheer and dance programs (both as a coach and choreographer). In addition, she has an extensive background in teaching tumbling and has a

special gift for helping youth work through mental obstacles. She has also taught/choreographed pom, jazz, and hip hop routines for school teams, studios, community performances, etc.

Currently, Deanna is a company member and manager/assistant to the Artistic Director of Keen Dance Theatre (Louisville, KY). In addition, she regularly teaches KDT's West African Dance Masterclasses. She looks forward to continuing her dance journey as a performing artist, instructor, and choreographer.

Musician Bios for West African Programming:

Baba Kenyatta Henry ("Baba Kenyatta")- is a renowned percussionist from Wilmington, Delaware. He began playing drums and other percussion instruments at the age of 23, when he began learning basic conga techniques from Albert Park. Intrigued by the sounds of Latin and African percussion, Baba Kenyatta would listen for hours to the percussion instruments of Earth, Wind & Fire and other groups and then mimic the sounds at home. As he gained proficiency, Baba Kenyatta began playing with various bands in his area for 15-20 years. Over the years, Baba Kenyatta has had the honor of being a sound technician for well-known African-American recording artists, including B.B. King, The Whispers, the O'Jays, The Temptations, the Four Tops, Regina Bell, and Miki Howard.

Baba Kenyatta studied the djembe for years with various teachers, including Fadouba and Kumbai Conde. During this time, he came into contact with a storyteller by the name of Patricia Butler, who introduced him to storytelling and the drum. He soon thereafter became a member of the National Association of Black Storytellers. Baba Kenyatta has drummed behind various storytellers, including Baba Jamal Koram, Kala Jojo, and Queen Nora.

Since moving to Louisville (KY), Baba Kenyatta has become a staple in the drumming community. He has served as a presenter for a plethora of drumming workshops and has performed at a variety of cultural events. He currently serves as the master drummer for West African dance classes taught by Deanna Atchley. Known for his commitment to preserving the African rhythms he has studied, Baba Kenyatta regularly does private or small group lessons to train others in West African drumming. In addition, Baba Kenyatta travels periodically to West Africa.

Lafayette Cowden IV- The proud husband to Terri L. Cowden and father of 4 with 4 grandchildren, Lafayette Cowden's interest for music began at a very young age. His passion for drumming and percussion heightened at the age of 15 when an instrument presentation at a church retreat was given by his first drum teacher Shahid Abdullah Shabazz. "Brother Shahid " was taught by Brother Bailay by way of Nigeria. Lafayette was a member of Louisville's own Imani Dance Company under the tutelage of Sister Harlina Churn Trumbo for the next decade. Later Lafayette became the lead drummer for Nubian Images Dance company. Lafayette has participated in drumming workshops across the country with some of Africa's most profound master drummers. In 1998 Lafayette was a guest musician featured on the CD album "Fuma " Just Drums Calling the Ancestors. Lafayette has been a part of the accompaniment of several plays over the years including "From Africa To You " and "Black Butterfly" (Brown Theater, formally The Macauley Theater) also The African American Arts series and projects with

the Actor's Theater of Louisville. Lafayette provided the percussion for the University of Louisville's Floyd Theater production of Eda. He also is a frequent participant of local festivals like WorldFest. Lafayette is currently being coached by Master Drummer Baba Kenyattaa Henry. Lafayette currently continues to work with local dance companies and teaching artists that are dedicated to passing the torch to the youth or to perpetuate the richness and history of African Culture.

Artistic Content of Programming

Artistic content is a unique blend of my life experiences blended with various dance styles and my dance training. I evaluate the artistic content of programming through Self assessment, peer review and feedback – specifically stakeholders feedback and assessment/evaluation.

Educational Content of Programming

Generally: sense of belonging, confidence, emotional intelligence, sense of community.

Specifically for Traditional West African Dance programming: Increase students' understanding of African cultural traditions, Explore ways of stimulating students' non-verbal means of communication. Give students an introduction to the history, language and techniques of African dance and drumming, Expose students to traditional African musical instruments

Process for hiring, training, and evaluating performance/effectiveness.

Through both informal (verbally) and formal feedback (evaluations). In addition, as I take my role very seriously, I also do a self assessment. Especially when working with youth, I also evaluate my effectiveness by their reaction and energy that they provide back to me. I am highly selective in selecting musicians based on expertise, professionalism, and ability to communicate/teach others.

How are participants of all backgrounds and abilities included in programming?

I have taught dance and or presented to audiences from toddlers to senior citizens. As a person with chronic health/joint issues myself, I am especially sensitive to individuals with movement limitations or concerns and have a variety of modified movements or choreography prepared for such circumstances. Both personally and professionally, I am a diversity and inclusion ally. I strive to be inclusive across all demographics and utilize inclusive language as a teaching artist. In workshops, I not only applaud those who easily get the steps, but also every individual who is doing their best and engaged.

How do I engage teachers and community center staff before, during, and after programming?

Introducing myself and discussing the overall plan with them in a collaborative manner. Also informal check-ins to see how things are going, address any concerns, etc. Sometimes great ideas come out of these conversations.

How do I engage participants in the creative and learning process?

Through movement, call and response, asking questions to check for understanding, permit questions/ideas as time permits, hands-on approach.