



BigThought

Summer Programs



Take a peek at our BIG summer!

BIG THOUGHT MANAGED SUMMER CAMP LOCATIONS

Big Thought supplements community summer programs by providing professional development, training, curriculum support, and/or financial resources.

I LOVE TO READ SITES (p. 7)

- Friendship West
- True Lee
- Family Gateway
- Project Still I Rise
- TECO
- Bethlehem Center
- St. Philip's School and Community Center
- West Dallas Community Center
- Skillful Living
- J. C. Turner
- St. Paul UMC (Arts Vision Summer Camp)
- St. Paul UMC Church
- Mission Trails
- Choices

DALLAS CITY OF LEARNING NEIGHBORHOOD SITES (p. 5)

- Bishop's Camp
- Divine Eagle Scholars
- Frazier Revitalization
- Heart of Oak Cliff
- I Master Me
- Inspire
- Juanita Craft Recreation
- Language Ladders
- Moorland YMCA
- SOAR
- Southern Soul Network
- TeCo
- ArtsVision/West Dallas Community Center

(These camps are not represented on the map)



"All of this bullying led to depression, stress, low self-esteem, and isolation from others.

I started to go down the wrong path and get into trouble. I kept all my emotions to myself and wouldn't allow anyone to help me, until one day I was introduced to Big Thought's Creative Solutions."

- Franklin, Creative Solutions student



BigThought CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

75 teenagers (13-18) participated in Creative Solutions at SMU.

On average, communication skills improved by **10.1%**,

On average, Creative Solutions youth improved their social skills* by **8.7%**

*communication, cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, engagement, and self-control as measured by Pearson's Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS).

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

The walls are lined with original artwork, a series of multi-media pieces that courageously express the raw emotions of budding artists. But this isn't your usual gallery. Couverture Art Studio sits inside the Dr. Jerome McNeil, Jr. Detention Center. It's a small room adorned by a striking mural that thematically depicts the adage, "Can't Judge a Book by its Cover."

True words, since the studio's painters currently live in the Center. Their works of art were on full display during the unveiling of Couverture. The studio and its talented artists are the fruits of Big Thought's Creative Solutions program, a 20-year partnership with the Dallas County Juvenile Department that utilizes professional teaching artist mentors and a research-based curriculum to enhance empathy, critical thinking, teamwork skills and grit in teen probates.

Cynthia Wallace, program and training manager for the detention center, visualized an art program at the center for years. She wanted something therapeutic for the kids. But it wasn't until she connected with Big Thought during the first week of 2012, that her idea became a reality.

"The kids had never put brush to canvas," says Wallace. "They had no idea that was inside of them. When you are in that class it is something that happens inside of you, your creative juices flow."

Program Sites

Southern Methodist University – 7 week visual and performing arts program

Letot Residential Center – 10 spoken word poetry sessions

Evening Reporting Center – 20 painting sessions

88% of youth say that they are involved in decisions and their opinions matter at Creative Solutions.

87% of youth say that they have improved as an artist and are proud of their contributions.

80% of youth believe that their art can positively impact others.

91% of youth say that they have gained trusting relationships with staff at Creative Solutions.

81% of youth say that they can better express their feelings.

79% of youth say that Creative Solutions helped them improve their confidence.

In 2014, the recidivism rate for Creative Solutions participants was only 8%—two points lower than the recidivism target for arts education programming in Dallas County.



DALLAS CITY OF LEARNING

Inside the Frontiers of Flight Museum, a boy with a summer crew cut approached the famed Apollo 7 command module and marveled, “An escape pod!” Another watched a robot that takes apart bombs. Meanwhile, a couple of volunteers in their eighties mingled with families, sharing tales of flying fighter jets and helicopters during wartime. It was all part of the Dallas City of Learning Turn Up! at Love Field that took place on August 1—the sixth in a series of seven engaging, educational and inspiring summertime events.

Turn Up! events are one of the most popular components of the Dallas City of Learning initiative, which Big Thought launched last summer in partnership with Mayor Mike Rawlings. Dallas City of Learning is part of a groundbreaking national campaign that began in Chicago in 2013, and is now joined by major American cities including Pittsburgh and Washington D.C. City of Learning is founded on the idea that learning happens all the time, across many different spaces. Dallas families seem to agree.

At the museum, Amanda and her two third-grade boys were checking out a bomb-sniffing police dog. She was impressed with the variety of free activities available this summer, especially since hers is a low-income family. “We’re trying to do everything with the Mayor’s City of Learning. We went to the one at the Central Library – they had a 3-D printer there! We’re also doing the Mayor’s Summer Reading Club. I’m trying to make their summer fun and educational and not break the bank. They’ve been having a lot of fun at all these events.”

Supported by more than 200 partner organizations, Dallas City of Learning connects kids with the things they love to do and helps them prepare for the future. They can explore their interests online or take part in exciting activities all around Dallas.

About Dallas City of Learning

By recognizing learning happens all the time, across many different spaces—at parks, museums, rec centers, libraries, churches, online—Dallas City of Learning creates a citywide network of out-of-school learning experiences that helps students discover new interests, develop skills and create pathways to future success. For more information visit dallascityoflearning.org.



POWERED BY
BIG THOUGHT
AND THE DALLAS
MAYOR'S OFFICE

In partnership with the Dallas Mayor’s Office, we bring together hundreds of organizations to connect innovative out-of-school learning experiences that tap into new interests, develop new skills and encourage informal learning wherever it happens.

In our most underserved communities, we direct financial, programmatic and educational resources to engage

students right in their own neighborhoods. Students can earn digital badges in many subject areas, which can:

- recognize their out-of-school learning achievements,
- encourage new and deeper experiences based on their interests,
- map out learning pathways toward college or career.

34,743

Student accounts

454

Unique badges

285,140

Hours of learning

Neighborhood Sites

Bishop’s Camp	Heart of Oak Cliff	Language Ladders	TeCo
Divine Eagle Scholars	I Master Me	Moorland YMCA	ArtsVision/
Frazier	Inspire	SOAR	West Dallas
Revitalization	Juanita Craft Recreation	Southern Soul Network	Community Center

"Our kids really loved *All the Way to Lhasa*, some of our early readers couldn't wait to show off their reading skills!"



BigThought
I Love to Read!

793
Students

14
Sites

I LOVE TO READ! PROGRAM

From the hills of Tibet to Malawi, a southeastern African country and a Taliban controlled town in Pakistan, this summer more than 790 students in Dallas followed the journey of three young people who transformed lives and made a difference in their own villages around the world.

I Love to Read!, Big Thought's five year old literacy program partnered with more than 14 participating sites including local community organizations, churches and other summer camps. Each site was provided with books and materials to support the reading, which included a corresponding author profile poster, educator guides, and backpacks for each student.

"Our kids really loved *All the Way to Lhasa*, some of our early readers couldn't wait to show off their reading skills! As an educator I could really appreciate the curriculum but like the fact that we could build on the actual reading experience and expand their learning with other activities. By having the kids take their own walk like the young Tibetan boy our campers really got into the story by actually taking steps. This helped them to understand the importance of his journey and never giving up even more. When books come alive for kids, it makes them want to read even more," said Donna Brewer, summer camp instructor at St. Philip's School and Community Center.

I Love to Read Sites

Friendship West, True Lee, Family Gateway, Project Still I Rise, TeCo, Bethlehem Center, St. Philip's School and Community Center, West Dallas Community Center, Skillful Living, J. C. Turner, St. Paul UMC (Arts Vision Summer Camp), St. Paul UMC Church, Mission Trails, Choices

Reading List

K-5

All the Way to Lhasa: A Tale from Tibet by Barbara Helen Berger

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer

6 - 8

I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban by Malala Yousafzai



BigThought
LIBRARY LIVE! 1,500 27 52
 Students Sites Programs

Teaching Artists

Alfreda Rollins	Dorayne Breedlove	Rochelle Rabouin
Alicia Colina-Ashby	Jennifer Kindert	Rolanda Bringham
Audrey Turner	Jiann Powers	Roxana Jimenez
Blanca Reyna	Lynn Moon Schellenberg	Sandy Shrout
Dana Proulx-Willis	Maria Paz Rogers	Stewart Shelton
Doc Gibbs	Melody Bell	Tony Browne
Donna Farrell	Nadine Burke	

LIBRARY LIVE!

Library Live! is Big Thought's literacy program in partnership with the Dallas Public Library. Year-round this program brings countless adventures in reading all across the city. Every program is led by a master storyteller, artist or puppeteer who engages the young and not-so young with interactive stories coupled with hands-on activities. Programs are based on cultural and holiday themes and incorporate various lessons.

This summer more than 1,500 students at 27 sites had the opportunity to learn something new and travel around the world through literature.

Library Live! Programs

JUNE

Theme:
Summer Holidays

Pink and Say
Let's Sing and Play
Pecos Bill
Bird Talk
The Gift of Music
Juneteenth
Night Before Summer vacation
Los Voladores
Cock-a-Doodle Quack
Beautiful Oops
Tanabata Matsuri
It's Your Cloud

JULY

Theme:
Independence Day

Tanabata Matsuri
Independence and Liberation
Pink and Say
Pecos Bill
Cock-a-Doodle Quack
Beautiful Oops
Hats Off for the Fourth of July
Night Before Summer Vacation
Gift of Music

AUGUST

Theme:
Back to School

Grapes of Math
Clara Caterpillar
Back to School Robots
Math Magicians
What's in a Name?
Wonderful World of Books
It's the First Day of School
Emily's Everyday Manners
Goldylocks and the 3 Dinosaurs
What Did the Pen Say?
School Days Around the World
Pink and Say



Thriving Minds Summer Camp (TMSC) programs offer children creative environments to explore enriching activities that support academic and personal growth outside of the classroom. The program is open to select elementary and middle school students at various Dallas Independent School District campuses, Uplift Education campuses and numerous community partner sites.

- Thriving Minds Summer Camp community programming was offered to 7,800 students at 83 partner sites in 2015
- Thriving Minds Summer Camp at Dallas ISD involved over 30 partner organizations
- Students participating in Thriving Minds Summer Camp enter the fall with a meaningful advantage in math.*
- Students who attend at least 22 days or receive 39 hours of reading instruction also enter school in the fall with a meaningful advantage in reading.*

71% of parents say that if this summer camp program were not available, their child would be at home or at a neighbor's house (Parent/Caregiver Survey, 2014).

52% of students assessed showed positive gains in Relationship Skills competency (Devereux Student Strengths Assessment, 2014)

Community Sites

Bath House Cultural Center
Latino Cultural Center
South Dallas Cultural Center
African American Museum
Behind Every Door - Heart of Oak Cliff
The Black Academy of Arts and Letters
St. Philip's School and Community Center

Dallas Independent School District Elementary Schools

Nathan Adams
C. F. Carr
Highland Meadows
Celestine Soto
Whitney M. Young Jr.

Middle Schools

Franciso Medrano
Harold W. Lang**

Uplift Education

Uplift Heights
Uplift Meridian
Uplift Triumph
Uplift Williams

**Ready for Fall? Near-Term Effects of Voluntary Summer Learning Programs on Low-Income Students' Learning Opportunities and Outcomes, 2014, RAND Corporation.*

***Creative Solutions model*

THRIVING MINDS SUMMER CAMPS - DALLAS ISD

What do elephants use to brush their teeth? Elephant toothpaste, of course — which is what students enrolled at various Thriving Minds Summer Camp elementary sites found out this summer while learning all about science. Veteran educator and science instructor for the Perot Museum of Nature and Science, Marsha Chinal could often be found at Thriving Minds sites as she amazed students with the marvels of science. Chinal knows that when you take simple chemistry or physics and make it relevant by showing kids that everything we do and everywhere we go, science is always there, it becomes a part of their world.

Chinal says, "I try to help them realize that learning more about their own environment can help you appreciate your surroundings and that science can be a whole lot of fun. It's great when you mix things together and something explodes, but when they really understand that there's so much more to science, and that living is science, that's when it really begins to click. Whether you're in a classroom lab, outer space or your own kitchen, in the end they realize that science is part of everything you do in some way or another."

Chinal hopes that by introducing science in various relatable ways and exposing students to new interests, they won't be afraid to explore all that science can offer and will start to see career choices in science that they might not have previously considered. "I've been doing this for a long time, but I still get excited when they get excited."



Elementary	2,000+	K-5	345,440
	Students	Grades	Hours of programming
Middle	90	6-8	10,800
	Students	Grades	Hours of programming

"It's always amazing when you can take a book that captures their imagination making them want to read and then tell the story, their own way."



400
Students

4
Sites

120
Hours of
programming
per site

THRIVING MINDS SUMMER CAMP - UPLIFT EDUCATION

This summer literacy came alive for the scholars at Uplift Education where it was all about books, books and more books.

The kinders were amazed at the colorful "fish aquarium" created by the first graders from their own reading selection. Fish and sea creatures of all shapes, sizes and colors were stacked high and wide creating a multi-tiered underwater world.

Second and third grade scholars read *Stellalauna*, the story of a baby fruit bat finding her way and learning to adjust among the like and differences she encounters after being separated from her mother. The scholars then worked to recreate the story with their teaching artist by developing their own interpretation of the story, choreographing a dance (partially in the dark) and adding LED flashlights to make it interactive.

Not to be outdone, fourth grade scholars created their own version of the classic Peanuts book, *Charlie Brown's All-Stars*. In addition to scriptwriting, they also designed costumes and created playbills for the play. "It's always amazing when you can take a book that captures their imagination making them want to read and then tell the story, their own way," states Fran Jeffery Anderson, an Uplift Education summer teaching artist.

Sites

- Uplift Heights
- Uplift Meridian
- Uplift Triumph
- Uplift Williams



"Each student had a gift that would be part of the final product. So they learned to appreciate each other's gifts. The strength of each team was based on each person's individual strength."



BEHIND **EVERY** DOOR

25

Students

108

Hours of
programming

THRIVING MINDS SUMMER CAMP - HEART OF OAK CLIFF

You can build a robot with blocks. You can build a bridge with Popsicle sticks. You can build a business with t-shirts, air brushing and imagination. But mostly, you can build a child's social, emotional strength through teamwork.

At the first Village Oaks Thriving Minds Summer Camp, building partnerships took top priority. The camp focused on reading, writing and robotics, which covered science and engineering.

"It's about learning to play," says Kea Westbrook, Village Oaks Program Site Manager. "You would think that is normal for kids, but not necessarily depending on the environment. Some don't know how to play without arguing or fighting and just be free to play without emotional walls by letting your guard down. "

Every day of the 8-week camp teams filled the rooms of the Village Oaks Community Center where teamwork came in handy on activities such as constructing a bridge and making sure it held a bunch of pennies.

A small room tucked away in a corner served as the t-shirt air brushing headquarters. Next door, a room with a blue screen became a film studio where students filmed and edited a 7-minute documentary on life in Village Oaks titled, "Through Our Eyes." One of the bigger rooms gave K-2nd grade students plenty of space to move, to dance and to spread out for homework. On Fridays, they gathered outside during golf lessons.

Building social skills and shaping well-rounded human beings couldn't happen without support from Village Oaks instructional partners I Master Me, Nth Fine Arts, Project Still I Rise and First Tee.

"We want our kids to be creative risk takers so we ask them to fail brilliantly, a learning process that was born out of improv performances, because it can be intimidating to get in front of people without a script and not know what will happen."



Bath House
CULTURAL CENTER

48

Students

120

Hours of
programming

BATH HOUSE CULTURAL CENTER

Our kids live in an age where technology has the ability to take over every facet of their young lives. Although this is the world we all live in, in this day and age we have to work harder to fully develop kids.

At Bath House Cultural Center the focus is just that, developing creative minds. Whether it's creating infinite circle stories for theatrical productions, choreographing a dance, making music and visual arts, for 3 weeks our campers are mandated to do three things: They're not allowed to say no to any ideas, must learn to fly by the seat of their pants and most of all fail brilliantly! By doing so, they learn to express themselves by listening to others, better focus and the art of collaboration. The creative learning process can be amusing, sometimes annoying and even frustrating — but they love every minute of it! Every summer the age of participants expands because at BHCC kids just keep coming back.

The summer camp at BHCC used to be a program for just fourth through eighth grades, but next summer the center will have high school students who have been in the program since they were third graders! Those kids who entered the program when they were in their elementary years are now helpers to the younger kids.

"We want our kids to be creative risk takers so we ask them to fail brilliantly, a learning process that was born out of improv performances, because it can be intimidating to get in front of people without a script and not know what will happen." By allowing all mistakes and having the kids own them, the young performers create something even more brilliant than what they originally saw. Being a creative risk taker forces the students to let go of self-judgment, teaches them to trust their instincts and offers a better understanding that failure is nothing to fear. You never know where that delightful mistake might take you!

"We create the curriculum but let the kids have ownership of it. We give them the content, but the final production is a student creation."



25	5-8	152
Students	Grades	Hours of programming

LATINO CULTURAL CENTER

The colorful, free form fascination of graffiti enlightened the Big Thought 2015 Thriving Minds Summer Camp at the Latino Cultural Center. During the four-week program, 25 students reveled in theater, dance, visual art, cinematography and photography guided by the center's two-pronged summer exhibit, "Maestro Filiberto Chapa: Artist and Teacher, 1980-2006 and the Sour Grapes: Celebrating Fifteen Years of the Collective."

Students interviewed members of Dallas' Sour Grapes, the Hispanic art troupe best known for its vibrant graffiti murals, to help them weave stories that were incorporated into final performance vignettes, said Jessica Trevizo, LCC's Education and Outreach Coordinator.

In addition to the acted vignettes, which were performed at the center's 304-seat theater, they created a mini-movie and dance performances that connected one vignette to the next. Stencil and graffiti projects allowed the students to flex their visual arts muscles outside at the center's loading dock.

The Latino Cultural Center again depended on the partnering support of Cara Mía Theatre Company, which provided all of the teaching artists.

"We've been really good with Cara Mía Theatre Company, growing organically," says Trevizo. "We create the curriculum but let the kids have ownership of it. We give them the content, but the final production is a student creation."

Working on the piece that culminated the summer camp bolstered teamwork and exposed the kids to different opportunities. Children see their potential in others that look like them and excel at their chosen craft. So the presence of the Sour Grapes artists proved transformative.

"It helps the kids develop as people," says Trevizo. "Getting to interact with Latino artists and a Latino audience, it helps them from an identity standpoint. If I want to be an artist I can do it because here are Latinos doing what I want to do."

"All the kids started cheering. It was a very touching moment. The kids planted the tree; they got involved in its growth. They jumped in and got their hands in the dirt."



Oak Cliff
CULTURAL CENTER

55

Students

7-17

Ages

148

Hours of
programming

OAK CLIFF CULTURAL CENTER

A newly planted oak tree grows symbolically in front of the Oak Cliff Cultural Center. The young tree, donated by Home Depot, became an emblem of growth for the 2015 installment of Cara Mía Theatre Co.'s The School of YES!, at Oak Cliff Cultural Center.

That oak inspired the 55 kids in attendance, a 60 percent Hispanic group ranging in ages from 7-17, for four weeks of dance, theater, music, visual arts and film. Oak Cliff Cultural Center sits on Jefferson Boulevard, and is integral to the district's Hispanic heartbeat, which is about 76 percent Latino. Here every month is a celebration of Hispanic heritage.

The School of YES!, created by Cara Mía Theatre Co., spread out through three rooms – the art gallery space transformed into a theater, a storage room became the film studio, and a wood-floored area was used for music and dance.

"When it came to the actual planting of the tree we had a little ceremony," says Gerardo Robles, Cultural Programs Coordinator for Oak Cliff Cultural Center. "All the kids started cheering. It was a very touching moment. The kids planted the tree; they got involved in its growth. They jumped in and got their hands in the dirt."

Stephanie Cleghorn Jasso, administrative assistant with Cara Mía Theatre Co., has a similar story to tell about maturing, nurturing and transforming.

"We had a little boy, about 7-year-old," she says. "It was his first time doing a camp for an extended period and for the whole day. He was really shy at first, quiet and withdrawn. I saw how much he grew. He started making friends and telling stories. In four weeks his personality changed. He became confident and talkative."

Nine student leaders acting as big brothers and big sisters created a learning atmosphere of inclusion, development and teamwork. The student leaders took it upon themselves to create lesson plans, Robles said. So all the students were ready for the final performance.

"We had one student that had a really rough time in dance class," remembers Cleghorn Jasso. "He was really emotional, not sure he could do it. So when he did it during the final performance, it was so emotional in the best way."

"It's important that our children understand their heritage, where they came from and how those traditions are still used today and have helped influence the way people live all across the world."



SOUTH DALLAS CULTURAL CENTER

A mural rests in the rear courtyard of the South Dallas Cultural Center and serves as an eternal reminder of the Summer Arts at the Center. This summer the South Dallas Cultural Center returned to its roots and celebrated the culture of Senegal and the historical lineage it lends to many of its Texas descendants. Over five weeks students enrolled in the camp learned the relational history, foundation and contributions of this African country by indulging in various creative disciplines. The classes ranged from performance, drawing, printmaking, multi-media sculpture, African drumming, media technology and photography. The classes were fun and engaging, but allowed students to problem solve as they created their pieces that offered more understanding of why and what they made.

The halls of the Cultural Center were endless, filled with woven baskets and sitting mats, brooms, flags, masks, paper bag dolls, jewelry and scarves. But with each piece made, a story of Senegalese lifestyle was shared and instilled in the young artists. "It's important that our children understand their heritage, where they came from and how those traditions are still used today and have helped influence the way people live all across the world. We know that most Texans of African descent come from Senegal and next year everything will come together as we travel back to our homeland. These kids find out exactly who they are when they learn where they come from. It's about pride, self-respect and being able to relate to your roots" stated Vicki Meek, manager, South Dallas Cultural Center.

There's nothing greater than to know oneself, with that you can grow and go. As the young artists understand how baskets have been made for centuries they're also learning about the time women in the village spend together which teaches them a sense of community, their community, our community — and how to build community.



South Dallas
CULTURAL CENTER

75
Students

K-12
Grades

210
Hours of
programming

"Some of them come here for the first time and they are fearful, not knowing what's going to happen. They worry about fitting in. I saw the younger ones fitting in really quickly. This camp was really fun. They were learning and had fun activities along the way."



AFRICAN AMERICAN
MUSEUM

75
Students

8-15
Ages

320
Hours of
programming

AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM

The sweet taste of success came in a bag. Armed with five simple ingredients – milk, vanilla, hard rock salt, dry ice, and ice – the 75 students at the Science of Art Camp made ice cream to satisfy cravings for a cool summer treat.

Chill the contents with just a few shakes of the bag and you have instant ice cream. It's no wonder that the ice cream making lesson, which was part of the science class, was the most popular activity at the 2015 installment of the Big Thought Thriving Minds Summer Camp at the African American Museum.

"This is something they all participated in and they all enjoyed it," says Sheila Robinson, program coordinator and assistant camp director for AAM. "It captured the interest of all of them. They were very excited about the science class."

Science plus reading, music, African American history, theater, visual arts and Spanish filled the days during the nearly two-month camp for students age 8-15. Two dressing rooms sandwiching the museum's auditorium served as classrooms for Spanish, art, science and African American history. The auditorium was used for dance and music. A nearby library allowed kids to choose books for reading aloud.

In keeping with real world technology, a laptop demonstration and instruction session featured Big Thought team members at the helm.

Robinson was amazed at how computer savvy the kids were, noting that many were in practice instead of learning mode. "They were already really good at it," she says.

That combination of hands-on learning mixed with casual social interaction proved paramount for everybody, especially the young first-timers.

"Some of them come here for the first time and they are fearful, not knowing what's going to happen," says Robinson. "They worry about fitting in. I saw the younger ones fitting in really quickly. This camp was really fun. They were learning and had fun activities along the way."

"This summer's big performance was one of the best ever, our community is close knit and I know how programs like these help kids grow."



ST. PHILIP'S SCHOOL & COMMUNITY CENTER

Community centers often have their ear to the ground and are well aware of what families in their neighborhoods need. They realize their neighborhood kids don't always have the means for extra curricular activities. St. Philip's School and Community Center, a second home for many kids in the community surrounding the Fair Park neighborhood, knows that need for their kids all too well.

St. Philip's and Big Thought have been long standing partners making sure the interests and passions of those same kids are met despite their economic or geographical situations. This summer St. Philip's Academic and Adventure Summer Camp partnered with a staple in the Dallas theater community, SoulRep Theatre. SoulRep provided enrichment classes that helped the campers explore the creative process of storytelling through drama using their body and voice. The kids learned the art of improvisation, direction, stage cues and how to project, and every camper, grades first through sixth, had a role in the culminating performance.

Community Outreach Director, LaSheryl Walker stated, "This summer's big performance was one of the best ever, our community is close knit and I know how programs like these help kids grow. There's one little girl that I've known for a few years, she's always been a bit shy because of a slight speech impediment. However, her leading role brought out something in her that I've never seen. She is now the definition of projection and we can see another side of her personality."

But whether the roles were supporting or leading, they all felt like superstars.



80
Students

1-6
Grades

321
Hours of
programming

"Teach and affirm to kids about who they are. Once they find that, they are embraced by others. And sometimes it doesn't even matter if they are accepted."



THE BLACK ACADEMY OF ARTS AND LETTERS

The 2015 Performance Arts Master Class at The Black Academy of Arts and Letters taught 50 students music, theater and dance.

But that's only part of the story. The intense two-week educational training at the downtown campus focused on four aspects of personal maturation: "Character, self-confidence, self-esteem, self-actualization – that is what we teach," says Curtis King, TBAAL's director and founder.

King and his TBAAL staff, with support from the Office of Cultural Affairs, worked with students on two final recital performances that instilled more than synchronized steps and acting cues. These kids got real talk about the sacrifices associated with a career onstage.

They learned about each other. They learned to embrace who they are regardless of their circumstances at home. They learned that refined and raw talents are both malleable.

"Because they are in an intense environment, when you put them in the same setting and have the same values in their minds, you can mold them into social understanding," says King. "As a result the kids become very emotional."

Emotions fuel interpretive powers and shape the nature of everyday lives. Confidence building blossoms from the ability to navigate reality and make believe.

"You have to incorporate life skills into the talent," says King. "Separate emotions of real life, and perhaps incorporate them into your performance."

Once the students grasp the theory and technique of dancing, singing and acting, they've mastered invaluable lessons that carry them into adulthood.

"Teach and affirm to kids about who they are," says King. "Once they find that, they are embraced by others. And sometimes it doesn't even matter if they are accepted."

The Black Academy of
Arts and Letters



50
Students

10-18
Ages

70
Hours of
programming

These programs were made possible thanks to the support of:

Creative Solutions

Anonymous
Anonymous
Baker Botts LLP
Bank of America
Bank of Texas
Frost Bank
HFS Wealth Management
Husch Blackwell LLP
IPS Advisors
Matthews Southwest
Turning Point Foundation
U.S. Trust

Dallas City of Learning

Agnes Cluthe Oliver
Foundation
Bank of America
Ben E. Keith
Best Buy
City of Dallas Office of
Cultural Affairs
Dallas County Community
College District
Dallas Jewish Community
Foundation
DART
Dexter F. and Dorothy H.
Baker Foundation
Fossil Foundation
Frost Bank
Hoblitzelle Foundation
John D. and Catherine T.
MacArthur Foundation

M.R. & Evelyn Hudson
Foundation
Mankoff Family Foundation
Microsoft
National Endowment for
the Arts
NBC Universal Foundation
Perkins-Prothro Foundation
Rees-Jones Foundation
Sapphire Foundation
Starbucks Foundation
Studio Movie Grill
The Astrid and Pat
Merriman Family Fund of
Communities Foundation
of Texas
The Dallas Foundation
The Eugene McDermott
Foundation
The Walt Disney Company
Todd A. Williams Family
Foundation
Turning Point Foundation
Vin and Caren Prothro
Foundation

I Love to Read

AP Management Company
III, Inc.

Library Live

The Craig & Kathryn Hall
Foundation
Herbert H. and Barbara C.
Dow Foundation

Thriving Minds

ACE
City of Dallas Office of
Cultural Affairs
Dallas ISD
House of Blues Music
Forward Foundation
Jorge Baldor
Lockheed Martin
Sammons Enterprises, Inc.
Roy & Christine Sturgis
Charitable Trust, Bank of
America, N.A., Trustee
Target
Texas Instruments
Foundation
The David M. Crowley
Foundation
The Pollock Foundation
United Way
The Wallace Foundation

Additional Funding for Thriving Minds at Village Oaks

Hillcrest Foundation
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