

Watoto De Afrika Programs

FOUNDING PRINCIPLE // Reflecting the love that all children have for performing arts activities and given the rich and historical musical culture of African American people combined with the musical heritage of Memphis, TN, the Watoto De' Afrika Performing Arts Program for Youth was formed. The program uses African American performing arts forms, literature, and American history as the foundation of its curriculum. Youth of the Watoto program have the unique experience of singing, dancing, and performing their way through American history which has improved their self esteem and self worth.

WATOTO BUTTERFLY (Pre-K & Kindergarten students) // Performing arts are used to improve social and motor skills development while building language and literacy skills.

FUNZZIE I & II (1st – 5th grade) // Introductory and Beginners level vocal, acting, and dance.

WATOTO DE' AFRIKA // (Middle School - High School) // The aim is to develop a passion for knowledge through historical research of performance materials. Performing arts activities are used to improve academic and social skills development with an emphasis on team work.

WATOTO MEMPHIS AMBASSADOR ENSEMBLE (Advanced level) // Students in this component perform as ambassadors of the Watoto program and the city of Memphis by touring locally, nationally, and internationally.

SUMMER CAMP SHOWCASE // The Watoto program conducts an eight week summer arts program which offers its students a fun and enriching arts experience on the beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. Classes taught by certified and experienced instructors in both the performing and visual arts create an environment that promotes both physical health and cognitive development.



Contact Us

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Watoto Memphis

Performing Arts Academy

EXPERIENCES OF A LIFETIME...

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Watoto De Afrika About Us

FOUNDING // In 1987, native Memphian Donald O'Conner, musician/songwriter/producer, founded the non profit Memphis Cultural Arts Enrichment Center (MCAEC), umbrella to the Watoto De' Afrika program.

MISSION STATEMENT // Using the performing arts and history to improve the academic and social skills of children and youth.

WHY DOES MEMPHIS NEED THIS PROGRAM // Students are taught skills that will make them an "asset" to their community rather than a "liability". Emphasis is placed on the development of self discipline, work ethics, and focused attention. Through the Watoto program, the MCEAC strives to create a community of learners and leaders in which respect and concern for members of the whole community is important.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS // Established organization that has been in existence for the past twenty-five years // Trained over 3,000 urban and at-risk youth // Enrolled students have gone to college or some other post graduate studies program // High school graduates have received full college scholarships // Participated in international tours that included Italy, Mexico, and the Bahamas // Conducted performances for the following: Bono of U2, Magic Johnson, Dr. J, Essence Festival, The King & Queen of San Marino, Congressman John Lewis, Lennox Lewis, and Dan Zanes of Playhouse Disney // Created Watoto De' Afrika chapters in twelve cities // Established partnership with the National Civil Rights Museum // Debuted national tour of the production "Love Everybody" in tribute to the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

CONCERTS, BOOKINGS, AND ENROLLMENT // The Watoto program presents three general public concerts a year in which all students participate. They are held during the months of December, May, and August. Throughout the year smaller ensembles are available for private and special performance bookings. The Watoto program has a year round open enrollment policy.



How Can You Get Into The Act?

The Watoto program has a proven track record. For 25 years it has positively transformed the lives of Memphis area youth. However, ticket sells alone can not cover operational and production costs. Support is needed in the areas of volunteer services and in-kind/monetary donations from those who desire to take part in the program's continued success.

VOLUNTEER Volunteer support is needed in a variety of categories. Special training sessions are held to prepare volunteers for the following tasks:

*Class Monitors
Ticket sells
Distribution of programs and other printed materials
Light clean up after rehearsals and performances
Joining the special events Friends of Watoto Advisory Committee*

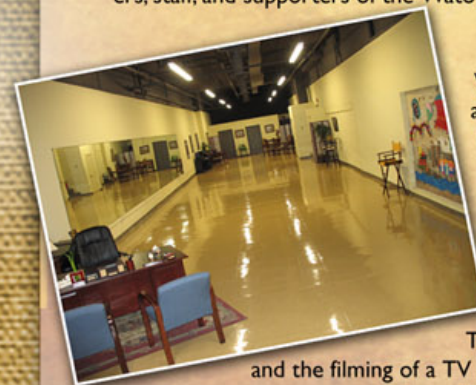
DONATE // Donors are people who understand, appreciate, and value the positive impact the Watoto program has had on Memphis youth and the community as a whole.

Support of Watoto De' Afrika and its mission ultimately benefits Memphis area businesses through an improved work force. In addition, the program's Ambassador Tour component, takes the spirit and uniqueness of Memphis beyond its own borders.

PLEASE MAIL DONATIONS TO:
Watoto De Afrika
55 S Main St. • Memphis, TN 38103
Make Check payable to:
Memphis Cultural Arts Enrichment Center (501c3)

Watoto De Afrika New Beginnings

The past couple of years have been a time of new beginnings for the organizers, staff, and supporters of the Watoto program.



NEW FACILITY // February 2009 - Watoto moved into its new state of the arts rehearsal and recital facility at 55 S. Main located in the heart of downtown Memphis.

NEW RELATIONSHIP // July 2008 - Watoto students performed with Grammy Awardwinning artist Dan Zanes of Playhouse Disney. The group was renamed "The Funnzies" and the filming of a TV pilot entitled "Welcome to Funzville" is presently underway with Zanes as production advisor.

NEW PARTNERSHIP // February 2010 - During a press conference held at the National Civil Rights Museum, museum officials announced a partnership with Watoto De' Afrika. The relationship has led to monthly performances at the museum and a national performance tour of the production "Love Everybody" which is a tribute to the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The production opened at the museum on January 15, 2010, Dr. King's birthday, and launched its national tour in Atlanta March 17, 2010.

