

Adrienne Arsht Center

FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FIRST LADY RECOGNIZES AILEYCAMP MIAMI AT THE WHITE HOUSE

*Adrienne Arsht Center program presented with nation's highest honor
for creative youth development programs*

MIAMI, FL November 14, 2016 - The Adrienne Arsht Center's **AileyCamp Miami**, a free summer program that uses dance as a vehicle for developing self-esteem in young students, on Tuesday received the **2016 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award** – the nation's highest honor for creative youth development programs. **Janasia Johnson**, 14, of Miami, FL, and a 2016 camper, was at the White House today along with **Jairo Ontiveros**, the Arsht Center's Director of Education and Community Engagement, to receive the award from **First Lady Michelle Obama** on behalf of AileyCamp Miami. The camp was recognized for its effectiveness in promoting learning and life skills in young people.

The award recognizes the country's best after-school and out-of-school-time creative youth development programs for using engagement in the arts and the humanities to increase academic achievement, graduation rates, and college enrollment. The 12 awardees – chosen from a pool of more than 251 nominations and 50 finalists – were also recognized for improving literacy and language abilities, communication and performance skills, and cultural awareness.

"It was an honor to represent AileyCamp Miami and all my peers at the White House today. Accepting this award from First Lady Michelle Obama was an incredible moment for me because she is someone I look up to so much," said Janasia Johnson. "I am thankful to the camp for helping me find my voice and confidence to reach for the stars and work hard towards fulfilling my dreams. This whole experience has proved to me that nothing is impossible!"

Fully funded with private and public support, AileyCamp Miami is produced by the **Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County** through a partnership with Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation. The camp uses the power of dance as a vehicle for developing self-esteem, self-discipline, creative expression and critical thinking skills in vulnerable public middle school students in Miami, Florida. AileyCamp Miami students learn 4 primary dance forms – ballet, modern, West African and jazz – as well as communication skills, and take personal development classes focused on everything from body image and nutrition to conflict resolution, bullying and drug prevention. Tuition, transportation, meals and dance wear are free for campers.

The 6-week program annually provides 100 children, ages 11-14, with a performing arts experience they would not otherwise have. Campers show a marked improvement in dance and personal growth skills. The camp has achieved critical acclaim and widespread community

recognition as a positive force for underserved youth in Miami-Dade County. 800 children have been served since the program started in 2009.

First presented in 1998, the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award is the signature program of the **President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities** (PCAH). The awards are presented annually in partnership with the **National Endowment for the Arts** (NEA), the **National Endowment for the Humanities** (NEH), and the **Institute of Museum and Library Services** (IMLS).

In addition to the national recognition bestowed by receipt of the prestigious award, AileyCamp Miami will receive \$10,000 to support its programming and engage more young people from the community.

"Today is a day for celebration! The Arsht Center is thrilled to celebrate this high honor from the White House and applaud all the young people that have been part of the AileyCamp Miami family since its inception. We're also eternally grateful for the board members, sponsors, volunteers, staff and our partners at Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for making this life-changing program possible," said **John Richard, Arsht Center president and CEO**. "We strongly believe in the unique power of the performing arts as the catalyst for transformation and this prestigious recognition is the manifestation of that vision."

"Alvin Ailey understood the life-changing power of the arts and AileyCamp was the last program he implemented before his passing. It isn't just about learning to dance, but about unleashing creativity, imagination, collaboration and hope. Because of where I'm standing now, I'm living proof of the impact of that exchange on a young person," said **Artistic Director Robert Battle**. "Miami is where I grew up and was first touched by Ailey's *Revelations*. I see myself in the faces of the young students in AileyCamp. I'm beyond thrilled that the Arsht offers this valuable program in my hometown and that it has received a preeminent honor at the White House given by our First Lady."

In 2016, AileyCamp Miami was made possible with the leadership support of The Batchelor Foundation, with additional support provided by Green Family Foundation; The Miami Foundation; The Ware Foundation; The Children's Trust; Miami-Dade County Mayor, Board of County Commissioners and the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs; Tri-Mix Foundation, Marian and David Rucker; The Israel, Rose, Henry & Robert Wiener Charitable Foundation; Friends of AileyCamp Miami, and the state of Florida/Department of State, Florida Division of Cultural Affairs/Florida Council on Arts and Culture, among other supporters.

"The Batchelor Foundation is committed to making a difference in South Florida, and AileyCamp Miami is a living example of how arts and culture can improve lives in our community," said **Jon Batchelor, executive vice president of The Batchelor Foundation**. "We are so proud of what this program has achieved – and what it will continue to accomplish to benefit Miami children."

The National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award is the nation's highest honor for after-school arts and humanities programs. The award recognizes and supports outstanding programs that lay new pathways to creativity, expression, and achievement outside of the regular school day. These programs excite and engage a range of students, cultivating imagination, collaboration, discipline, and academic success—with demonstrable results. They also provide safe harbors after school, on weekends, and during the evenings for children and youth in some of our country's most at-risk urban and rural settings.

“These amazing programs prove how effective creative youth development can be in changing lives and communities,” said **Megan Beyer, executive director of the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities**. “They’re improving academic achievement and contributing to high school graduation rates, and they’re providing the opportunity for young people to build the 21st-century skills they need to succeed in school and in life.”

Created in 1982 by Executive Order, the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) is an advisory committee to the White House on cultural issues. The PCAH works directly with the administration and the three primary cultural agencies—the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)—as well as with other federal partners and the private sector, to address policy questions in the arts and humanities, to initiate and support key programs in those disciplines, and to recognize excellence in the field. Its core areas of focus are arts and humanities education, cultural exchange, and community revitalization. Mrs. Obama, like other first ladies before her, serves as Honorary Chairman of the committee, which comprises both private and public members.

For more information about AileyCamp Miami, please visit www.arshtcenter.org/education and/or view this video [here](#). For more information about the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards, visit www.pcah.gov.

Photos/Video: Please see links below. Press CTRL then click on each link to access photos.

Note: Photos from the ceremony at the White House and the watch party at the Arsht Center in Miami will be available this afternoon.

Janasia at AileyCamp Miami (Photos):

<https://arshtcentersuzetteepinosa.sharefile.com/d-sa4320f5d2544708b>

General AileyCamp Miami Photos:

<https://arshtcentersuzetteepinosa.sharefile.com/d-s226ff76c3e1401c9>

AileyCamp Miami 2016 (Video):

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/9g9f908ceysjnpn/Janasia%20during%20Final%20Performance.mp4?dl=0>

Janasia is in the front row, right side starting at 45 seconds. She’s also on the right hand side of the stage during AileyCamp Miami affirmations (3:53) portion and the finale number (2:00)

The Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County is made possible by the public support of the Miami-Dade County Mayor and the Board of County Commissioners, the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Tourist Development Council and the City of Miami Omni Community Redevelopment Agency, as well as the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture. The Adrienne Arsht Center also receives generous support from individuals, corporations and local, state and national foundations.

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About the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County

Set in the heart of downtown Miami and designed by world-renowned architect Cesar Pelli, the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County is one of the world’s leading performing arts organizations and venues. Since opening in 2006, the Arsht Center, a 501C3 non-profit organization, has emerged as a leader in presenting innovative programming that mirrors South Florida’s diversity as well as a catalyst for billions of dollars in new development in the downtown area. Spotlighting legends and serving as a launch pad for local artists to make their mark on the international stage, the Center presents nearly 500 events each year across its eight flexible, state-of-the-art performance spaces. The Center

programs 12 signature series, including the largest jazz series in South Florida, the biggest flamenco festival on the East Coast, and a robust program of new theatrical works as well as free programming for the community and an arts education program that serves nearly 30,000 children each year. As Miami's new Town Square, the Arsht Center also houses Brava by Brad Kilgore, a fine dining restaurant; the Café at Books & Books in the historic Carnival Tower and a weekly Farmers Market.

Visit www.arshtcenter.org for more information.