

# THE ROOT

## **Watch: 13-Year-Old AileyCamp Student Is Moved by the Love of Dance**

By: Felice Leon

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Christian Herrera started dancing when he was 4 years old. He said he knew that he would be a dancer when he did his first split at his grandmother's house.

Now, at age 13, Christian is a second-year student at AileyCamp, a summer enrichment program for dancers that focuses on personal development, with 10 national sites. As a standout student, Christian has had the opportunity to perform at the Alvin Ailey Gala at Lincoln Center in New York City.

Even at a young age, Christian understands that sacrifice is a key to success. "When I decided to do dance, I wanted to do it. So, if there's a party, I just have to accept that I want to dance and this is what I want to do when I get older, so I want to take this with me, and I'm not missing out on anything," Christian says. This committed dancer has inspired his 10-year-old sister, Cydney, to dance, too.

"It's important for children of color to express themselves, because they are in a minority. Their struggle—as you say—the struggle is real. They're always trying to catch up, to get what somebody else might have," says AileyCamp's national director, Nasha Thomas. "It is important for them to believe that they can have what is out there."

Watch the interview here: <http://www.theroot.com/watch-13-year-old-aileycamp-student-is-moved-by-the-lo-1797676855>