

Mentoring Matters: Former AileyCamp Dancer Happily Giving Back To Younger Students

August 28, 2018



Watch here: <https://miami.cbslocal.com/2018/08/28/mentoring-matters-aileycamp/> (3 ½ minutes)

MIAMI (CBSMiami) – Standing on the stage where she first learned how to dance, 17-year old Dymon Smith softly describes her passion for the arts. “I found my heart in dance. It’s been my breakfast, lunch, and dinner every day. I can’t imagine my life without it,” she said.

Smith is a student at the New World School of the Arts but it was on this stage where she voluntarily spent six weeks of her summer mentoring and training younger dancers at AileyCamp Miami. Just a few years ago, Dymon was an Ailey camper. She was 10-years old when she was introduced to the power of dance.

“I never danced before AileyCamp. I started when I was ten years old. This was my first experience of being in dance and different techniques as jazz and ballet. I was all new to it and it really pushed me and challenged me because everyone around me they probably already had the dance training,” said Dymon.

Ailey’s Summer Camp led Dymon to train at the Polly Mays Conservatory of the arts for her middle school years and her training there got her admitted to New World where she is excelling and starting her senior year.

She says she didn’t hesitate when she got the call from AileyCamp to come back and mentor.

“It was really emotional because this is where I started, so to come back was like everything,” said Dymon.

This is the first year in its 10-year history that the program added mentors to its program.

Dymon adds that what motivated her to mentor was the opportunity to teach and share her experiences with younger aspiring dancers.

“They see a lot of me in them and they know like wow she was here she was here she was on this exact stage, so we can learn a lot from her and to just teach them to always push themselves and to never give up,” said Dymon.

This summer, AileyCamp at the Arsht Center celebrated 10 years of bringing the free 6-week program to local students ages 11 to 14 to learn dance and explore their creativity.

The camp is free and funded by private donations. The goal is to give students who could not otherwise afford it the opportunity to gain self-confidence, and connect with local artists who instruct the students during the camp.

Middle-schooler Trinity Cidell says AileyCamp has helped transform her over the last two years

“Yeah, they are like family here, it’s a lot of support and a lot of people that I have really like best friends with now, I grew here because I was really shy. Last year, I was really shy and then I came back and then all of my other friends were here and then I was so happy,” said Trinity.

Trinity says she was thrilled when she found out Dymon would be her mentor

“She is amazing, she is a wonderful dancer and then she’s really a really good spirit and she is really nice and I absolutely love her,” said Trinity.

Dymon describes her mentee Trinity as a triple threat

“Trinity is a beautiful soul. She is a triple threat. She likes to dance, sing, and act. She wants to go to FAMU and I told her just to be yourself and to always follow your heart. She’s very energetic. She makes me laugh. All the Miami mentees make me laugh, they are all energetic, and they all have something special that they can give,” said Dymon.

Trinity and Dymon are just one example of founder, dancer and choreographer Alvin Ailey’s vision, which is to use the power of dance to enrich and positively impact the lives of children.

Trinity says she walks away from the camp with one special takeaway and that is not to use the word “can’t” to define her possibilities.

The camp is funded by private donations through the Adrienne Arsht Center.

If you would like to donate please head to this website: <http://www.arshtcenter.org/Education-Community-Engagement/Programs/AileyCamp-Miami/Ailey-Camp-Miami/>