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AileyCamp Kicks Off Inaugural Partnership with Purpose Built Schools Atlanta, Aligning with Mayor Dickens' ATL Year of the Youth Initiative

Nationally Acclaimed Free Program Now in 10 Cities Helps Students Reach for their Full Potential



CTRL + CLICK to view and download: AileyCampers. Photo by Robert DeMartin; AileyCamp Overview video; AileyCamp National Director Nasha Thomas with Purpose Built Schools Atlanta students at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights. Photo by Christopher Moore.

ATLANTA – June 5, 2023 – [AileyCamp](#), the nationally acclaimed summer program that uses dance as a means to stretch the minds, bodies, and spirits of middle-school students, **launches in Atlanta today in partnership with [Purpose Built Schools Atlanta and continues through July 14](#)** at Luther J. Price Middle School. Aligning with Atlanta's "Year of the Youth" initiative announced by Mayor Dickens, the six-week, full scholarship program helps students ages 11-14 reach their full potential with classes in dance, personal development, creative communications, and inspiring daily affirmations. Founded by Alvin Ailey and Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey in 1989, and now reaching 10 cities nationwide, AileyCamp develops self-esteem, self-discipline, creative expression, critical-thinking and goal-setting skills in a supportive environment.

During the summer program led by AileyCamp National Director [Nasha Thomas](#), 100 AileyCampers will learn a myriad of dance techniques in daily classes such as **ballet, Horton-based modern, jazz, and West African dance**. The acclaimed program has a strong emphasis on **Personal Development and Creative Communication classes**, teaching campers how to express themselves in a positive way and tackle challenging subjects that include decision-making, peer-pressure, conflict resolution, and self-awareness. In addition to creative and educational classes, their experience at AileyCamp includes curated theme-based lessons and begins with reciting daily affirmations such as **"I will pay attention with my mind, body, and spirit,"** and **"I will not use the word 'can't' to define my possibilities,"** to guide AileyCampers to becoming confident, productive, and motivated individuals. Tuition, uniforms, dance attire, field trips, breakfast, and lunch are provided during the camp, which culminates in a final performance for friends, family, and community leaders showcasing the students' hard work in original productions of choreographed dances, poetry reading, and theatrical improvisations.

"Alvin Ailey once said, "to be who you are and become what you are capable of is the only goal worth living," stated **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Artistic Director [Robert Battle](#)**. "Since its inception, AileyCamp has

provided direction and hope to thousands of inner-city middle school students through dance. We are excited to offer Atlanta youth a safe space to stretch their minds, dream big, and take steps towards a successful future.”

“Our Year of the Youth is designed to provide opportunities for young people to follow their passion and enrich their lives. Thanks to AileyCamp, 25 Atlanta youth can do just that. Together, AileyCamp Atlanta and Purpose Built Schools Atlanta will allow these young people to learn from some of the nation’s leading dance instructors, nurturing their talents and, in turn, contribute to our city’s thriving arts and culture community,” **said Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens.**

"Dancing with AileyCamp is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our students," said Mike Davis, CEO of Purpose Built Schools Atlanta. "We are extraordinarily grateful for our partnership with the Ailey organization for providing our young scholars with the gift of dance to use as a vehicle for enhancing self-esteem, leadership skills, and creative expression. They will carry this experience with them always."

Although AileyCamp is not meant to be a training ground for professional dancers, some students are awarded scholarships to further study at [The Ailey School](#) or pursue training at other accredited dance schools and have later performed with professional dance companies. Currently, two AileyCamp alumni – [Solomon Dumas](#) and [Christopher Taylor](#) – are performing as members of the incomparable [Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater](#). **Participants in AileyCamp will witness their inspiring artistry and be introduced to Alvin Ailey’s powerful masterpiece *Revelations* during the Company’s annual engagement at the Fox Theatre.**

“We are thrilled to bring AileyCamp to Atlanta and nine other cities this summer,” says **Nasha Thomas, National Director of AileyCamp/Arts In Education Spokesperson & Master Teacher.** “AileyCamp gives young people an opportunity to have a quality arts experience, make friends, express themselves and show them that they matter. It is a joy to witness the transformation in these young people from their first day to the final performance, which I believe is a testament to Alvin Ailey’s mission of enriching the lives of the youth through dance.”

AileyCamp Atlanta will host an Open House on Friday, June 23 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. so attendees can witness firsthand the valuable impact of the acclaimed program and meet the instructors. In honor of Atlanta’s Year of the Youth, the High Museum of Art will host an AileyCamp rehearsal on Sunday, July 9 from 1 to 3:30 p.m. as part of their UPS Second Sunday in partnership with the City of Atlanta. Free admission is available to the general public.

All camps culminate with a special final performance for family, friends, and community leaders where the AileyCampers showcase their hard work in original productions of choreographed dances, poetry readings, and theatrical improvisations. **To commemorate the metro area youth’s transformations and accomplished goals this summer, AileyCamp Atlanta’s final performance will be on Saturday, July 15 at Purpose Built Schools Atlanta.**

As the last program Alvin Ailey founded before his passing, his trailblazing legacy continues to reach thousands of young people in AileyCamps across the country every summer, helping them to learn the steps to a pathway towards a bright future. As a visionary choreographer who used his artistry to change American dance and culture, Alvin Ailey is the focus of Jamila Wignot’s acclaimed *AILEY* documentary, now streaming on [Hulu](#) and [PBS Passport](#). The *AILEY* documentary has been recognized for its powerful work and nominated for several awards including the 2022 Image Award for Outstanding Breakthrough Creative (Motion Picture) as well as the 2022 Black Reel Awards for Outstanding Documentary.

PRESS: Click here for [photos](#) and an [overview video](#). For additional information, please visit pressroom.alvinailey.org.

AILEYCAMP 2023 SCHEDULE

Atlanta, GA: June 5 – July 15
Baltimore, MD: June 26 – August 4
Berkeley/Oakland, CA: June 20 – July 28
Chicago, IL: June 26 – August 4
Kansas City, KS: June 5 – July 13
Kansas City, MO: June 5 – July 13
Miami, FL: June 20 – July 29
New York, NY: July 5 – August 11
Newark, NJ: June 26 – August 4
Seattle, WA: July 5 – August 10

Georgia-Pacific, Georgia Power, and Home Depot are all Ailey & Atlanta supporters.

AileyCamp Atlanta is generously supported by the Fund II Foundation.

About Ailey Arts In Education & Community Programs and the Ailey organization

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater grew from a now-fabled March 1958 performance in New York that changed forever the perception of American dance. Founded by Alvin Ailey, posthumous recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom – the nation’s highest civilian honor, and guided by Judith Jamison beginning in 1989, the Company is now led by Robert Battle. Since 1992, Ailey Arts in Education & Community Programs has been committed to bringing dance into classrooms and communities across the country to positively impact people of all ages through the power of dance. In addition to AileyCamp, a full scholarship day camp for youth, in-person and remote programs includes lecture-demonstrations; technique classes; innovative curriculum-based residencies inspired by Alvin Ailey’s *Revelations* and *Night Creature*; and AileyDance for Active Aging, a program that serves as an outlet for artistic expression and fosters a sense of joy. Promoting the uniqueness of the African-American cultural experience and the preservation and enrichment of the American modern dance tradition, the Ailey organization also includes: Ailey II (1974), a second performing company of emerging young dancers and innovative choreographers; The Ailey School (1969), one of the most extensive dance training programs in the world to develop the next generation of performing arts; and Ailey Extension (2005), dance and fitness classes for the general public, which began with the opening of Ailey’s permanent home at 55th Street at 9th Avenue – The Joan Weill Center for Dance – the largest building dedicated to dance in New York City, the dance capital of the world. For more information about Ailey’s performances and programs, visit www.AlvinAiley.org.

About Purpose Built Schools

Through an innovative partnership with Atlanta Public Schools (APS) that began in 2016, Purpose Built Schools Atlanta began operating Slater Elementary, Price Middle and Carver STEAM Academy. Since then, Purpose Built Schools has evolved into a high-impact organization serving approximately 1,300 students and 1,000 families in three schools comprising one of Georgia’s lowest-income K-12 feeder patterns. Purpose Built Schools’ mission is to develop students’ skills and cultivate their agency in pursuit of their unlimited potential. Our model has proven that when students have access to high-quality education, exposure to enrichment opportunities, and basic needs such as housing, adequate nutrition, and mental health supports, their success is limitless.

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