

Teens Find Their “Voice” Through The Power Of The Arts At AileyCamp Miami

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The lives of more than a thousand underserved students have been strengthened thanks to Ailey Camp Miami at the Adrienne Arsht Center.

The six-week program strives to provide a safe and artistic environment for campers through the arts. “We want them to understand they are powerful young people,” said Jairo Ontiveros with Ailey Camp Miami. That’s what’s instilled in the minds and hearts of the more than 115 students taking part in the free paid scholarship camp offered to all Miami-Dade County public school students.

Every movement and each choreography represents an accomplishment for these campers but for many of them, it is not only about dancing. “They tackle bullying, conflict resolution, peer pressure, drug use, and abuse. Social issues middle schoolers go through and are not talked about in the classroom,” said Ontiveros.

The 11 to 14-year-olds also work on their personal development and are challenged throughout the six weeks, with the power of the arts, to be a voice for themselves. “I love dancing so I came here to fulfill my dream,” said Quaden John. But little did John know that he would be dancing away with so much more.

“When I first came to Ailey Camp Miami I was so shy, I didn’t want to be by nobody, but these people introduced me to everybody to talk to,” said John.

The same goes for Gina Diaz. “I suffer from ADD and I take a good amount of medicine for it and I haven’t been on my medication at all this summer. It’s also helped me to come out and be more positive and more involved in my community and everything around me, said Diaz.

That is their goal here at Ailey Camp Miami for each student to keep shining far beyond the stage. The camp ends on with a final performance at the Arsht Center on Saturday.

Watch here: <https://miami.cbslocal.com/2019/08/01/teens-voice-power-arts-ailey-camp-miami/> (2 minutes)