

# Charles Ahovissi's Residency Plan

## Contact Information:

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## Residency Title:

Celebrating & Exploring African Culture and History through Dance and Drumming



## Target Audience:

Grades: 6-7-8-9 and beyond  
Maximum numbers of classes: 4 per day, 20 participants per class.  
Preferred Timeline: Anytime

## Scope:

Number of Days: 15  
Time length of Session: 60 minutes

## Residency Purposes:

1. To spark participants' awareness and interest in the arts
2. To connect the participants' lives to African culture and history
3. To develop participants' knowledge of Africa

## Residency Objectives:

1. To introduce participants to cultural differences
2. To use links between Mr. Ahovissi's project activities and academic schoolwork
3. To persuade participants to exercise more for health and fitness

## Residency Overview:

### A. Residency Components

- Planning meeting with participating teachers
- Classroom sessions
- Culminating Event: Participants demonstration by the core group
- Reflection Meeting: Feedback from the teachers
- Residency Evaluation

### B. Residency Description

This residency will help participants explore and create dance movement and rhythm through the culture and history in pre-colonial Africa. They will be introduced to the traditional aspects of African life (including festivals, hunting, harvest, fishing represented through dance, drumming, and crafts. While expressing themselves through movement, participants will learn, create, and improvise dance movements and musical techniques necessary for communicating and telling stories. Participants will also learn how to play different percussive instruments, apply basic rhythmic patterns, and work together to create African inspired dances and rhythms. Residency will conclude with a celebration highlighting the success of participants.

### C. Rationale

Traditional African dancing and drumming is a powerful tool for helping participants to communicate, tell stories and learn about traditional daily life in Africa before the influence of colonization. A culture's beliefs and values are reflected in its arts. Exploring traditional African dance and drumming help participants uncover these beliefs and values. This residency naturally incorporates different learning styles such as musical intelligence and bodily kinesthetic intelligence from Gardner's Multiple Intelligences. Learning and creating African culture and history through traditional dance movements and drumming, provides participants with an engaging way to do academic and physical exercises. When participants express themselves, and create an African inspired dance and music, they have a better understanding of Africa's diverse and beautiful culture. Several connections can be made across the curriculum: social studies- history and geography; world cultures- traditions, culture, values, and beliefs; and physical education- rhythm, dance, movement and health.

## D. Results

As a result of participating in this residency, participants will:

- Comprehend the meaning and history of traditional African dances and drumming
- Identify and understand elements of dance and choreography
- Understand dance and drumming as a way to create and communicate meaning
- Understand improvisation of melodies, variations and accompaniments
- Know the source of a variety of sounds (musical instruments), and how the elements of music are used to achieve unity and variety, tension and release, and balance in musical compositions.
- Apply critical and creative thinking skills in dance
- Develop the skills required for communicating and telling stories

As a result of participating in this residency, participants will be able to:

- Express themselves through rhythm and movements
- Move to the beat, rhythm, and tempo of music
- Practice the elements of dance
- Move to a rhythmic accompaniment (drum beat) and respond to changes in tempo
- Create a movement and dance after exploring the meaning and creation of dance
- Play different instruments and variety of rhythms
- Practice accompaniment rhythms simultaneously with a solo
- Learn and perform an authentic traditional African dance and drumming

As a result of participating in this residency, participants will appreciate:

- The values of traditional arts
- Dancing, Drumming, and crafts making requires discipline
- How dancing, drumming, and crafts making can influence culture and history
- How culture and history can influence dancing, drumming, and crafts making

- That learning culture and history through dance, drumming, and crafts making is a process

E. Overview of Classroom sessions: (Attached)

Resume and References:

*Charles Ahovissi*



Professional Dancer, Choreographer and Educator  
 Traditional African Dance & Drumming  
 Artistic/Executive Director, African Culture Connection

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Objective: To teach people and perform about African culture and history through traditional dance, drumming and crafts.

Recent Career Highlights

- 2009: Colombia Tour (Culture Exchange) with Gansango Dance Company from Seattle, Washington
- 2010: “Participated in the Artists as Educators Seminar, Anatomy of a Lesson: Planning Instruction offered by The John F Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.”
- 2009: “Participated in The Kennedy Center’s Artists as Educators Seminar, Laying a Foundation: Defining Arts Integration.”
- 2008: Selected for a John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts’ Program, “Planning Effective Arts- Integrated Residencies for Students”
- 2008-2009: Selected for ArtsREACH Teaching Artist Programs through University of Nebraska Lincoln. Supported by Nebraskans for the Arts, the Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network, the Nebraska Arts Council and the Lied Center for Performance Arts.
- 2008: Certificate Of Completion: Child Abuse and Neglect 101 Reporting and

Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect.

- Middle Schools Learning Center Initiative: 2008 summer and fall, 2009 spring residencies through The City of Omaha and Omaha Public Schools.
- Professional Teaching and Performing Artist through The Nebraska and Iowa Arts Councils.

### Teaching & Performing Experience:

- 2009: African dance & drumming workshops/performances in Medellin, Quibdo, Manizales, Pereira and Armenia, Colombia.  
Workshops and Classes in Traditional African Dance and Drumming
- 2001-2009: On-going public classes in Dance and drumming, University of Nebraska at Omaha.
- 2008-2009: After school Artist in Residence. African Dance, Drumming, and Crafts at 6 different Omaha Public Middle Schools.
- January 2008: After School Artist in Residence. African dance and drumming classes with Kids Club Sponsored by the Omaha Schools Foundation
- March 2008: Artist in residence. 2 weeks traditional African dance and drumming at Sacred Heart Catholic School in Omaha. Sponsored by the Nebraska Arts Council
- June 2008: 22 days Artist in residence. Traditional African dance and drumming at Boys & Girls Club in Omaha. Sponsored by the Nebraska Arts Council.
- Summer and fall 2008: 44 days Artist in residence. Traditional African dance, drumming and crafts at Girls Inc. in Omaha, sponsored by “The Sherwood Foundation.”
- October 5-6, 2007: La Calabasse in Seattle Arts Museum. A dynamic and refined, sold-out performance of traditional and contemporary African dance and music presented by Gansango’s multicultural group of local and international dancers and musicians. Traditional costumes and live instrumentation.
- September 2007: A weeklong residency and performance at Geneva Public School in Geneva Nebraska sponsored by the Nebraska Arts Council.
- July 2007: Love Jazz and Arts Center Artist in residence, traditional African dance and drumming with Wesley House’s Kids, sponsored by the Nebraska Arts Council.

- May 2007: 20-day residency at Sacred Heart School followed with a presentation at the end of the residency. Sponsored by the Omaha Community foundation.
- March 2007: A weeklong artist in residence, traditional African dance and drumming in David City Public School, Nebraska. Sponsored by the Butler County Arts Council.
- January and February 2007: Bellevue Public Schools and Omaha Public Schools residencies at different schools: Ezra Miller, Birch Crest, Benson West, Boyd, South High, Catlin Arts Magnet and Beals Elementary.
- July 2006: three-week residency at Skinner Magnet School and Performance for world day at the Capitol Building in Lincoln Nebraska.
- June 2006: Performance for Omaha Summer and Arts Festival in Omaha downtown and at Quest Center for the University of Nebraska Medical Center's annual conference.
- April 2006: Performance at Metropolitan Community College for the International Fair in Omaha Nebraska.
- April 2006: Performance in Mobile Alabama for the annual African Culture festival.
- April 2005: Performance at Mobile County Training School in Alabama.
- February 2006: Traditional African dance and drumming classes in Alliance Public School, sponsored by the Alliance Arts Council.
- February 2006: Performance at Creighton University Omaha for celebrates Black History Month.
- November 2005: Residency and Performance at Bassett High School sponsored by the Nebraska Arts Council.
- October 2005: Performance at Sunrise Civic Center in Florida with Gansango Dance Company. (Kaleta: A Children's Festival from West Africa)
- October 2005: Performance at Holland Performing Art Center in Omaha with KITKA, Traditional and Contemporary Harmonies from Eastern Europe and Beyond.
- April 2005: A weeklong Artist in residence, traditional African dance and drumming at Bee, Nebraska Public School. Sponsored by the Nebraska Arts Council

- March 2005: A weeklong residency and performance at McCook Public School in Nebraska and South Dakota Art Museum.
- February 2005: Teaching and Performing at different places such as: Wayne State College, (Nebraska) Rocky Mountain College (Montana), and Norfolk Arts Center (Nebraska).
- October 2004: Columbus Area Arts Council teaching and performance. Sponsored by the Nebraska Arts Council.
- July 2004: Great Plains Girl Scouts Council residency at the Hanscom Park, Minne Lusa, and St. Cecilia's sites. Sponsored by the Nebraska Arts Council.
- June 2004: Performance at the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual African- American Festivals of Dance in Austin, Texas.
- May 2004: Forty-day residency at Holy Name School sponsored by the Nebraska Arts Council and the Omaha Community Foundation.
- April 2004: Residency and Performance at Skinner Magnet School sponsored by the Omaha Public School District.
- March 2004: Elkhorn Middle School residency and performance sponsored by the Elkhorn Public School District.
- February 2004: Black history Month Celebration Performances at different Schools such as: Skinner Magnet School in Omaha, Midland Lutheran College in Fremont, Wake Robins School in Bellevue, Central Park Academy in Omaha, and Beveridge Middle School in Omaha. Beatrice Area Arts Council Teaching and Performance sponsored by the Nebraska Arts Council. High Plans Arts Council residency and performance in Sidney, NE, sponsored by the Nebraska Arts Council.
- 1999: USA: Omaha, Los Angeles, New York, Baltimore, Washington, Sioux City, Indianapolis: Performing and giving instruction on African Dance.
- 1998 USA: La Belle Afrique Foundation to help promote African Culture and History.
- 1997 France: International Festival of African Culture.
- 1995 Belgium: African Gastronomy.
- 1993 Nigeria and Ghana: Festival of African Traditional Costumes

- 1991 Spain: Fifth Century of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus.
- 1989 China: Festival of African Dance
- 1988-1999: Super Anges Dance Troop. As a member of the Super Anges Charles traveled extensively throughout the world.
- 1984-1987: National Ballet of Benin, West Africa. As a member of the National Ballet Charles traveled to: Brussels, Belgium: International festival for tourism. 1986 London, England: Festival of African music. 1987 Switzerland: First Festival of African Art.

### Travel Experience

- Paris, Bordeaux, Madrid, China, Brussels, London, Switzerland, Belgium, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Mali, Togo, Ghana, Alabama, Montana, Baltimore, New York, Missouri, Iowa, California, Florida, Colorado, Washington. Colombia, South America: (Medellin- Quibdo- Manizales- Pereira- Armenia)

### Languages

- English, French, Fon, Mina Yoruba

### References

- Anne Alston & Deborah Bunting: Nebraska Arts Council, Tel: 402-595-2122
- Dawn Oropeza: Iowa Arts Council, Arts Education/Community Programs Coordinator, Tel: 515-281 5773
- Angela R. Fisher: Omaha Public Schools Arts Supervisor, Tel: 402-557-2535
- Josie Metal Corbin: Dance professor at University of Nebraska Omaha. Tel: 402-554-3239
- Nancy Eugene-Wedin: ArtsREACH Project Director, Tel: 402-472-4707