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African American Culture and Content for DC, MD and VA



ENTREPRENEUR'S OF THE WEEK

Welcome to a weekly feature here on the myvoicedc website. We've dedicated this page to feature local entrepreneur's doing incredible things in our community. I hope you enjoy learning about the businesses we spotlight and encourage you to submit others to my attention at: entrepreneurs@wtg.com

If you've ever dreamed about dancing or even playing a musical instrument, it's never too late. The Dream in Color Dance & Music Studio is here to get you started living your dream.

Dream in Color Dance & Music Studios
Founder Kimberly James
www.dreamincolorstudios.org
7373 McWhorter Place
Annandale, VA 22003

After one conversation with Ms. James, I was ready to get up and dance. Well I didn't quite do that. I let my fingers do the dancing in this spotlight. Her sincere commitment to the arts and making sure that every one no matter what the circumstances can be exposed to the performing arts is evident in her organization.

The Dream in Color Foundation was organized in January 2005, but the actual program activities didn't begin until a year later in January 2006. This non-profit Organization strives to diversify both the participation in and appreciation of the Performing Arts. The program is designed to make arts activities more accessible to ethnically and socio-economically disadvantaged families. They have a new dance and music studio in Annandale, VA offering children and adults of all ages top quality arts instruction in a nurturing environment, emphasizing self-esteem, cultural pride, artistic growth and commitment to one's self.



So who is the founder Kimberly James and how did she get started?

I've known since I was a child that I was meant to have a career in the performing arts industry, I just didn't know in what capacity. As an adult, I have been blessed enough to have worked as a professional dancer as well as in the public and private school systems. These experiences allowed me to be in a position to identify the need for diversity in the arts industry, and further identify the barriers that exclude certain groups of children from participating in artistic programs, which over time has led to the lack of diversity in the arts issue as a whole. Once I understood the connection between the two, it became a personal mission to be one of the people who would make a difference in the lives of others, while making a career of my passion for both art and education. The rest is history J

What are some of the programs at Dream in Color Dance & Music Studio?

Most arts education programs are very costly, which automatically weeds out most middle and low income families. We offer programs that are more accessible by setting our tuition on a sliding scale based on household income at our primary location and minimal fees at our satellite locations. We provide dance services in community and recreation centers throughout the metropolitan area and in after school child care programs that require little or no financial obligations to the parent. We also offer transportation services from schools surrounding our primary facility, to support the needs of working parents and we provide a place where our students can do homework and have the assistance of volunteer tutors when needed.

James has learned that being an entrepreneur has allowed her to push herself and continue to reach for more.

Although you tend to work longer and harder as an entrepreneur, the fruits of your labor mean so much more and there are no limitations on how far you can go. Eventually, you learn to work smarter and not harder. I'm not there yet, but I see it down the road!

We have only been in our new facility for three months, so we have a long way to go, but we truly believe that with proper exposure, we will start generating the public support needed for capacity building so we can best meet the needs of the communities that we serve.

There are so many wonderful programs to enjoy at the studio. Kim has found that her patrons continue to leave her with lasting memories.

Recently I convinced a single mother in her mid to late 40's to try our Old School Jamz class. She hesitantly joined us, and she honestly didn't pick up the moves very well, but the next week, she came into my office to tell me that that was the first time EVER in her life that she danced, (in any capacity) and that she was really worried about what people would say about her, but she surprisingly had the time of her life. She said that everyone in the class was supportive of one another and she was made to feel very comfortable regardless of how she performed. I can't imagine how anyone got that far in their life without every even wiggling a toe to the beat of music, but I was thrilled that we helped her with a major breakthrough in her life!

The Dream in Color Dance & Music Studios...is making a difference in the lives of everyone who walks through their doors.



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