

Her Path . . . Her Life . . . Her Way

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away."

Henry David Thoreau

by Gwen Swan

JULY 2013

SUMMER EDITION



It's entirely too easy – though amazingly accurate – to quote Henry David Thoreau when describing the choices made by the incredible, young musician Aaliyah Pitts. This drummer-extraordinaire chose a male dominated musical path and now sets the pace for others to follow. In keeping with world-renowned jazz drummer Kim Thompson, Aaliyah is one of St. Louis' own, having gotten her start as a drummer in a church choir. But that first experience wasn't a positive one.

Aaliyah recalls stumbling her way through a song at the age of 5 and being told to "get off the drums" by a much older boy. Though she felt sad and humiliated by the experience, her mother, who has been a lifelong supporter, explained to her that the boy had been disrespectful and should have, instead, shown her how to play. The supporting role played by her mother proved invaluable over the years.

Six years ago, Aaliyah met music instructor Hope Walker at Gateway High School. When Ms. Walker asked if anyone could put the drum set together, not one male stepped forward. Aaliyah did, played 1-½ minutes and thus began her path. Ms. Walker gave her a flyer about the CWAH Jazz Ensemble for Youth and Aaliyah decided to go and "loved it"!

"They made me feel welcome," says Aaliyah. "I knew I was there for a purpose. Jerome "Scrooge" Harris helped develop my techniques, and through his encouragement opened up a new world of music for me. The environment, the instructors . . . all kept the connection going. Weeks later Aaliyah and her best friend, who had also joined the ensemble, performed a duet. Two recitals followed.

With the help of bass guitarist Jeff Anderson, Aaliyah broaden her musical repertoire by expanding her technique with the bass instrument. Opportunities through the Institute led to a performance at the Bistro – "a door that CWAH opened. I played behind legendary pianist, Willie Pickens and was blown away," says Aaliyah.

"With jazz, you feel the music, your ears are open and you can improv," she says. In response to the roaring applause that followed her performance, Aaliyah decided that "nothing's going to stop me." And nothing has.



She recently graduated from Cardinal Ritter with an Emerging Leaders Scholarship to Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. Ms. Taylor, Project Manager of the Institute contacted Sharon Holbrooks, a member of the CWAH Ambassadors who helped her obtain a summer position at the Monsanto YMCA.

Aaliyah especially gives thanks to her mom who was "the bull" who kept pushing her. "She took me everywhere, was never late and put herself on the back burner so that I could go forward." Her advice to young women who aspire to be musicians: "Walk the road less traveled; the foundation has been laid by others." What an incredible young woman. She has chosen her path, to live her life, her way. ***Congratulations, Aaliyah!***

Community Women Against Hardship

3963 West Belle Pl, St. Louis, MO 63108

(314) 289-7523

www.cwah.org

Show Me Series Trip to DC We Are Almost There!!!

When I look at Luke Nelson picture to the right, I realize the value of the Show Me Series Trip and its impact on our youth. Luke has been with CWAH since 2011, and has had the opportunity to travel to Chicago, Kansas City and now we hope to Washington DC.

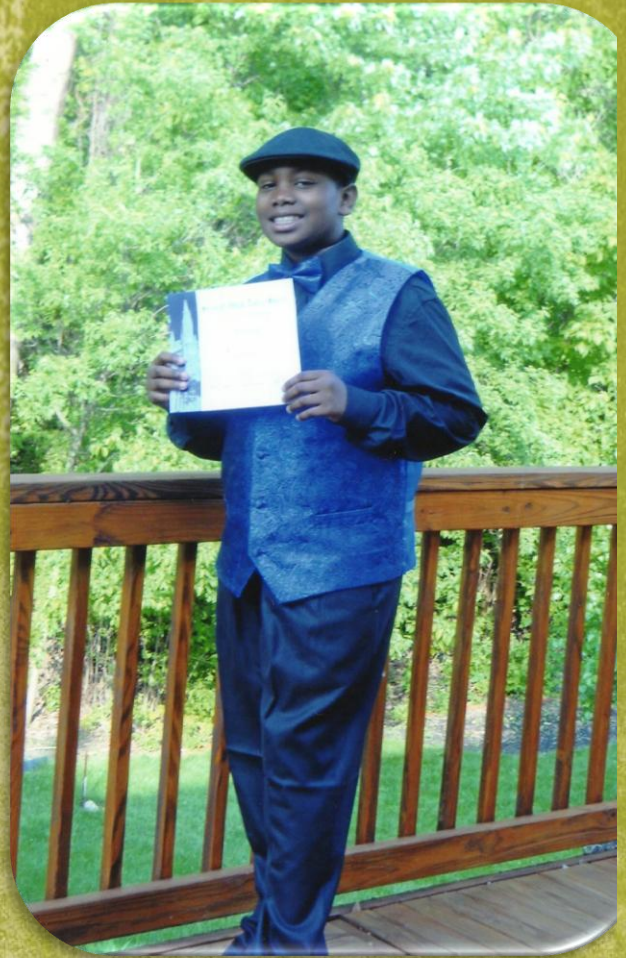
While we are approaching our travel date August 2, 2013 we still need those of you who can to sponsor a child for \$25, \$50, or \$100. There is an important part of American history unfolding before us and it's correlation to past history needs to be experienced by our youth.

We continue to rely on people who have respect for the value of history; the legacies left us, and the future of young people like Luke to make these opportunities possible. Thanks for your continued support.

***“Remember The Seeds We Plant Today
Are The Flowers We See Tomorrow.”***



CWAH partnered with Missouri University Extension College of Human Environmental Sciences for our Youth Enrichment summer program. Pictured above Jane Heffernan teaches safety rules in the kitchen.



Congratulations to Luke Nelson, one of CWAH's youth enrichment program students who received high honors from Duke University for Academically Talented Students



Summer Jazz Brunch

Guest Performer

ALTHEA RENE

Flautist with Jazz in Pink



Guest Musicians



Jeff Anderson, bassist, Jerome "Scrooge" Harris on drums, Matt Villinger on piano, and Anita Jackson on vocals.

Community Women Against Hardship (CWAH)'s annual Summer Jazz Brunch is rapidly approaching. This year's event will feature the electrifying flautist Althea Rene as guest attraction. She is not only genuinely beautiful, but an accomplished musician – with a fluent command of many styles.

The charitable affair will be staged at The Bistro at Grand Center -3536 Washington – on Saturday, July 14, 2013, with brunch at 1:30pm., followed by performance at 2:30pm. For ticket information call (314) 289-7523 or visit www.cwah.org

Prayer Breakfast

August 10, 2013

9:00AM

St. Alphonsus Rock Church

Speaker Dr. Roz Nichols

**PARTNERSHIPS IN THE COMMUNITY
ENHANCES**

**Youth Enrichment Programs and
Workshops at CWAH**



Pictured above are University of Missouri Nursing Students, Michelle Callihan, Sharia Walker, and Laurisha Robinson. Also picture is Dr. Denise Hooks Anderson and Gloria Taylor.



Dr. Denise Hooks Andersons, pictured above talks to parents about ways to manage stress and the importance of exercise to maintain healthy lifestyles.

Pictured below, Boeing Engineer William Gary teaches kids how to build tall creative buildings out of spaghetti and



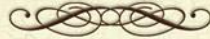
Community Women Against Hardship

3963 West Belle Pl, St. Louis, MO 63108

(314) 289-7523

www.cwah.org

25th Anniversary Celebration



November 3, 2013

Save The Date you don't want to miss it....



Executive Committee

Christine Reams, Board Chair
Lisa Langeneckert, EXQ, Vice Chair
Stephanie Muldrow, Treasurer
Cynthia Clay, Secretary

Board Members

C. Christopher Lee
Theresa Stuart
Arthurnine Mason Hunter
Edmond Johnson
L. Patrice Johnson, PhD
Sharon Johnson
Dr. Christy Richardson



PROVIDING HOPE FOR THOSE IN NEED