



Williamsburg County School District

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Dr. Kelvin Wymbs, Superintendent

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 6, 2024

AROHA AFRO LATIN DANCE HOSTS PROGRAM AT KINGSTREE HIGH SCHOOL

On Friday, December 6, 2024, Aroha Afro-Latin Dance hosted a program on the roots and movement of Afro-Latin dance at Kingstree High School. Students learned about the history of Afro-Latin dance through a video presentation. After being quizzed, they practiced some popular dance movements of the genre. Following this, students and guests participated in a showcase to demonstrate what they learned. The Kingstree High School's World Language/Spanish teachers are credited for bringing learning to life by offering this experience to the scholars. Black River A+ Education Consultants led by Mrs. Angela McClary-Fred will be sponsoring this event. This experience will provide more cultural experiences and a global perspective.

The mission of Aroha Afro-Latin Dance is to empower students to become active members of a vibrant and connected dance community. The goal is to foster a safe, inclusive, and friendly social dance environment where everyone feels welcome, whether they are new to dance or experienced enthusiasts. Everyone is encouraged to join in, creating meaningful connections through the joy of movement. At Aroha Afro-Latin Dance, participants express themselves through Salsa, Bachata, Kizomba, Cumbia, and Merengue. Aroha Afro-Latin Dance believes that movement is excellent for the body but even better for the soul. Participants enjoy fun, a good workout, and memorable learning experiences during our fantastic sessions. While other organizations invite you to a studio, we invite you to become part of a family.

The founder of Aroha Arts Collective and Aroha Afro-Latin Dance, Adalia Ellis-Aroha, is from South Carolina and has been dancing since childhood. Naturally drawn to dance, she participated in grassroots performing arts groups as a teenager, focusing on using dance to address social issues such as racism, gender equality, and substance abuse. She also found an outlet for her creativity as a writer of poetry and performed spoken word pieces in coffee shops. While attending Coastal Carolina University, Adalia was first introduced to Latin dance in her best friend's living room, where she wrote and performed her first choreopoem, "My Dear Mother Africa." As a young adult, she traveled the world, honing her skills as a Latin dancer and becoming a certified instructor under Son Na-Ri at SalsaIn Academy in Seoul, South Korea. While in Seoul, she partnered with MIZY, a UNESCO foundation, to facilitate and direct a program called "HipHopucation," which traced the roots of modern-day hip-hop from Africa to the present day. The collective artistic work of her students culminated in a public performance.