

# Arsht Center expands its arts education programs with mental health initiative for Miami high school students

*Throughout its 15-year history, the Center has remained a leader in arts education by providing free programs to more than half a million students*

MIAMI, FL, USA, October 18, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Since opening in 2006, the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County (@arshtcenter) has offered 10+ signature education programs and free arts opportunities to more than half a million students across South Florida. For its 15th Anniversary, the Arsht Center expands those offerings once more with the introduction of "I am Me," a free theater and hands-on arts-making workshop experience for Miami teens focusing on mental health awareness. The program, launching in the 21-22 school year, is part of the Center's ongoing partnership with Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) and will be available to every 9th grade student and teacher in Miami-Dade County.

"I am Me" is the culmination of the Arsht Center's Learning Through the Arts partnership with the fourth largest school system in the country. For more than a decade, the Arsht Center has offered Miami-Dade County students access to made-for-elementary-school musicals "Rock



Image of students enjoying a performance of Rock Odyssey – Photo by Justin Namon, ra-haus



Image of 5th graders experiencing the thrill of Rock Odyssey at the Adrienne Arsht Center – Photo by Eyeworks Production

Odyssey" (established in 2010) and "Kitty Hawk" (established in 2017) as well as hands-on STEAM workshops and specialized curriculum. Everything, including busing of students to the Arsht Center, is provided free to schools and students through the generosity of Arsht Center supporters.

"I am Me" is currently in development and will tour high schools all over Miami-Dade County beginning in 2022. A wholistic program that goes beyond performance, "I am Me" also includes services created to engage students in their high schools beyond the free performance experience.

After the performance has visited each school, the Arsht Center will integrate teaching artists into MDCPS afterschool wellness clubs to help students process what they saw on stage and what they are faced with in real life. It will also amplify the arts as an important mechanism for self-expression and self-care.



Image of Accessing the Arts Final Performance –  
Photo by Manny Hernandez

"Now that our students have returned to school after a long period of isolation and stress due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Arsht Center hopes to introduce the arts to students as a tool for healing and processing stress. We believe the arts have a positive effect on everyone, especially our youth, and we are offering 'I am Me' as one way for students to help enhance their mental health and overall wellbeing this year," said Jairo Ontiveros, vice president of education and community engagement at the Arsht Center.

In addition to the new "I am Me" initiative, the Arsht Center continues its commitment to delivering high-quality arts-based learning experiences for free to 60,000 students in the coming year, as it has for well over a decade. [Click here for a video about our programs.](#)

Below are just a few highlights of arts education initiatives offered in 2021-2022. Please [visit arshcenter.org](https://www.arshtcenter.org) or [here for a complete look at arts education offerings](#) for Miami-Dade students in 2021-2022.

## LEARNING THROUGH THE ARTS

As the Arsht Center's flagship arts integration program, Learning Through the Arts uses live theatrical performances as the primary path for learning traditional subjects and has reached more than 325,000 MDCPS students since its inception in 2010. Programs include "Rock Odyssey," "Kitty Hawk" and "I am Me."

## ACCESSING THE ARTS

Throughout the 2021-2022 season, students with disabilities from MDCPS receive arts instruction in this nationally recognized program. In partnership with Arts4All and MDCPS, the Arsht Center implements nationally recognized, inclusive residencies designed to integrate the performing arts into classroom for students with varied disabilities. For the culmination of the program, students are invited to make their Arsht Center debut with a performance on our stages.

#### MIAMI-DADE ARTS EDUCATION COLLECTIVE

Created in 2020 to provide virtual arts education programs for students during the COVID-19 pandemic, the collective includes the Arsht Center, South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center, Miami Theater Center and Culture Shock Miami. Offerings for 2021-2022 will include online and in-person performances, including "Duke," a story about Duke Kahanamoku, Hawaii's first Olympic gold medalist and the grandfather of modern surfing; and "Dreamers," an immigrant story told through storytelling, toy theater, collage, and video projections.

#### KNIGHT MASTERWORKS CLASSICAL CONVERSATIONS

Free lectures that provide insight into the musicians, composers and history around many of the Center's classical music concerts. Concert tickets not required.

#### JAZZ ROOTS: SOUND CHECK

This program welcomes high school students from MDCPS to the Knight Concert Hall for free sound checks, lectures and, on occasion, opportunities to perform with headline artists from the Center's Jazz Roots concert series. Participants also receive free admission to that evening's Jazz Roots concert, provided free of charge by the Arsht Center.

Throughout the program's history, students have participated with jazz legends such as Chris Botti, Chucho Valdés, Candy Dulfer, Aaron Neville and the Dirty Dozen Brass Band to name a few.

#### ARSHT GOES TO SCHOOL - BEYOND BOUNDARIES

MDCPS students can attend free performances by local and visiting artists throughout the year. In-classroom workshops are also offered.

The Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County is made possible by the public support of the Miami-Dade County Mayor and the Board of County Commissioners, the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Tourist Development Council and the City of Miami Omni Community Redevelopment Agency, as well as the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture. The Adrienne Arsht Center also receives generous support from individuals, corporations and local, state and national foundations.

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## AboutUs

Set in the heart of downtown Miami, the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County is committed to welcoming and connecting ALL people to the arts, to the Arsht Center and to each other. Our stages are alive year-round with artists from around the world, innovative programming from our resident companies and local arts partners, free community events that reflect Miami's unique identity and arts education experiences for thousands of Miami children each year. For more information, visit [arshtcenter.org](https://www.arshtcenter.org).

Suzette Espinosa Fuentes

Adrienne Arsht Center

+1 786-468-2221

[email us here](#)

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