

## Doing Good: Talent show aids arts education

As arts education is decreasing in schools, Atlanta All Stars Talent Show Network hopes to fill the void. Focusing on performance arts, the ATL All Stars puts on talent shows throughout the city displaying the talents of youth and in turn building their self-esteem, confidence and investing in their abilities.

“We wanted to provide a way for students, especially in low-income areas, to be a part of performance arts,” said Mike Pickering, founder of ATL All Stars.

Founded in 2004, the non-profit program uses performance-based activities to increase self-esteem and create bonds between metro Atlanta youth. The organization involves young people in activities which help them to learn new ways of thinking and experiencing life that build confidence both on and off stage.

“We wanted to find a way to showcase these kids in a positive environment and allow them to support each other while building leadership skills,” said Pickering.

The talent show is run by the students and stars the students - from performing to running the box office or being the sound engineer, the kids are responsible for the talent shows. There are about two to three shows per year and have been held in locations such as College Park and South Cobb.

Anyone who auditions makes it into the talent show, and through theater classes, the students are prepared for the talent show which is performed for the local community. The goal of the program is to be in as many neighborhoods as possible and establish partnerships with local schools.

J. Thrilla, who is now the emcee of the shows, performed at the Atlanta All Stars Talent Show in 2012, and has been involved since. “I performed and I was hooked,” the Georgia State University student said. “This avenue taught me how to express myself and find a support system within my peers.”

The all volunteer-run organization is always looking for community involvement to continue the momentum it has gained. ATL All Stars needs youth and adults alike to assist with auditions, shows, workshops, and community outreach.

“Young people are the future and they need to be encouraged to be their best,” said Adrie Keaton, program director of ATL All Stars. “With this organization and the local community, we are providing them a positive outlet to become leaders today and for the future.”

In other news: Kroger’s ‘Bringing Hope to the Table’ Campaign donated \$37,000 to The Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Atlanta. The Society supports 38 food pantries throughout North and Middle Georgia all working to feed the hungry in the communities they serve.

Who’s doing good? Each Tuesday, we write about charity events such as fun-runs, volunteer projects and other community gatherings that benefit a good cause. To suggest an event for us to cover, contact Devika Rao at [doing.goodAJC@gmail.com](mailto:doing.goodAJC@gmail.com)

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