



VOICE

HOME

CELEBRATING 45 YEARS!

ARCHIVE

Young Artists Initiative gives IE youth a community

Aug 15, 2020 | Feature Story, I.E.

Community



Leo Cabral | Contributor

The Young Artists Initiative was created to



Turn your learning into earning.

Your time is now. Use this time as an opportunity to get ready for spring 2021. Find out about financial aid, guaranteed transfer to a four-year university, explore career paths and prepare yourself for the future.

Enroll for spring 2021 classes at StayEnrolled.com



ACROB
ATIC
MATHE

give underrepresented young Black, Brown and other people of color the opportunity to learn and share their art as part of a community of peers.

Micherlange Hemsley, 19, was always passionate about ballet history and history in general. She was so passionate, she would quiz her peers in the dance studio on the history of ballet and African American history during Black History Month for fun.

Hemsley got the idea for the Young Artists Initiative in her junior year of high school when she noticed that

Micherlange Hemsley has been a full-time scholarship student at Anaheim Ballet, Debbie Allan Dance Academy and more. She has won medals in ballet and photography at the NAACP ACT-SO regional competition in 2018 and 2019. Hemsley is a sophomore at UC Irvine majoring in African American Studies with a minor in Criminology, Law, and Society.

many people were unaware of how the past has shaped our lives today, especially when it comes to the experiences of people of color.

“I had the idea that it would be really great to have something produce work in which it helps educate people about history and

MATICA
L
THINKI
NG (6)

MATHE
MATICS
OF
AFRICA
N
TRADIT
ION
FOR
BLACK
YOUTH
(5)

***AF
RICAN
UBUNT
UIS
SPIRIT
UAL
“ME/W
E” (1)

artists,” Hemsley said. “Because being a Black dancer, specifically a ballet dancer, obviously there are professional Black female dancers in companies right now and there have been for years... but it’s not necessarily the same as having somebody of the same ethnicity as you who is at your studio.”

The Initiative aims to partner with community events and local artists to create educational opportunities and a mentorship program.

“I know, for me, having a Black ballet dancer that I could have asked questions to would have made all the difference because me and my sister always danced together but we were in it together so she didn’t know any more than I did,” Hemsley said. “That’s why the mentorship program is something I wanted to implement.”

Although the mentorship program is still in the making, Hemsley hopes to have local, seasoned artists partner with YAI so young people of color have role models in the community.

Subscribe To Our Newsletter

Join our mailing list to receive the latest news and updates from our team.

EMAIL

SUBSCRIBE!

“The Initiative is amazing because it gets kids that are actually interested in the arts and want to do it long term and get(s) them the support and community that they want and deserve,” said Gabriella Stanton, co-founder and community outreach coordinator.

Stanton attended high school with Hemsley and has been involved with the Young Artists Initiative since its beginning stages.

Stanton grew up playing piano, violin, and the guitar and taught children piano before the COVID-19 pandemic.

The two noted that, as artists, the arts community is difficult to come across outside of academia, so they wanted to provide a community that was more accessible to young artists.

The Initiative makes it possible for artists to have a sense of community despite COVID-19. It has done well thanks to social media since many artists share their work via social media platforms.

“Don’t let being the only person in whatever room it may be, deter you from trying

something or getting involved in the arts,” Hemsley said. “Just know that there’s always a community out there that is there to support you, Young Artists Initiative being one of them. Even if you don’t have that support or somebody that looks like you on a day-to-day-basis, there are people out there you can look up to. Keep going, it can be hard at times but if it’s something you’re really passionate about, I would tell people to go for it.”

To get involved with the Young Artists Initiative or to learn more information, they can be contacted via their contact page on www.youngartistsinitiative.com or via Instagram @young_artists_initiative.

“FATHERS WISHES” 30×40” Oil on wood by Mariah Green is one of the many works shared with the Young Artists	A piece from Micherlange Hemsley’s “Black is Beautiful” project.	A piece from Micherlange Hemsley’s “Black is Beautiful” project.
---	---	---

Initiative.

< PREVIOUS

NEXT >

More Inmates and Sheriff Department Employees Test Positive for COVID-19

Keeping it Real—Can You Spell Backwards, Forwards

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Leo Cabral

Leo Cabral is a proud first generation Chicanx multimedia journalist working on their associate degree in journalism at Riverside City College. They are a strong advocate for QTBIPOC visibility and rights. Leo is managing editor at Viewpoints, RCC's student operated newspaper, and at Black Voice News and The IE Voice.