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Summer of RESILIENCE: AileyCamp Empowers Local Youth in New York City and Newark During Six-Week Program

Nationwide Program Motivates Middle-School Students through Dance in 10 Cities and Pays Tribute to Life and Legacy of Judith Jamison

(New York, NY) – July 9, 2025 – This summer, [AileyCamp](#) continues to provide a safe space nationwide for youth to discover their unlimited potential through dance. The two local programs opened on July 1 in the Bronx, in collaboration with Children’s Aid Society, and in Newark, with the New Jersey Performing Arts Center and Newark Public Schools. In addition to the 2025 national theme of RESILIENCE, this year’s AileyCamp honors the late Judith Jamison’s commitment and service to AILEY and her dedication to uplifting America’s youth.

Following his vision of “using the power of dance to enrich the lives of children,” Alvin Ailey and The Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey created AileyCamp in 1989, ultimately becoming the last initiative he founded for AILEY. [Now operating in 10 cities nationwide](#), AileyCamp marks over three decades of dedication to youth development across America, providing a safe space for students ages 11-14 to explore their creativity, build leadership and communication skills, and develop a foundation for successful futures (watch program overview video, [here](#)).

Driven by the theme of “RESILIENCE,” the AileyCamp curriculum engages students in daily dance technique classes in Horton-based modern, ballet, jazz, and West African. The Personal Development classes allow students to work on goal-setting and conflict resolution, as well as Creative Communication classes to unleash their creativity in visual arts-based projects, creative writing, and more. With [Daily Affirmations](#) such as, “**I will not use the word can’t to define my possibilities,**” AileyCamp provides youth with the tools they need to thrive throughout their lives.

“It’s always inspiring to visit each camp and witness a new group of campers discover their creativity, gain self-confidence and explore their own voice at AileyCamp, **guided by dedicated instructors,**” said [Nasha Thomas](#), AileyCamp National Director. “**While learning new things, making friends, and having fun, our focus on RESILIENCE will help prepare these young people to overcome the inevitable obstacles on the journey to adulthood.** It is also very meaningful to celebrate the legacy of the late Judith Jamison who inspired us to be our best selves and embrace Mr. Ailey’s belief that dance is for everyone.”

The dedicated instructors and staff are positive role models who nurture campers’ creativity within an atmosphere of warmth, respect, and trust, allowing them to express themselves and build self-confidence. Damazi Williams continues to serve as the Children’s Aid/AileyCamp New York Director for over 10 years and personally experienced how life-changing the arts can be. In 1980, Mr. Williams’s was offered the opportunity to begin training at AILEY, leading to his dance career. The AileyCamp community strengthens each year, as alumni return to the program in leadership roles, helping to guide their young peers.

Each AileyCamp culminates with a special performance for family, friends, and community leaders where campers showcase their hard work over the last six weeks. In addition to performing original productions of choreographed dances, poetry readings and theatrical improvisations, the students will open their performances with an excerpt of [the Emmy Award-winning Hymn](#), choreographed by Judith Jamison. *Hymn* was created in 1993 as tribute to the late **Alvin Ailey** using explosive ensemble dances and quiet solos to dramatize Mr. Ailey’s humanity and the dancers’ unique qualities. AileyCamp honors not only Alvin Ailey, but also Judith Jamison and their teamwork devoting their mission towards the organization. **To commemorate the metro area youth’s transformations and accomplishments, AileyCamp Newark’s final performance will be on Wednesday, August 6 at New Jersey Performing Arts Center and Children’s Aid/AileyCamp New York on Monday, August 11 at 7pm at Hostos Community College.**

The AileyCamp experience extends beyond the summer sessions, with reunions and special activities, including witnessing a performance by Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater during the annual season in New York City, on December 3, 2025-January 4, 2026, which features four AileyCamp alumni who were introduced to dance through the program: [Christopher Taylor](#) (Newark), a participant of the inaugural AileyCamp Newark, continued to study on scholarship at The Ailey School and danced with Ailey II before joining the Company; Taylor, alongside [Solomon Dumas](#) (Chicago), the first former AileyCamper to join the troupe; [De'Anthony Vaughan](#) (Kansas City, MO), also an Ailey School scholarship student; and [Sebastian Garcia](#) (New York), who joined the Company in 2025, all proudly share the stage with similar dance journeys. Although AileyCamp is not meant to be a training ground for professional dancers, some students are awarded scholarships to further study at The Ailey School or pursue training at other accredited dance schools and have later performed with professional dance companies.

"I am trying to show the world we are all human beings, that color is not important, that what is important is the quality of our work, of a culture in which the young are not afraid to take chances and can hold onto their values and self-esteem, especially in the arts and in dance. That's what it's all about to me." – Alvin Ailey.

PRESS: Upon request, media interviews and coverage opportunities may be arranged to highlight AileyCamp during its six-week program, including final performances. Click here for [photos](#) and [videos](#). For additional information, please visit pressroom.alvinailey.org.

Upcoming Local AileyCamp Important Dates:

July 15, 2025 – AileyCamp New York Site Visit (Children's Aid Society)

July 22, 2025 – AileyCamp Newark Site Visit (Newark Arts High School)

August 4, 2025 – AileyCamp Baltimore, New York, and Newark students visit the Ailey Studios in NYC

August 6, 2025 – AileyCamp Newark Final Performance (NJ PAC)

August 11, 2025 – AileyCamp New York Final Performance (Hostos Community College)

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AileyCamp Newark is administered in collaboration with Newark Board of Education and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center.

About Ailey Arts In Education & Community Programs

Since 1992, Ailey Arts In Education & Community Programs has been committed to bringing dance into homes, classrooms, and communities across the country to positively impact people of all ages through the power of dance. In addition to AileyCamp, a summer day camp for youth, in-person and remote programs include lecture demonstrations, technique classes, innovative curriculum-based residencies inspired by *Revelations* and *Night Creature*, and AileyDance for Active Aging, a program that serves as an outlet for artistic expression and fosters a sense of joy. For more, visit ailey.org/community.

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