



Wichita Griots: Keepers of the Stories
Annual Report to NABS 2018

The Wichita Griots: Keepers of the Stories, Presents programs throughout the year at many organizations, locations and events.

1) **Tellabration™** an International Celebration, that allows storytellers across the nation to share storytelling on the same day. African history, culture, values, and a good academic education is shared.

2) The annual **Kwanzaa Celebration** brings the community together to learn about the seven principles of Kwanzaa which are: Unity, Self-determination, Collective work and responsibility, Collective Economics, Purpose, Creativity, and Faith.

3) Arts Partners / USD 259 Elementary & School Presentations

Working through Arts Partners, Wichita Griots offers a variety of presentations for grade levels K through 12. These presentations integrate storytelling, dancing, drumming, singing, theater, and visual arts into each classroom visit or all-school presentation. These presentations bring prominent historical characters to life, while promoting Social and Emotional Development for Standards. African Folktales, Family Stories, and fun learning through Spooky and Hair Raising Tales at this time of the year, inspires and engage students.

WG strives to expose students to the art of storytelling in a community where arts programs are non-existent in public schools. Through WG's unique form of drawing students in through cultural forms of dancing, drumming, singing, crafting, and storytelling, they are learning without realizing it. Using these art forms engages the youth and makes learning fun, while creating a safe, comfortable environment for the students.

Since its inception in 1998, WG has transformed the lives of thousands of students in the Wichita, community. WG presents quality cultural, educational, and thought-provoking programs, to enrich the lives of all ages and diverse backgrounds. WG is also dedicated to the belief that the arts can play an important role in building understanding about inequities, shedding light on social injustice, helping to build a more expansive and inclusive societal mind set, while inspiring young people and their families to reject the current status quo and strive for more equitable change.

As WG visits schools and community organizations in Wichita, the invitation is extended to participate in the Cultural Arts Enrichment Camp. Students can pre-register for Camp beginning in March each year. The camp will be held in July at Urban Preparatory Academy (UPA).

Students, ranging from six to 16 years of age, attend sessions from 9am to 5pm daily, with a Stage Production Grand Finale on the final day.

Griots Cultural Arts Enrichment Camp students experience art, storytelling, music, poetry, writing, crafting, drama, and drumming. Students are given opportunities to read, write, create, produce, and perform. Sessions are set up in classrooms throughout UPA and students make the rounds to each of the sessions throughout the day. Each session provides a mentor/instructor to work with the students and the results are wonderful. Groups of students learn to sing songs, play instruments, paint on rocks and canvas, write poetry, and tell stories. Storytelling is used in daily lessons and activities to reinforce character traits such as respect, responsibility, integrity, caring, self-discipline, and self-reliance. Civic leaders and volunteers from the community often attend the summer camp to share their personal stories and demonstrate a moral or lesson as self-awareness, personal development, and core principles. The Catalyst for all these goals are storytelling.

This time of learning comes together on the final night of Camp when all participate in the Grand Finale production. This is the time when students shine and share their newly learned skills with parents and the community. This production includes skits based on current events, topics of politics, racism, diversity, and bullying. All are portrayed by the students reading poetry, singing, dancing, drumming, storytelling, creation of set designs, and the use of technology and projections.

Leja Bulela, Inc. Congolese-American partnered with WG for its 25th annual Conference which was held at WSU for an evening of Luba Folk Tales presented by Wichita Griots...

WG Celebrates (20) twenty years of being a Storytelling Organization in Wichita, Ks in 2018, and will officially Celebrate The occasion at our new Advanced Learning Library in March 2019 during Spring.

Griots have added (2) two new members since NABS Conference was held in Wichita, Ks in 2017.