



Nebraska ARTS COUNCIL

1004 Farnam Street

Plaza Level

Omaha, NE 68102

402.595.2122 fax 402.595.2334

www.nebraskartscouncil.org

January 18, 2012

National Arts & Humanities Youth Program Awards
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 526,
Washington, DC 20506

RE: African Culture Connection Nomination

Dear Colleagues


I am writing in support of African Cultural Connection's application for a Youth Program Award. Its founder, Charles Ahovissi, to my mind is the perfect embodiment of how America is constantly enriched and refreshed by its newest citizens.

African Culture Connection (ACC) began its association with the Nebraska Arts Council almost a decade ago when Charles inquired of our agency how he could share the dance and music of his native Benin with the children and adults of Nebraska. The success of his early school residencies supported through our Artist in Schools/Communities program has rapidly evolved into a sophisticated structure of extended contact with after school programs sponsored local social service organizations and the Omaha Public Schools.

In a short period of time, Charles has earned his citizenship and African Culture Connection has incorporated to fulfill a business model dedicated to providing cultural understanding through the arts of sub Saharan Africa. His passion for education, genuine love of people, skilled practice of cultural art forms and drive to take advantage of opportunities available to him is a testament to the work he has invested in becoming an effective teacher.

Charles has proven that through the extensive sequential activities in dance, drumming, costuming and storytelling children of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds benefit. As one leader observed, "The active learning is the best way to learn and understand content that can be convoluted with misinterpretation and misinformation." We in Nebraska feel very fortunate that African Culture Connection has become part of our cultural fabric.

Best regards,



Suzanne Wise
Executive Director

Dave Heineman, Governor

Julie Jacobson, Chair

Suzanne Wise, Executive Director