

Where academics and the arts meet

Written by Alysha "AP" Price



Imagine a place where children are given a platform to openly share their talents, where they are encouraged to be creative and where they are supported in being individuals.

Does that sound too good to be true? Well this place actually exists ... it's called FAIR Crystal (Fine Arts Interdisciplinary Resource School). The school is committed to arts education and to giving students the opportunity to actively engage in culturally relevant student-centered curricula.

Although students of FAIR Crystal are delivered an ideal balance of academics and arts they are stimulated in ways that inspire individual talent. So what's a school to do with over 500 talented students? They have a talent showcase, of course.

This year's talent showcase included 23 acts, including pianist eloquently mimicking Mozart, singers who "Adorn-ed" the audience, as well as a monologue for the theater lovers. However, the last performance of the night brought the house down. The Swagg 1000z (pronounced thousands), 5th graders, Jasir Johnson and Freddy Husbands brought the entire audience to their feet as they rapped their anthem, "Big Boys Night Out," a song about the simple joys in a young boy's life.

Rapper/producer Wendell Johnson, (Jasir Johnson's father) also known as Win Nevaluze (pronounced Never Lose), who wrote and performed the "Youth Bus" theme song for Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board, described "Big Boys Night Out" as a spontaneous creation.

"What took us no more than 30 minutes to create during a birthday overnight has given the boys a lifetime of memories," said Wendell Johnson.

Jasir Johnson and Husbands were friends prior to their decision to perform in the talent show; however the two say the experience has definitely strengthened their bond. Supporting one another and staying committed to the process won the duo 1st place in the FAIR Crystal talent showcase.

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FAIR, a kindergarten – 12th grade fine arts interdisciplinary resource community, has a stated goal of being committed to equity and excellence for all students, eliminating disparities in achievement and opportunity, and preparing all learners to thrive in a diverse world.