

LoveWorks Academy Drum and Drill Team in motion

Written by By the West Broadway Coalition
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Watching LoveWorks Academy's In Motion Drill and Dance Team and TKO Drum Line perform is awe-inspiring.

You ask yourself, "How do they do it?" You say, "They're so young, yet they perform so well, they don't make any mistakes. How do they do it?"

The answer, of course, is practice, enthusiasm, and a dedicated coach and parent directors.

Those of us lucky enough to catch the group at FLOW Northside Arts Crawl saw firsthand how skilled the young dancers and percussionists are, as well as how much they enjoy doing what they do.

The LoveWorks TKO Drumline and In Motion Drill Team was started in 2010 when Arthur C. Turner, III became the music teacher at the LoveWorks Academy for Visual and performing Arts, a kindergarten through eighth grade charter school in Golden Valley. One of Turner's goals as a new teacher was to offer quality afterschool activities to students in the community. Turner, who is originally from Norfolk, Va., first came to Minnesota to pursue his Masters in Educational Leadership at Minnesota State University – Mankato. A drummer during high school and college in the Southeast, a region famous for its drum and drill tradition, Turner has served as a percussion fundamentals consultant for various high school band programs across the east coast.

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After less than two years, the TKO Drumline and In Motion Drill Team has 35 members ranging from the 3rd to 9th grades, and they're looking to add more children from the Northside to their roster.

Byron Hawkins, a drummer in North Minneapolis, is now a director of the team and has been with Turner since the start of the program. Hawkins' son, Ja-ron Ross-Hawkins, is an original member. As the elder Hawkins said, "Drumming is in the family." After one year playing the cymbals, Ja-ron Hawkins has moved on to the bass drum and, according to his father, can read music "almost as well as me." Ja-ron Hawkins is 11 years old.

The drum-line and drill team offers kids an incredibly fun, ongoing afterschool activity that is also good exercise. Students have the opportunity to be part of a tight-knit community led by dedicated adults. But more than just a fun way for kids to pass time after school, it's a learning process.

"We're teaching something we didn't get taught to prepare us for college." said Byron Hawkins. "We've got 3rd graders reading music at a high school level; the dancers learn more than one genre of dance. We're teaching a craft inside and out, preparing them to step over to a high school and college band."



Earlier this summer, the team competed at two major national dance competition held at the Minneapolis Convention Center. In both occasions, they represented one of the only

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predominantly African-American groups out of over 500 teams. LoveWorks' team placed very well and took platinum awards for presentation and performance.

In April, the group made a trip to Virginia for the Mideastern Drum Competition and Battle of the Bands, where it competed against eight high schools. As a middle school team, In Motion Drill Team and TKO Drumline was proud to be ranked fifth place out of nine.

Though the team has been composed of just LoveWorks students or alumni for the past two years, the team is looking to expand its numbers, and will hold open tryouts in late September. Tryouts are open to all Northside and area children in grades 3-8. No prior experience is necessary; just the desire to work hard. The team practices for three hours a day, three times a week during the school year.

To learn more and keep informed about tryouts, contact Arthur Turner at 757.553.2164 or online at www.lovetheacademy.org . You can also check out videos of the team performing on YouTube.