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## **Access Arts scholarship program soon open to applicants**

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TAMPA, Fla. – Children who otherwise may never experience the joys of the performing arts will get to participate in performing arts classes and camps, due to the 2010 Access Arts Scholarship program offered by the David A. Straz, Jr. Center for the Performing Arts (formerly Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center). Scholarship applications will be accepted January 5 through March 2, 2010.

For Tampa's underserved children, Access Arts provides scholarships and program funds for a wide variety of performing arts education opportunities available at the Straz Center's Patel Conservatory.

Through the Conservatory's many school, community and agency partnerships, children in grades one through 12 interested in learning about the performing arts will be identified and interviewed. They then may be enrolled in age-appropriate classes, camps and workshops to help develop the skills they desire for achieving their dreams, after qualifying through an organization that works with underserved youth.

"These students are so earnest and honest and eager to jump right in. The confidence gained in the interview process is evident in their spirits when they come out of that room. Our panelists are kind and encouraging and want everyone to be brilliant; truly a great experience," said Ami Sallee Corley, a community ambassador.

In addition to providing new and enriching learning experiences for these deserving children throughout Tampa, Access Arts focuses on building bridges of understanding among all the diverse communities in the Tampa area.

"Access Arts gives opportunities to children who otherwise would not get to experience the joys of learning performing arts skills, who would otherwise miss out on the thrill of performing," said Wendy Leigh, vice president of education. "Our proactive scholarship recruiting process aggressively and methodically seeks out students who have had no previous experience in the arts and who may not even know that we are here for them."

While learning performing arts skills at the Patel Conservatory, students' work may evolve into a rehearsal process that leads to a final performance or a student showcase attended by family and friends. Previous performing arts training is not required for entry level programs, and students can progress at a rate that suits their abilities while they achieve the experience required to advance their studies.

Access Arts scholarship applications are available by calling 813.222.6413; more information is available at <http://www.patelconservatory.org>.

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