

African Dancing and Drumming Classes

March 20 and March 27, 2009 - On the last two Fridays of March, students ages 10-16 from Benning Park Recreation Center in Southeast, DC, learned basic dance concepts and movements from the Mandingue Tradition of West Africa. The drumming instructors were Jabari Exum and Malari Moore, members of the group Farafina Kan; the dance instructor was Bintou Kouyate of Memory of African Culture, Inc. Special thanks to Words, Beats, and Life Inc., who co-hosted this workshop, and to our sponsor, the United Black Fund.

Before they began, the youth watched a short video to get a preview on the dance steps that they would be learning. The dance steps were fast but the participants kept up with Ms. Kouyate's lessons. Likewise, the participants quickly caught on to the basic concepts of the drumming rhythms - such as hand-note techniques, drumming group signals, tempo, and group dynamics - taught by Mr. Exum and Mr. Moore using the Djembe percussion orchestra.





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