



Event Schedule

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Hope Academy Teaches Kids to Shine

June 12, 2013 12:51pm by [Emily O'Donnell](#)



Photo provided by the Hope Academy.

The Hope Academy is an outreach program run through East Liberty Presbyterian Church. Established in 1999 as an after-school and weekend arts education outreach program, Hope Academy offers affordable education for the youth of Pittsburgh. The program focuses on underserved communities who would not otherwise have this kind of arts program available. Michael Chapman of the Hope Academy says, "We provide a safe, affirming environment where young people of diverse ethnic, economic and religious backgrounds can further their personal and artistic growth." They can do this through studying, and performing, music and creative arts. This gives them "the opportunity to build self-esteem as they discover hidden skills and talents." The goal of the Academy is to "make the arts more affordable, accessible, and not a matter of privilege."

This year, the Hope Academy will be performing at the Dollar Bank Three Rivers Arts Festival on two different days, with two different performances. On Saturday, June 8th Hope Academy put on a play called "Wiley and the Hairyman." The play is rooted in African folklore and was well

received at the family stage. The full cast and band included twenty-two teenagers, and eight of those kids will also perform this Thursday, June 13 on the Katz Stage as part of the HATCO performers.

HATCO is the Hope Academy Theater Company that teens must audition for. The company is an intensive ensemble and performance based experience for young students. The teens are encouraged to create original work and some of their own work will be performed on Thursday, along with a mix of cover songs. Performing in the Hope Academy Theater Company on Thursday will be vocalists Candace Burgess and Jewel Strothers; Anna Lowe will play guitar and bass, Bonnie Nickle will accompany on the violin, Sam Gardner will play percussion along with Mimi Thomas and Zoe Zielinski, who will also sing.

At Hope Academy, all students are encouraged to shine in a non-competitive environment. The students work together to perform and in doing so, they learn valuable discipline and life skills. Chapman says that at Hope Academy, "we believe that in the process of learning how to do and make art, something mysterious and profoundly beautiful happens — a blossoming that begins when a child has a glimpse of who she or he is meant to be; because it is through the arts we come to know others and ourselves in the fullness of our humanity."

The Hope Academy Theater Company will perform on Thursday, June 13th in Katz Plaza, on the corner of Penn and 7th. They will perform at 5pm and 6pm.

For more information, please visit <http://www.hopeacademyarts.com>



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