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Contact: Lea Pandy
Development & Communications Coordinator
Phone: 215.398.7885
Email: lea@playonphilly.org



Philadelphia Youth Share Their Voices Through Artistic Works at the POP Summer Showcase: Lifting Our Voice

Friday, August 7, 2020, Philadelphia, PA/Online: Students from POP Virtual Summer, a free online summer music program, will share musical, written, and visual artistic works centered around the importance of one's voice in the community at the *POP Summer Showcase: Lifting Our Voice* on August 7th at 5 pm ET. The POP Summer Showcase will feature a reading of poetry created by 1st-4th grade students by master storyteller [Charlotte Blake Alston](#) and POP Virtual Summer students, excerpts of digital self-portraits from the 1st-4th grade students' electronic book *We're Here to Play: The Story of Us*, synesthesia-inspired art created in partnership with [Fresh Artists](#), and the debut of *Nature's Karmic Vengeance*, written by composer, teacher, and former producer-member of Public Enemy, [Kerwin Young](#), in collaboration with our 5th-12th grade students. *POP Summer Showcase: Lifting our Voice* will be hosted online and is free and open to the public by [registering at BigMarker](#). Other artistic collaborators whose work will be featured in the POP Summer Showcase include stop motion artist Rafaela Dreisin and composer and 2021 Sphinx Medal of Excellence recipient, [Carlos Simon](#).

Charlotte Blake Alston led a Creative Writing Workshop at POP Virtual Summer as a precursor to her appearance in the *POP Summer Showcase: Lifting Our Voice* on August 7th. "I loved working with the POP kids!...I wanted to make sure that the virtual platform was as interactive as it could be so the students would be able to participate in discussions and also share their writing aloud. I talked about the importance of 'giving' voice to your words; that the words, phrases, images you craft are similar to playing notes and melodic phrases. With storytelling, your voice is your instrument."

POP Summer Showcase: Lifting Our Voice celebrates and empowers the young voices that are the heart of our community. The Summer Showcase is the culminating performance of Play On Philly's innovative and free online summer camp, POP Virtual Summer, which has been adapted and enhanced from an annual in-person camp in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Throughout the course of POP Virtual Summer, over 120 students from Philadelphia and partner organizations throughout the country, including North Carolina, Ohio and Texas, came together over the course of 4 weeks to explore ways of creatively expressing themselves and their appreciation for music through visual art, creative writing, composition, and performance. *POP Summer Showcase: Lifting Our Voice* highlights the ways our youth use their voices individually and as a community through artistic platforms.

"Over POP Virtual Summer, our students have nurtured their creativity with the support of local musicians, artists, and creators in Philadelphia, as well as across the nation. We are grateful to empower the voice of each and every student through the ecosystem of the arts community at large," says Executive Director & Founder Stanford Thompson. "With the negative effects of isolation alongside the injustices happening within the communities of our youth, it is important now more than ever to provide an artistic platform and build their creative toolbox as they navigate through these experiences. The POP Summer Showcase is an opportunity for our students to express their unique voices with the community."

What: POP Summer Showcase: Lifting Our Voice

When: 5:00 – 5:45 pm ET

Where: <https://www.bigmarker.com/play-on-philly/Summer-Showcase>

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About Play On Philly:

Play On Philly (POP) provides high-quality music education to students, who would typically lack access, as a vehicle for life skills and academic achievement. We provide 2 hours of music instruction and ensemble practice every day after school and over 25 performance opportunities throughout the year. Students range from Kindergarten to 12th grade and are loaned an orchestral instrument at no cost. POP programming has proven results: our students score ten points higher on standardized tests and have improved behavior and study skills. We cultivate musical excellence, lifelong skills, and confidence. **POP Virtual Summer** is presented by Cricket Wireless. Learn more about POP at our new website: www.playonphilly.org.