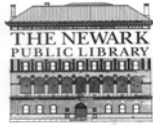


THE NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY
5 WASHINGTON STREET, NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07102



PRESS RELEASE

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Please Contact: Heidi Cramer 973-733-7837

Pam Goldstein, 973-377-0300, ext. 14

Newark Library's Branches Hosts African Dancers

The Newark Public Library's two-month long salute to the history of black dance continues next week at two branch libraries, which will host performances by the Okra Dance Company. The troupe will present *Journey Into Africa*, a performance of songs and dances from Senegal to Soweto, Wednesday, February 23 at 4 p.m. at the Weequahic Branch, 355 Osborne Terrace, and Friday, February 25 at 3:30 p.m. at the Springfield Branch, 50 Hayes Street.

With broad appeal to both children and their families, the Okra Dance Company's performances will feature two dancers, accompanied by a percussionist. Created by the late dancer/choreographer, Phillip Bond, the troupe takes the audience through the evolution of popular American dance from its African roots and European influences to soft shoe, tap, minstrel, and social dancing, culminating with the Broadway and club dances of today.

The programs are part of the Library's 2011 Black History Month celebration, *We Are a Dancing People: The History of Black Dance From Then Until Now*. An exhibit tracing the chronology of black dance from its roots in Africa to some of the most famous dance steps of the last century—the Limbo, Cakewalk, Lindy Hop and Shimmy—through today's pop versions is on view at the Main Library, 5 Washington Street through March 23.

Curated by Sandra L. West, an associate in the Library's James Brown African-American Room, the exhibit is paired with a photographic display, *The Art of Dance*, by photographer/collagist Mansa K. Mussa.

"The rich diversity of the American culture is reflected in the expression of art and dance as it evolved from the African-American to the mainstream community," said Library Director Wilma Grey. "The Newark Public Library's Black History Month's exhibit and its accompanying programs capture the history and richness of black dance."

Funding for the Library's Black History Month activities and exhibits has been provided by a generous grant from the PNC Foundation.

All programs are free and open to the public. For more information or to arrange a tour of the exhibits, please call (973) 733-5411. In case of inclement weather, please call (973) 733-7800 (Main Library), 973-733-7751 (Weequahic Branch) or 973-733-7736 (Springfield Branch) to determine whether the Library is open.