

## **Vivian Ayers Workshops in Open Fields presents Literacy Through the Arts Featuring the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor June 18, 2022**

After two summers of being postponed due to Covid related concerns, Vivian Ayers' Workshops in Open Fields was finally able to get going again this June in a beautiful way. Brainerd Institute Heritage partnered with the Gullah Geechee Heritage Corridor to provide a phenomenal experience to enrich the public on the historic grounds of Brainerd in Chester. The goal of teaching literacy through the arts was superbly accomplished.

When Vivian Ayers started Workshops in Open Fields in Houston, the goal was to have artists and educators "doing what they do best." She instructed her teachers not to require anyone to attend their workshops or prevent them from leaving but simply "get busy doing what you do best." This approach creates a free and "open" environment for students to joyfully engage in the lessons being freely offered. The result is authentic and refreshing enrichment.

Likewise, the Workshops in Open Fields event with Gullah artists powerfully immersed students of all ages into greater enlightenment seemingly effortlessly as the wisdom, beauty, and cultural richness brought by the Gullah Geechee Heritage Corridor graced everyone who attended.

Victoria Smalls, the director of the Gullah Geechee Heritage Corridor, assembled the following world renowned artists and performers

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**GULLAH GEECHEE MURAL PROJECT** With artist Amiri G. Farris ( Mr. Farris was unable to make it due to car trouble but Sancho Smalls did a wonderful job guiding the young scholars in attendance to create a phenomenal mural).

Time:

10AM – 12:30pm

1:30PM – 3:30PM

Description: All day painting activity. Attendees will create a Gullah / Historic Brainerd Institute Mural that will belong to Brainerd and can be displayed in the community.

More Info: <https://amirifarris.com/projects>

**SWEETGRASS SEWING AND BRADING** with Michael Smalls and Dino Badger

Time: Three Sessions

10:00AM- 25 students

11:00AM - 25 students

12:00PM – 25 students

Description: Sweetgrass sewing and braiding workshop- 1 hour. Will take home a creation.

More info: <https://www.gullahbasketsbymichaelsmalls.com/about-us>

**3.) DANCE PERFORMANCE and CLASS** with Family Slide Dancers

Time: Two Sessions

10:30AM-11:15AM

12:15PM-1:00PM

Description: Performance of two dances by Family Slide. Along with two large group dance classes 30 -45 minutes each.

4.) GHANIAN ADINKRA ART ACTIVITY with Layla Love, Gullah Student Ambassador , Angel Parson, Gullah Geechee Corridor Staff

Times: Three Sessions:

10:15AM-10:45AM

11:00AM-11:30PM

12:00PM-12:30PM

Description: Three sessions. Learning about Adinkra symbols and take-home art activity.

5.) PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP with Sancho Smalls

Time: Two Sessions

10:30AM-11:15AM

12:15PM-1:00PM

Description: Small group photography workshops to document the day.

One photo from each student will be gifted to the Brainerd Institute.

More information: <https://sanchosmalls.com/about-contact>

6.) GULLAH STORYTELLING AND HISTORY INTERACTIVE PERFORMANCE

With: Aunt Pearlíe Sue and the Gullah Traveling Theater

Time: 1:00PM

Description: Gullah history and culture interactive performance

More information: [https://www.gullahkinfolktravelingtheater.org/...](https://www.gullahkinfolktravelingtheater.org/)

7.) MUSICAL PERFORMANCE and WORKSHOP with Responsible Artistry

Mahoganèè Amiger -Vocalist and Andre Amiger- Sound Engineer

Times: 1:00 PM

Description: One vocal performance. One large group vocal workshop.

More information: <https://mahoganee.com/educator...>

8.) STORY TELLING PEROFRMANCE with Natalie Daise - formerly of Gullah Gullah Island, Nickelodeon TV

Times: 2:00pm

Description: Storytelling interactive performance

More information:

<https://nataliedaise.com/natalie-in-the-press/>

9.) GULLAH GEECHEE RING SHOUT Performance and Audience Participation with Geechee Gullah Ring Shouters

Time: 3:00 pm

Description: Sacred Gullah Worship Ceremony

More Information: <https://www.youtube.com/results...>

Thank you to everyone who contributed, participated, and created a most Beautiful Day to be remembered. The voices, art, performances, and Spirits of the artists from the Gullah Geechee Heritage Cultural Corridor rang out "True, Beautiful, and Free" under the majestic trees, over the green fields, and through the summer air at Brainerd. Thank you Chester and to every person that supported in person or in spirit; you are greatly appreciated and hope you left enriched. God indeed Blessed June 18, 2022.

More related media articles from the event: <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/south-carolina/articles/2022-06-26/workshop-in-chester-aims-to-remember-gullah-geechee-culture>

[https://www.pmg-sc.com/the\\_news\\_and\\_reporter/gullah-geechee-a-people-a-culture-a-way-of-life-west-african-descended-culture-celebrated/article\\_892d759f-cb58-5419-b094-46bd0b748f62.html](https://www.pmg-sc.com/the_news_and_reporter/gullah-geechee-a-people-a-culture-a-way-of-life-west-african-descended-culture-celebrated/article_892d759f-cb58-5419-b094-46bd0b748f62.html)