

# Kids Creative uses the arts to teach peace education



Kids Creative, through its art-based school workshops and summer camp, instills an important lesson of peace and collaboration while showing kids a good time.

**K**ids Creative (KC) started as a summer camp for 12 kids in a Manhattan studio apartment in 2000. The two-week workshop was based on creating and performing a play. Since then, founding brothers, Stephen and Adam Jacobs have expanded their workshops to schools and other spaces including a summer camp. They have worked with thousands of students in grades pre-K through 12 and produced over 100 original musicals.

The Jacobs, also members of the Dirty Sock Funtime Band, an adult band that plays for children all over the world, turned Kids Creative into a non-profit in 2004. The initiative has further evolved into what they describe as an arts-based, peace education programs for students through after school programs, summer camps and workshops. Kids Creative currently employs three full-time and 50 part-time teaching staff.

"Our idea of peace is a community where everyone is encouraged to collaborate, be creative and self-confident enough to resolve conflicts and eat lots of healthy, delicious cookies!" the brothers enthuse.

Sound like fun? Hakim Mohandas Amani Williams, a board member of Kids Creative since 2007, certainly thinks so. Williams, a doctoral candidate at Columbia University, studying International Educational Development with a focus on peace education, met Adam Jacobs in the program.

"I discovered that Adam had this wonderful organization premised on what I was studying. It was a delightful opportunity for me. I relish it," says Williams. As chair of board recruitment, Williams helps with fund raising and attends events to find other board members "who would be the right fit for a non-profit that believes in peace building."

"We are a small organization and we continue to grow. We believe that every kid can benefit from our programs," he says, explaining that over 50 percent of the hundreds of NYC kids that attend their summer camps have received scholarships.

"I grew up in Trinidad and left when I was 18," Williams remarks. "I was raised in a poor community, but my mom was always giving back. I ardently believe that you have to give back. So when Adam asked, I said 'absolutely.' I didn't think twice."

Adam notes, "Hakim gives off a sense of justice. I is at the forefront of everything he does. The organization has gained quite a bit from his involvement with everything from recruiting students and interns to finding staff. He also has a background in working at after school programs and serves as a great advisor to us. And lastly, he's fun to be around."

"My involvement is personal. I believe in Adam and what he is doing. I see the wonderful work the kids have done. Adam works his tail off and has made many personal sacrifices to keep this afloat. I find that admirable," says Williams.

"Peace education is the crux of my doctoral studies. It's not a career for me, but rather a life's calling. Kids Creative actually lives out my life's calling, day in and day out. KC inspires our future leaders to be peacemakers, while having fun at it."

For more information, call (646) 485-5123 or visit [www.kidscreative.org](http://www.kidscreative.org).

— Holly Reich

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