

Baha'i Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program (JYSEP)

Arts Empowerment



Oscar DeGruy, a youth advocate with over 40 years experience as an actor, public speaker, workshop creator, facilitator and mentor, has been invited by the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Las Vegas to offer Arts Empowerment to support the JYSEP programs in our cluster. Oscar utilizes performing arts to boost youth self-esteem, encourage self-discipline and increase social awareness. His techniques will also support the Animators/Teachers who work with youth, as well as inspire expression and transformation in the areas of race and ethnicity, gender inequality, violence and substance abuse.



"The use of the arts became an important feature in the proclamation, teaching, deepening and devotional activities of the worldwide community. The arts attracted young people, who applied them to their teaching and deepening activities principally through the numerous drama and dance workshops active in many parts of the world. But the dynamics of the arts went far beyond singing and dancing to involve a range of imaginative activities that grounded people in the Cause." (Universal House of Justice - Ridvan Message 2000)



"At the outset of every endeavour, it is incumbent to look to the end of it. Of all the arts and sciences, set the children to studying those which will result in advantage to man, will ensure his progress and elevate his rank." (Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 168)

How it works.



JY AND YOUTH SCHEDULE

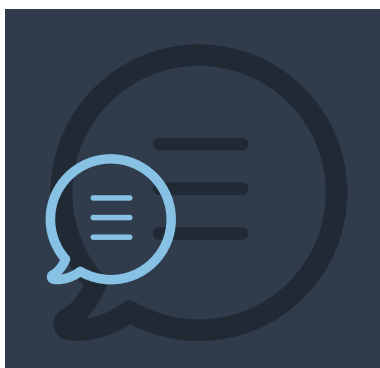
Ruhi Book 5 Animator Training (In-person or zoom TBD)	Maximum Number: 20	Weekly on Saturday April 9	Schedule: 10am to 12pm
Arts Empowerment for JYSEP, Youth and Adults OSCAR DEGRUY	Maximum number: 40	Weekly on Saturday April 9	Schedule: 12pm to 4pm

12PM FOR LUNCH: The day will start with lunch. This is an important activity for bonding and making friends.

ARTS EMPOWERMENT: The arts empowerment will be a 3 hour process including theatre games, performance, spoken word, dance and presentation skills. For older youth and adults, there also be an opportunity for Oscar to

provide insight and understanding about why he does, what he does when working with young people.

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED: Every participant will be asked to complete a registration form for the Arts Empowerment session. Any youth or adult over 18 may enroll.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

- **Mr. DeGruy is Fully Vaccinated**
- **Mr. DeGruy would welcome any teachers or animators.**
- **Participating youth must be no younger than 11 years of age.**
- **Youth must be able to manage themselves and cooperate with adult requests in order to participate.**
- **The Baha'i Center regulations for COVID at the time of the event will be observed.**

SCHEDULE FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS

Welcome, Fireside, Devotional, and Overview for Oscar DeGruy	Maximum number:	Weekly on Saturday April 9	Schedule: 7:00p
Deepening on "The Eternal Quest for God"	Maximum Number: 90	Weekly on Sunday: April 10	Schedule: 2:00p to 4:00p
Devotional / Fireside for Seekers	Maximum number: 90	Weekly on Starting: TBD	Schedule: TBD
Ruhi Book 1 Study Circle	Maximum Number: 20	Weekly on Sunday: TBD	Schedule: 11:00a to 1:00p

NOTE TO LSA FOR CONSULTATION: The date on the April 2 is the date I propose because it's the first weekend Oscar is here. The other dates are open because I know we are also going to be planning the Conference for our area.

ARTS EMPOWERMENT REGISTRATION

Please provide all of the information requested.

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED: Every participant will be asked to complete a registration form, whether junior youth, youth and adult.

Arts Empowerment will be a 3 hour session, once a week on Saturday, unless there is a schedule change requiring the use of the Center at that time (i.e. feast, holy day, funeral, wedding or conference), held at:

**The Las Vegas Baha'i Center
7035 West Oakey Blvd.
Las Vegas, NV 89117 (800) 228-6483**

Arts Empowerment includes theatre games, performance, spoken word, dance and presentation skills. For older youth and adults, there also be an opportunity for Oscar to provide insight and understanding about why he does, what he does when working with young people. **(Write NA in the spaces below if you are not a Junior Youth.)**

I am the parent/guardian of _____

Print JY's Name Here

JY's Birthdate: _____

I have read the information about the Arts Empowerment give permission for my child to participate in this education. I understand that this material was developed over the past 40 years by the Oscar DeGruy for the purpose of teaching young people how to use the arts to portray the Bahá'í principles of equality, racial harmony and the unity of religions.

(CHECK ONE)

☐ I AM A PARENT ☐ I AM A YOUTH (16 - 21) ☐ I AM AN ADULT

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ **Email:** _____

Address: _____

The emergency Contact Person: _____

Child/Adult Allergies, (Food / Other): _____

Medical Conditions: _____

☐ I permit ☐ I do not permit photos of my son/daughter to be published to promote the Arts Empowerment.

☐ I permit ☐ I do not permit my son/daughter to walk home.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN

DATE

What happens?

**Team
Building**

**Performing
Arts**

**Recreation
Activity**

“ This Arts Empowerment activity will enhance the JY’s power of expression, sharpening their spiritual perception and allowing them to analyse the constructive and destructive forces of society. ”

The primary focus is on junior youth between the ages of 11 and 15. This is a crucial period of a junior youth’s life as their consciousness is expanding and, day by day, they are becoming increasingly exposed to the forces of society.

Older youth are invited to participate in the arts empowerment activities as well as participating in a Ruhi Book 5 intensive to become an “Animator”. The role of an Animator is to assist the junior youth in developing their capacities, encouraging them to contribute to the betterment of society as well as encouraging them to question the world around them. Most importantly, an Animator must strive to become a true friend to the junior youth.

Adults, particularly Teachers who want to learn performing arts tools to use with your education programs are welcome to join. Oscar will have special insight into the why’s and how’s of working with youth, and give you valuable insight you may use in your own creative ways.

QUESTIONS: Contact Martine Hubbard | 909-997-8265 | martine.hubbard@gmail.com





More about Oscar DeGruy

Oscar DeGruy is a professional actor and in his early acting career he is known for his role as a regular on The New Bill Cosby Show for the 1972 -73 season. He appeared in shows as diverse as Room 222 to Hill Street Blues. His first role was on The Young Lawyers in 1970 and in 2008 he completed work as a supporting actor in Zero Option based on a true story.

Ever Wonder What Happened to “Mad Dog” on “Good Times”

In Good Times in 1974 DeGruy was featured in a two-part episode “JJ and the Gang”. JJ is forced into a gang led by Mad Dog (DeGruy) who wounds JJ. After the trial Mad Dog is confronted by his mother who confesses “I never thought I could feel this way about my child, but I hate you” and the two exchange emotional arguments over the missing husband/father. JJ’s father, James, ultimately feels sympathy for Mad Dog witnessing the family argument over the absent father.



The Baha’i Youth Workshop

A former member of the Black Panthers, Oscar DeGruy changed his approach to racism issues and “had to do something” - so in the late 1970s he and his wife combined performing theatre arts with step dance and street dancing to portray the Bahá’í principles of equality, racial harmony and the unity of religions.

This approach to performing arts and social responsibility transformed and inspired youth around the country and around the world to contribute to the betterment of society.

In 1995 there were over 100 Workshops in the United States, and another 100 scattered across 50 other countries.



Over 1000 such Workshops have formed over the years, some of which have toured internationally and still exist today.