

COMING UP TALLER: TEN YEARS OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF YOUTH



Since 1998, the Coming Up Taller Awards have recognized and supported outstanding community arts and humanities programs that celebrate the creativity of America's young people, provide them learning opportunities and chances to contribute to their communities. These awards focus national attention on exemplary programs currently fostering the creative and intellectual development of America's children and youth through education and practical experience in the arts and the humanities.

What follows are highlights and remarks on the effect of this program, not only in championing the work of the organizations honored, but also on the lives of the young people participating in the program.

"In a world where all too often the creative possibilities of our children are stifled by violence, abuse, and anger, these after school and summer arts programs provide safe havens where caring adults help young people to explore and discover who they are and what they want to become."

--Bill Ivey, NEA Chairman remarks on the 1999 Coming Up Taller Awards



Coming Up Taller Recipients:
Gallup Performing Arts Academy
(left) 1998 and New Orleans's Ya-
Ya 1999 (right).



"I've worked in youth development for 25 years, and I've noticed over and over again that outstanding programs are those that are arts-based, or integrate the arts into their work in significant ways. Because arts-based programs are so often exceptional, but are so often overlooked, I think it is very important for a program like Coming Up Taller to recognize and promote the best work in this area."

*-- Keith Hefner, Youth Communication, NYC
2000 Coming Up Taller Award winner*



Coming Up Taller Recipients:
People's Light Theatre
Company (2000) and the
Nevada Humanities Young
Chautauquans (2001)



“Coming Up Taller has been extremely helpful to us in gaining attention to the work we are doing. It is one thing to offer programs and believe they are important. It is another thing entirely to be able to point to proof of national recognition for work we are doing.”

--Victor Swenson, Vermont Council on the Humanities



Coming Up Taller Recipients:
Brooklyn Children's Museum
Team Afterschool Program
(2002) and the Saint Joseph
Ballet (2003)



“Each of you is a custodian of the human spirit. Your determination, celebration and insistence on doing the right thing has now literally been recognized by the United States of America. It is your belief in the power of sunlight, and often times caring for the least among us, that is what this country is all about. It is my hope that because of this recognition you feel a renewed spirit and energy to carry your work forward against sometimes difficult odds.”

*--William E. Strickland, Jr., Member,
President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities,
2002 Coming Up Taller Awards Ceremony*



Since 2002, Mexican youth programs such as the 2004 Coming Up Taller recipient The Programa de Atención a Grupos Vulnerables have been congratulated by Mrs. Laura Bush.

"I have carried photography with me for the past six years. It has made me into an entrepreneur, a businessman, a worthy student, and a role model for younger students to follow the same way. I have evolved from a 10-year old photographer to a 16-year-old artist."

*--Joseph Gilmore, 16, Participant
ICP at the Point, 2005 Coming Up Taller Honoree*



Coming Up Taller
Recipients: Delaware's
Cathedral Choir
(2005) performing at
the White House and
Teatro de Rosa
(2006).



"Shakespeare once said, "We know what we are, but we know not what we may become." After-school programs provide opportunities for young people to express their creativity and experience new and exciting adventures. For a decade, Coming Up Taller has recognized the nation's exemplary after-school and out-of-school cultural programs."

*-- Mrs. Laura Bush,
Honorary Chairman
President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities*