

**Proactive Parents to Shake Rattle & Roll
Bedford Library for Twelve Weeks,
Starting Feb. 28; Public Invited**

By Yoidette Erima

Parents As Primary Teachers, Inc. will kick-off *Shake, Rattle & Roll*, 12-weeks of free, lively, hands-on percussion workshops for children of all ages and their families at the Bedford Branch of the Brooklyn Public Library on Wednesday, February 28 at 6pm. Ninety-minute weekly sessions will run from 1:30 to 3pm on Thursdays as of March 8th at the Bedford Library, located at 496 Franklin Avenue between Fulton and Hancock streets in Brooklyn, New York.

In the program, neighborhood families will unite with Brooklyn-based musicians and veteran educators for compelling storytelling; followed by dazzling hands-on music lessons - using instruments from Africa, the Caribbean, the Americas, and Asia. Children will be inspired to create their own instruments and compose rhythm patterns. Specific library books and materials will be highlighted each week to complement the program and highlight its relationship to other academic subject areas. Then, families will be empowered with training and NYS Performance Standards-based curriculum guides that enhance their learning experience and extend the fun.

Shake, Rattle, & Roll aims to teach children of one-income families how to play percussion instruments. Parents As Primary Teachers, Inc. organized this music program because of the expressed desire of home-schooling and stay-at-home parents to have their children learn how to play music despite these families' limited financial means. This particular design that mixes children of all ages, including infants and toddlers, was inspired by a percussion workshop at the Clinton Hill branch of the Brooklyn Public Library. The percussionist, Shawn Banks, was so effective at introducing the children and parents to the various instruments as well as their backgrounds that I and several other parents immediately approached him to conduct the Shake, Rattle, and Roll music classes.

"More music programs for families and children in the community, like *Shake, Rattle, and Roll* should be made available," says Banks. "They are vital in increasing awareness and introducing music, culture, and instruments not commonly seen in the boroughs. It also shows the diversity and vast variety of talents within our community."

This writer can recall the heartbreak when music programs were drastically reduced from the public school system – just when it was finally my turn to take part. I remember my excitement on my way to the school's music room; I was eager to find out why people often said I had *piano players' hands*. On the day we chose our instruments, the piano was not an option, so instead I selected the clarinet. That was the first and last time I entered the school's music room. Within a week, everything disappeared: the instruments, the teacher, even the sign marking it the music room.

Parents As Primary Teachers, Inc. firmly believes in maximizing children's ability to explore, nurturing their interests, and promoting higher level thinking skills. The exploration of oneself and the world as well as the inventiveness that cultivates critical thinking are severely

limited without arts education. Music education, in particular, has been cited by several respected sources to be correlated with greater thinking capacity and overall academic excellence.

While I may not be able to effectively teach my children how to play music on my own, we home-schooling and stay-at-home parents sought a way that we might use our resourcefulness to give our children a quality music experience. By creating *Shake, Rattle, and Roll*, we are providing our children with vital music education. *Shake, Rattle and Roll* has stirred up an overwhelming response from enthusiastic parents that are grateful for the unlikely opportunity to expose their children to the spectrum of percussion instruments and forms of music that they can play. With less than a month before the program begins, we are already overbooked and looking forward to offering the program annually. Reservation records currently show most interest from the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Crown Heights, Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, Park Slope, Boerum Hill, Prospect Heights, Flatbush, Brownsville, and Canarsie.

“I was ecstatic to learn of the possibility of a program like this in the community,” says Olugbemisola Amusashonubi-Perkovich, a homeschooling mother of 3 year-old, Adedayo.

“We attended a brief workshop with Shawn Banks at the public library last year, and it was fantastic and accessible to people of all ages. My daughter still talks about what ‘Mr. Banks’ showed us, and remembers the names of some of the different percussion instruments that we handled and played. We found opportunities to reinforce what was learned, with library books and media resources, which is always a plus.”

Parents As Primary Teachers, Inc. strongly believes in eliminating educational inequality. We believe that programs like *Shake, Rattle, and Roll* will impact public and private educational institutions in the United States by providing an effective external model. “I’m a big fan of *Shake, Rattle & Roll* because it promotes the family structure and supports our local cultural institutions,” says NYS Assemblywoman Annette M. Robinson. “I’ve been married for over 40 years; I’m a mother of six and a grandmother of eleven. I know what it is to be a primary teacher.”

As the home-schooling population is growing at a faster rate than the public school population and home-schooled children are showing a pattern of excellence, educational institutions are already increasing their examination of home-schooling practices which will influence change in national education policies. As a result, the success of programs like *Shake, Rattle, and Roll* will improve the likelihood of restoring music into public schools’ core instruction.

“Independence Community Foundation is proud to support educational initiatives where educators, families, and communities work together,” says Small Grants Administrator Diane John. “We are particularly excited about the efforts of Parents as Primary Teachers and their program at the Bedford Library where parents and their children are creating instruments and making music together. Congratulations on this important and fun work.”

For more information, please, email parentsasprimaryteachers@gmail.com or call 718-857-8487.