

# A W O L A L L W A L K S O F L I F E , I N C .

P.O. Box 15846, Savannah, Georgia 31416 ☎ Phone: 912.303.4987 ☎ Fax: 912.525.3160 ☎ Web: [www.awolinc.org](http://www.awolinc.org)



# PARTICIPANT & PARENT HANDBOOK

**INCLUDES:**

Registration/Referral Form  
Release of Information Form  
Confidential Financial Assistance Application  
Income Verification Form  
Transportation Liability Form  
Program Participation Form

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## About AWOL

AWOL All Walks of Life, Inc. is the only federally recognized spoken word poetry and hip-hop based youth development program in Chatham County. Our mission is to promote and provide self-awareness through the use of Poetry, Hip-Hop and Life. This mission is met by providing youth with Arts and Technology training in the fields of Theater & Performing Arts, Film making, Sound design and Technology Training Center. AWOL programs encourage respect, creativity, education and most of all non-violence.



## Program Structure

AWOL is a school year based program providing after school programming from September 15-June 15.

## Program Availability

Program slots are limited to 120 youth ages 7-18 years of age and college age youth ages 19-22 within the following program categories

Program	Age Range	# Slots
Theater & Performing Arts (TP1)	All Ages	65
Advanced Theater & Performing Arts <small>*Must have already completed TP1</small>	All Ages	25
Sound Design	12+	15
Film Making	12+	15
Technology Training	14+	20

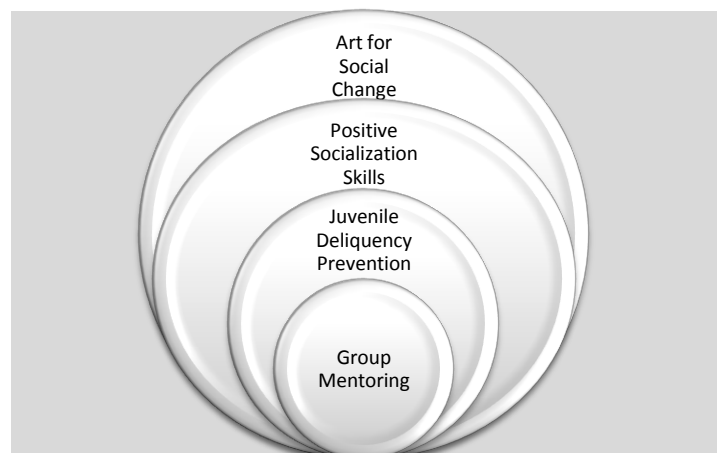
## Not just you're Regular Afterschool Program

AWOL prides itself as not being just your "average" after school program. As a part of your child's participation AWOL program staff utilizes an array of supportive staff that not only serves as facilitators, but as mentors to enrolled youth. Each youth enrolled will be monitored closely in three major categories: School Performance, Home Life, and Community.

**School Performance**  
 Educational Attainment  
 Behavior at School  
 (Suspensions, Expulsions)  
 School Attendance

**Home Life**  
 Behavior at Home

**Community**  
 Juvenile Crime Prevention  
 Truancy



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## **Targeted Conditions:**

**Youth from all walks of life are welcomed into AWOL programs.** While some of our youth come from at-risk conditions, this is not a requirement for program participation. **Some of our youth may be experiencing the following risk categories.**

- A destructive or non-existent home life.
- Past victims of abuse.
- Poverty.
- Gang affiliation.
- Drug abuse.
- Underperforming schools or school drop outs.
- Racial/territorial tensions from the environment.
- Peer pressure and family pressures to participate in illegal or irresponsible activities.
- Low self-esteem and no positive identity.
- No sense of belonging outside of negative groups such as gangs.
- No sense of achievement in positive areas.

## **Program Overview**

### ***Media Education Program***

AWOL'S Media Education Program serves as a vehicle in which the targeted youth have an opportunity to express themselves through the art of Sound Design and Film Making. In addition, these two programs offer a flexible, alternative educational and employment training pathway that takes a complex approach to success. Targeting low-income youth facing multiple barriers in education and employment, they work simultaneously to develop industry standard training in new media, and help them to develop the life skills necessary to successfully collaborate on and produce a high-quality creative product.

### ***Theatre & Performing Arts Program***

The AWOL Theatre & Performing Arts Program Encompasses an array of performing arts mediums such as the learning and development of abilities in spoken word, rap, acting, and dance. Original, as well as published works are showcased by youth through these community based theatrical productions. Unlike current community theatre programs, AWOL's theater programs for youth do not only focus on theatre education, but utilizes techniques of noted thespian, Augusto Boal to teach youth ways to resolve conflict.

### ***Advanced Theater & Performing Art-Act Up!***

Our Young Performers Conservatory offers pre-professional training year-round. The purpose is to give the student intensive and specialized training in the performing arts. Focus will vary depending on the program but will typically include character work, scene study, acting for film, musical theater, dance, voice, and performance training. Our Young Performers Conservatory is composed of more serious and committed student actors.

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## **Technology Training Center**



The Goon Squad is AWOL's Information Technology Training program for at-risk and adjudicated youth living in Savannah. The overall goal of the project is to enable youth to enter the world of Information Technology and enhance their abilities, employability and ultimately, self-sufficiency. The primary objective of this component of AWOL programming is to provide computer training, skills and knowledge to youth living in the Savannah community with a focus on Juvenile Offenders. In concert with the IT training will be Project Mean Green, which will recycle computer technology and provide low and no-cost computing to individuals and not-for-profit organizations in the community.

## **Education**

While arts and entertainment can be a tremendous draw for young people, the importance of education is a vital component to their sustained growth and development. AWOL Youth Programs offer various educational services. Students are encouraged to complete high school as a part of their participation in center programs. For older students who have not completed a high school education, referral linkages to local GED programs are strongly utilized. Youth receive assistance with college applications and SAT preparatory workshops. Encouraging youth to seek higher learning opportunities is a key component of AWOL's educational supportive services.



## **Eligibility**

Youth ages 7-18 (In School Youth-ISY) and ages 19-22 (College Age) are eligible to enroll in AWOL programs. Satisfactory attendance and progress in school is a requirement for all ISY to participate in the programs. AWOL is also available to youth of any age that may have dropped out of school. Out of School Youth (OSY) must be in a job-training program and/or working on a GED. Out of School Youth must also at a minimum, be engaged in part-time employment.

## **Program Fees**



AWOL is made available through the generous support of the **City of Savannah, Chatham County Commission, and United Way of the Coastal Empire, and The Comcast Foundation** and several other public and private donors. We greatly appreciate this financial support which has allowed us to grow into one of Savannah's most popular after-school programs for young people living in Savannah. However, their support does not cover all of this program's cost of operation.

Program Fees are necessary to help cover the operational and program cost associated with running the AWOL program. The cost for one child to participate in our program for one year is approximately \$3000 annually. Because of grants and donations this amount is reduced to about \$500 annually which is paid on a month to month basis by you the parents. We will make every effort to work with parents when it comes to paying fees, but an ailing economy and high demand for the program gives us little room to assist those in severe need. Our suggestion is to seek out the assistance of your family or church to help make a positive investment in your child's life.

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Note: Individuals over the age of 18 must also pay program fees. Please fill out a **CONFIDENTIAL Financial Assistance Application**

## **Sponsorship**

If you are able to, we strongly encourage you to sponsor a child in the program. It cost a mere \$50 per month or \$3.50 per day to sponsor a child in AWOL. There are dozens of young people that need to be nurtured in a positive environment with caring adults. As a community, it is our responsibility to make sure that the entire “village” is involved in raising a child. Please fill out a **Sponsorship Agreement Application** and turn it in to an AWOL staff member to get started today. All contributions are 100% tax deductible to the furthest extent allowed by law. Some unique ways of getting the community involved is to maybe have your church or a local business owner sponsor a child. Sponsorships will be given to only those youth who have submitted the appropriate documentation proving the families inability to pay. Get involved, sponsor a child!

**WE WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO NOT TURN AWAY ANY CHILD because of a family’s inability to pay. Please be prepared to provide us with the necessary documentation to prove eligibility for reduced cost participation.**

## **Participation Rules & Regulations**

The following rules and regulations have been developed in an effort to help all of us attain our goal of operating a safe, supervised, drug & alcohol free facility for the enjoyment and benefit of all of AWOL participants. All potential AWOL participants, and their parents, should read and agree to abide by these guidelines prior to registering.

AWOL is a program that continues to evolve over time. AWOL reserves the right to amend these rules, as needed, to better meet the needs and desires of our participants. If you have any questions or suggestions regarding any of these policies, please call the AWOL, Inc office at 912.303.4987 Your input and ideas are welcomed, encouraged, and will be given full consideration! Thank You!

### **General Rules**

- Members must comply with all directions given to them by AWOL staff members.
- AWOL staff reserves the right to refuse entrance to any person who does not comply with AWOL, Inc guidelines, or the direction of one of the AWOL staff members.
- AWOL staff reserves the right to dismiss any member who is in violation of any of the AWOL rules and regulations, or whose behavior is considered inappropriate. If it is determined that dismissal from a program/event an AWOL staff member will notify the participant’s parent or guardian.
- AWOL may suspend or revoke the enrollment privileges of any participant who is in violation of any policy.

### **Participant Behavior**

- All participants are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with mature behavior.
- Rights of others must be respected.
- Excessive rowdiness, fighting, damaging the facility or its equipment, or any inappropriate behavior will result in suspension from the program and parents will be contacted. If necessary, the incident will result in the payment for damages and, depending upon the circumstances, may be reported to the police.

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- Profanity in or around the program will not be tolerated.
- Public displays of affection are discouraged around the program.

## ***Drugs, Alcohol, Smoking, Etc.***

- No smoking is allowed in or around AWOL, Inc programs.
- Absolutely no drugs, alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, including drug paraphernalia, or weapons are allowed in or around AWOL programs.
- Anyone suspected by our adult staff members or AWOL member of being under the influence of, or having used drugs, alcohol or any controlled substance, or is suspected of being in possession of drug paraphernalia or any weapon will have their parents called.
- Anyone found to be in possession of drugs, alcohol or any controlled substance, including drug paraphernalia or any weapon, while participating in AWOL program, will be immediately reported to the Police, parents will be called, and the participant will be prohibited from participating in AWOL programs.

## ***Parent Behavior***

Parents are a vital part of our youth program. Without the parents, youth development programs would find it difficult to exist. Parents are the volunteer work force that accomplishes essential tasks in support of youth programs. And, most importantly, they attend and support the performances and efforts of all children who participant. This is why it is imperative to maintain a friendly and professional atmosphere at all times. Use of profanity, arguing or any other form of disrespect toward AWOL staff will not be tolerated. Our agency reserves the right to have any and all persons that infringe upon these rules removed from the premises and your child permanently expelled from the program.

AWOL has a 100% open-door policy. In the event you have a grievance, please contact the AWOL office immediately at 912.303.4987 and we will be happy to assist you by scheduling a time to meet with the appropriate staff. Grievances will not be discussed during program hours, as we must give 100% of our efforts to the youth during that time.

## ***Parent Volunteers-“Please help us in our efforts to help Youth”***

### **MANDATORY VOLUNTEER HOURS**

AWOL requires all parents to volunteer a minimum of 20 hours to the program which can be broken down into 2-3 hour segments.

- Parent volunteer hours must be completed by a Parent or Guardian of an enrolled child under age 18.
- Parent volunteers will receive a 1-hour volunteer training that will count toward the minimum 10 hour volunteer time. Volunteer hours must be completed during the school year in which the child is enrolled.

### **Healthy Snack Policy**

Each night of programming participants are provided with a healthy snack. AWOL relies on parent volunteers to donate snacks weekly to accommodate youth enrolled in the program. Snack donations also count toward volunteer hours on a 50:1 basis. Simply put, for every 50 individually wrapped/boxed snacks you provide equals 1-volunteer hour towards the 20 hour mandatory requirement. In an effort to fight childhood obesity and other health problems, we have a **100% HEALTH SNACK POLICY**. A list of suggested healthy snack options will be provided to you.

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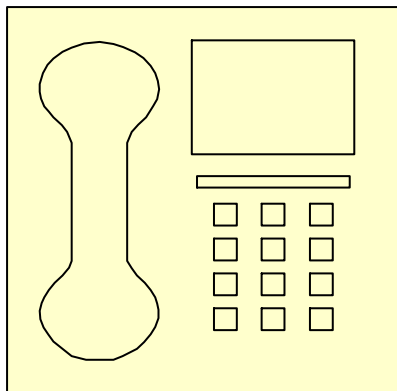
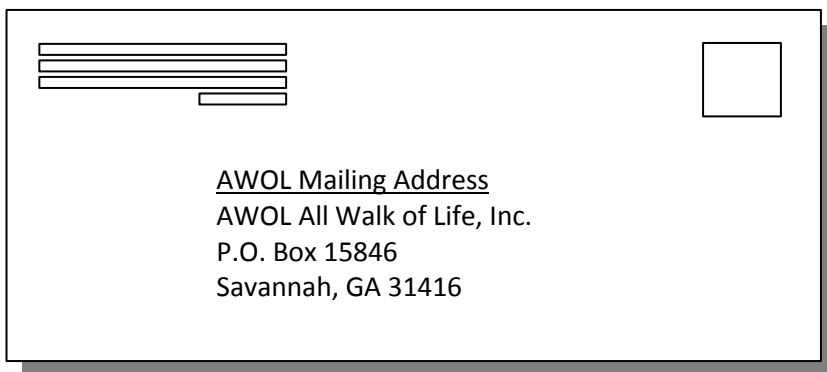
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## Coming & Going

All participants under the ages of 18 should sign-in once arrive to a program/event and must sign-out once the program/event is over. **Participants under the age of 12 MUST BE SIGNED out by an adult 18+.**

## No Show, No Call Policy

In the event you or your child is absent from programming for more than a week, (you) they will be terminated from the program. All registration and program fees are non-refundable regardless of program completion. Not attending programming does not constitute a non-payment situation, neither does it waive or reduce your program fees. Youth who are terminated, must re-register which means they will pay an additional registration fee of \$35. Please call or email the AWOL office at least 24 hours in advance of being absent from programming.



**Telephone: 912.303.4987**

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