



We Empower Kids >>> For Life

Background for Documentary

About

Positively Arts is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that uses the performing arts to create a safe and supportive environment where children gain the confidence to express themselves freely without fear of judgment. Through artistic discovery and performance, students develop the social and emotional skills, mental resilience, and confidence needed to excel in every aspect of their lives.

Quick Facts

What We Do: Positively Arts has a profound impact on the youth of Las Vegas by introducing new skillsets, honing talents, and fostering a level of self-confidence many within the program would not otherwise have the opportunity to develop. More importantly, it applies arts therapy to its programming. By providing a caring environment for kids to connect and proactively learn how to cope with and overcome life's challenges, students begin to uncover strengths they didn't know they had and ultimately discover their potential and pathway to becoming the best version of themselves.

Who We Do It For: Children ages 7 – 18 across the Las Vegas Valley. There is no "typical" child – some join with dreams to one day become an actor or recording artist and are seeking the skills and opportunities to thrive. Others participate as an outlet to express themselves, as there are no longer options like this through traditional school environments. Still, others are brought to Positively Arts to overcome the mental and emotional trauma often experienced after a life-changing tragedy. No matter why they join, all learn the skills necessary to cope with the day-to-day stressors of life and become better prepared to handle any challenges or adversity they may face in the future. No child is turned away from Positively Arts, no matter their ability to pay for classes.

The Visionary: Pilita Simpson is the founder and executive director of Positively Arts. Since 2014, Pilita has been creating content and programs for youth across the Valley. Raised in a family dedicated to community service and personally rocked by the tragedy of losing her father to an accident when she was a young age - to ultimately becoming a successful actress and performer with Disney, Sesame Street, Broadway, and eventually in Las Vegas - to earning her master's degree from *Harvard University in Arts Education* – Pilita's mission, crafted from the narrative of her life story, is to ensure every child has the knowledge and skillsets to handle life's ups and downs, stay positive when facing difficulty and overcome rather than succumb to their circumstances.

Frequently Asked Questions the Documentary Can Address

What is Arts Therapy?

- Arts therapy engages the mind and body in ways that are distinct from verbal articulation alone. Creative arts therapy uses art, music, dance/movement, drama, and play to allow self-expression, abstract thinking, growth, and development. Through artistic discovery and performance, students become aware of how their voice and actions have value and worth and build the confidence they need to overcome personal obstacles in all areas of their lives.

Why does Positively Arts use art therapy?

- Arts therapy strengthens a child's social-emotional development and creates resilience by providing the tools, coping mechanisms, and positive outlets needed to grow as an individual. The arts help people find awareness about themselves and others, encourage emotional growth, gain confidence in themselves as individuals, see value in the contributions they make to others, and build stronger connections with the community and each other.

How does Positively Arts apply art therapy to its programs?

- We build self-esteem through every camp, class, and student experience. We are a support system outside of the student's home and, as such, supplement that child's social and emotional development in an impactful way. In a time where kids don't always talk about their feelings and problems with each other or their family members or have access to a counselor, the performing arts provide an opportunity for that much-needed catharsis and emotional release. We encourage students to be open to their feelings and emotions throughout the art learning process

How does encouraging artistic discovery help a child grow and overcome struggles?

- Music allows us to express what we feel, even when it's difficult to talk about it. It stimulates feelings and emotions and can serve as a productive outlet of expression. Through the arts, we help kids become more aware of who they are, how they feel, their motivations to do what they do, and how actions can affect people – both positively and negatively.

What sets Positively Arts apart from other arts programs?

- Positively Arts is not just about the classes and programs we offer; it is about HOW we offer them and the delivery system. We require students to show empathy, respect, acceptance, and understanding throughout the art learning process and emphasize individual goals instead of "perfect performances." All of our programs exist in a unique framework designed with care and backed by science. We are not training the next generation of artists; we are building the next generation of confident, resilient, and empowered human beings.