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Bridges Program Students Focus On Character Traits During January Artists in the Schools Residency

Raleigh, NC: During January, *The Magic of African Rhythm* will guide students from Bridges Program in an Artists in the Schools program entitled "African Safari." *The Magic of African Rhythm* will guide elementary students in a workshop that follows NC State Curriculum Guidelines in social studies, arts education, and character education. The program will give young students with a history of disruptive behaviors the opportunity develop successful academic skills while focusing on their individual characters.

The artists of *The Magic of African Rhythm* will combine writing, dramatic and artistic work for students to learn about the geography of Africa and the cultural traditions of the region. Students will design t-shirts using traditional African symbols to represent character traits of kindness, respect, perseverance and courage. On the final day of the residency, students and artists will perform African drumming, dancing, and storytelling for parents and guests, utilizing the Ngoma tradition of creativity and energy within the community. The performance will involve all Bridges students and guests will be encouraged to participate.

The Magic of African Rhythm has extensive experience working with at-risk students and has presented effectual staff development workshops. The group is composed of the Shabu family: Maisha, also known as Mama, lived within her music in Africa for 20 years, performing with Miriam Makeba and others; Baba worked as an Artist and Textile designer all over Africa for 20 years; Mabinti was born into the arts culture of West Africa and is known for her vivacious dancing and teaching skills; and Teli, a young drummer and dancer who is skilled at instructing and bringing young people into the rhythm and magic. They are included in artists' directories for both The North Carolina Arts Council and the United Arts Council.

This program was made possible by the Artists in the Schools program of the United Arts Council of Raleigh and Wake County.