ORIKI THEATER’S RITES OF PASSAGE PROGRAM:
Most African peoples have rites and ceremonies to mark a child’s stages of growth and development. The rites of birth and childhood introduce the child to the corporate community, but this is only an introduction. A boy must grow out of childhood into manhood physically, socially and spiritually. This is a change from a passive to active membership in the community.

Now in its 18th year, Oriki Theater’s Rites of Passage program is designed to lead African American teenage boys socially and spiritually into manhood: a status of responsibility, earned rights and privileges with corresponding duties and obligations to society. It is a manhood training program that presents African American boys a clear path to manhood through a multi-layered approach that involves: coaching, mentoring, leadership development and life skills activities. The program is anchored on eight principles borrowed from traditional African ceremonies, namely:
Love for self and others,
Respect for self and others,
Honor for all that God has made,
Strength to Soar above distractions,
Wisdom to know what is right,
Courage to stand up for what is right,
Patience to take your turn
Pride in who you are.

The Rites of Passage program empowers our young men to develop the resiliency, self-reliance and confidence required to succeed in adulthood. The young men who go through our program gain a better sense of self, acquire a positive resolve to excel in school and life, stay on track, gain the tools to handle peer pressure and are plugged into a community of committed African American professionals concerned about their well-being.
THE AFFIRMATION

The African man assumes an honored and proud place in society: a Status that is earned by acquiring certain qualities, namely:

Love for Self and others
Respect for Self and others
Honor for all that God has made
Strength to soar above distractions
Wisdom to know what is right
Courage to stand up for what is right
Patience to take your turn
Pride in who you are

MY PLEDGE:

In order to become an honorable person and make a positive contribution to my family and society, I pledge to do my best to live by the above Rites of Passage Affirmation and Principles.

Student Name: _______________________________
Signature: _________________________________
Date: ____________________________

Mentor Name: _______________________________
Signature: _________________________________
Date: ____________________________
RULES AND STANDARDS

THE PROGRAM:
• Sessions are held on Saturdays from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM.
• Independent Project: You are expected to complete an independent project. Your mentor will serve as your advisor and guide. Presentation of project will be in March.
• Book Assignment: You are expected to read assigned pages of the “Class Book” and participate in class discussions.
• Community Service: A community service day will be scheduled.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A STUDENT IN THIS PROGRAM:
• Attend all sessions punctually.
• Discuss progress with program staff and mentors.
• Complete any homework or assignments promptly.
• Show respect to personnel and other participants.
• Speak courteously during sessions.
• Maintain proper conduct during sessions.
• Maintain appropriate dress code, cleanliness and safety habits.
• Turn off all electronic devices during sessions.
• Attend closing the Passage Ceremony.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN:
• Attend the kickoff / orientation session.
• Ensure regular and punctual attendance of their children.
• Check and monitor the progress of their children.
• Provide supportive action to the child’s growth process.
• Discuss with program staff or child’s mentor any issues of concern.
• Help child plan time and space for completing homework or assignments.
• Attend the Parents Sessions.
• Attend the closing Passage Ceremony.

PASSAGE CEREMONY RULE:
You MUST attend all sessions to participate in the Passage Ceremony.

I affirm that I understand and agree to abide by the above rules and standards.

Student Name:_______________________________________________
Sign:_______________________________ Date:____________________
SESSION ETIQUETTE:

• Participate fully, but share the air – let others speak.
  • Participate in one conversation – no side talks.
    • Stay present and focused on the topic.
      • Let one person speak at a time.
      • Everyone has a responsibility: help the team stay focused and on task.
• Speak openly, honestly and only for yourself.
• Safeguard everybody’s confidentiality: what we say or do here stays here.
• Speak up when you don’t understand: seek to understand by asking questions.
  • There is no “dumb question”: the only “dumb question” is the one you don’t ask.
• You may sometimes disagree with someone, but you must RESPECT the person’s RIGHT to have a different opinion or perspective.
  • Assume people have positive intents.
    • Seek win-win solutions
THE RITES OF PASSAGE 3E MODEL:
The Rites of Passage program is a manhood training program with a process that is meticulous. The rules and code of conduct are strict, Passage Ceremony requirements are demanding and, sessions are rigorous, fun, practical, participatory, honest, and confidential. We believe that by setting high standards and EXPECTATIONS coupled with a safe and supportive ENVIRONMENT, we will EMPOWER you to unleash your potential. We aim to graduate young men with height-ened sense of SELF, armed with a rich array of SKILLS, and ready to make positive and phenomenal contributions to SOCIETY.

EXPECTATION:
We will set the bar high, challenge you to high standards of excellence and support you in your effort to reach the bar. It is not failure to reach a goal that is crippling, not trying is. “I can accept failure. Everyone fails at something. But I can’t accept not trying.” - Michael Jordan.

Commitment: Teenage years can be a time of great self-consciousness. For this reason, we encourage and demand that you commit and stay focused so you can push past your self-consciousness in order to unleash a creativity and dynamism that you may not realize you possess. “Total Commitment” in the ROP means giving 100% to the sessions, punctuality, full participation in activities, reading assignments, staying on track and up-to-date on assignments and asking for help when needed. Simply put, it means hard work and giving maximum effort.

Professionalism: In the context of the ROP, this is an ideal combination of exemplary conduct, accountability and drive. It may never be fully attained, but is a target that you are always pointed towards.

Conduct: ROP expects you to always act with respect and courtesy towards fellow students, mentors, guests, staff as well as at home, school and in the community. The ROP rules and standards contract includes rules requiring proper behavior, attire, attendance, etc.

Accountability: Being personally accountable for your actions and your responsibility is a mantra of the ROP. If you show up late for a class, you must apologize to the class, even if the lateness was not your fault. You are required to call in advance to alert your mentor and staff if you know you will be late or need to request an excused absence. “No Show, No call” is grounds for probation. If you miss a class, you are responsible for calling your mentor prior to the next class to arrange a make up.

Drive: The ROP will train and arm you with tools to sort through the maze of distractions from friends, television, video games, etc, find your own voice, bring your life goals into focus and strive to achieve those goals.
ENVIRONMENT:
The ROP environment is a family atmosphere of support, joy, humor, love and belonging. We are a band of brothers; committed and dedicated to lifting up our community by helping you begin, so you can continue your journey to greatness.

Safe Space: Very important to the ROP is creating a Safe Space for you to thrive. The ROP is a tough live environment. It is tough because you may sometimes struggle to meet our high demands, but you soon learn that if there was ever a place to practice falling, dusting up and trying again - the ROP is the place. The ROP's physical and mental space is non-judgmental and free of prejudice. Our staff and mentors model the “Safe Space and Total Acceptance” philosophy. Less or more is not expected of you because of your past or present condition. When you come to sessions, you MUST leave “cool” outside the door and step into “A Brothers Only” safe zone where we roll up our sleeves and search for solutions to issues that confront us as a family.

Support: While the ROP is not a social services agency, we are sometimes able to refer you and your family to available resources in the community. We are continuously updating our database of community resources (see the list in this booklet).

EMPOWERMENT:
Empowerment is at the heart of the ROP model. Your ROP experience is incomplete if you only learn to follow directions and do as you are told. Our goal is to equip you with the tools to take action based on your own choices, having internalized the self-discipline and self-motivation required to succeed.

Skills: The ROP, through class sessions, reading assignments, individual projects, presentations, debates, civic engagement, etc, will provide you the necessary skills you need to succeed in life. Reading and comprehension, public speaking, positive social interaction, time management, social activism and public service are all essential ingredients for a healthy and successful adulthood.

Self Esteem: In the often very tumultuous teenage years, peer pressure, identity definitions and self-doubt are prevalent. The ROP sessions and activities grounded in the rich traditions of traditional Africa, will inbue you with heritage pride as we expose you to great role models that look like you. Combined with the program’s philosophy of High expectations, Safe space and Empowerment, you will transition into a young man that knows who he is, where you came from, where you want to go, and how to get there. You will leave our program with a heightened sense of self and confidence in your abilities. You gain a positive self-image, a love of and respect for self that translates to a love of and respect for others.
RITES OF PASSAGE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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