

Stars shine at Broadmoor library

By Allison McClain
Special to Voices

"Let's see how many of you are jazz stars!"

Los Angeles native and Shreveport resident Roshanda Spears joined in on the summer fun at Broadmoor Library as part of their 2008 Summer Reading Program.

As a jazz and tap dancer, Spears celebrated her love for dancing with young children, parents and grandparents in hopes of educating them on the art of dance. Her motto states: "If you can walk, you can dance."

"Jazz is just so expressive, I'm able to celebrate the African roots through dance," Spears said.

Children 5 and older who have signed up for the Summer Reading Program were able to let loose and show off their creative sides. Events scheduled over the summer are geared toward encouraging young children and parents to visit the library and read.

"We would like to get every youngster out here to read and have fun while doing it," said Broadmoor library assistant Jackie Rasco-Miller.

Spears' jazz dance event was just one of many artistic activities planned for every age group.

"Bringing in different cultures is terrific. It enables the children to understand creativity," Rasco-Miller said.

Jazz dancing first began in the United States by our African ancestors. Spears opened her event with a brief history on jazz and how it relates to everyone.

"Jazz dance first began in New Orleans. That's so close to us, isn't it?" Spears asked the young children.

Many of the children, both boys and girls, interacted as Spears



Jim Hudelson/VO

Roshanda Spears leads a jazz class on Thursday during the summer reading program at the Broadmoor library in Shreveport.

shared her skill. A dance routine was learned and encouraging words were expressed.

Her second year to join Broadmoor library's Summer Reading Program, Spears still loves every minute of her time with the children. "The kids are just having so much fun. I don't mind that the moves aren't perfect. The more information I give them, the more worthwhile everything seems to be," Spears said.

The interaction the kids had with one another and with Spears proved to show the importance of having fun while still learning something new.

"Try it by yourself. I'll talk you through it," she said encouragingly to the kids.