



**Tufara
Waller
Muhammad**
Director of
International
Community
Outreach

Tufara Waller Muhammad

Born in the 70's in Fort Worth, Texas, Tufara Waller Muhammad has worked as a community organizer and social justice activist since she was a teen. She uses the Arts – especially spoken word, songwriting and singing to educate and empower. She is the product of two preachers who lived social justice. She experienced social justice work as a small child in her parents' interactions with Black Student's United at the University of Texas, Arlington and later with her mother's interaction with the Battered Women's Shelter, prison ministry and work toward empowerment of women in local churches.

Tufara was educated in Little Rock Public Schools: Williams Magnet School, Horace Mann Arts Magnet School and Parkview Arts Magnet School. She attended Philander Smith College on a music scholarship where she majored in Philosophy and Religion and minored in Music education. While attending Philander she was a section leader in the Colligate Choir and member of the Vocal Ensemble. She was also one of the founding members of the Islamic Student Association on the campus of Philander Smith College a United Methodist Church related HBCU.

While in college she enthusiastically embraced radio as a medium of communication. As radio show producer/ DJ on on KABF 88.3 in Little Rock Arkansas she hosted **The Sankofa Sessions** for three years, establishing a grassroots progressive alternative to commercial radio outlets. She was instrumental in bringing national celebrities to the Little Rock Metroplex, initiating collaborations with community organizations to support visits of Iyana Van Zandt, Dr. Linda Hollies (Womanist Theologian), Umar Bin Hassan (Last Poets), Dr. Tony Medina (Poet/Activist), Jollivette Anderson (The Poet Warrior), C. Leigh McInnis (Poet/Activist) and others.

She worked intensively with Patrick Oliver (formerly of Third World Press) to provide venues in Little Rock for artists and philosophers outside of the main stream. Her working relationships assisted in facilitating the introduction of US Postal Service's Kwanzaa stamp and the visit of Dr. Maulana Karenga to the Philander Smith College Campus. She went on to become one of the organizers/hosts for Lyrical Message, an open-mike/spoken word presentation held in various venues around Little Rock.

A versatile vocalist, Tufara performs various musical styles. Before her passion for organizing consumed her and made her an indispensable force for change in the South, she performed R&B with Kashmere, blues with the Essie Neal Blues Band, and sat in with numerous other bands around the South. However, she readily admits a preference for show tunes, ballads and freedom songs. She has shared the stage with legendary freedom singers, Dorothy Cotton, Bettye Fikes, Bernice Johnson Reagan, James Bevel, Guy and Candie Carawan. Tufara's visual Art works have been exhibited at the Aida Ayers Art Gallery and auctioned at the Women's Project Annual Art Show in Little Rock, Arkansas.

She was certified as HIV/AIDS Peer Counselor through the Center for Disease Control in 1990 and began to do youth training throughout Little Rock. She continues her work as an ally with Arkansas Equality Network, a regional lesbian/gay/bi-sexual/transgendered organization which seeks to strengthen community advocacy on issues of discrimination and diversity. With AEN, she has worked to advocate for the "Safe School Campaign" which provides that public schools become places of comfort for all children.

Waller Muhammad has worked extensively with children and youth for Safe Haven and Black Community Developers, she designed a program that empowers youth through entrepreneurial skills, health awareness, arts and cultural sensitivity. A trained counselor for NCCJ's Anytown, she served both as a camp counselor, song leader, and adult advisor for several years.