

## African Drum and Folktale Night

---

*Tarrant Elementary School  
Hampton, Virginia*

An after-school program of Hampton Parks and Recreation Center, that serves Tarrant Elementary School students, added an academic component to their recreation program. In partnership with Tarrant Elementary and its PTA, the after-school program incorporated the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) test curriculum into its student and family activities. The end result was a spring Family Night centered on social studies.

On Monday, May 17, 2004, the partnership invited families to a dinner and an SOL-based presentation called “Tales of the Griot.” “Tales of the Griot” was an African drum and folktale story, performed by a husband and wife team called Autumpan. Students had the chance to play instruments, while parents participated in an African dance. Atumpan taught the children the importance of the drum as a means of communication in African villages and the importance of the storyteller in African society. At the end of the evening, each family received a book about African culture.

Organizing the event required a great deal of collaboration and communication between teachers, after-school staff, and parents. Teachers and staff organized and served the dinner. Hamilton Parks and Recreation staff assisted by signing in guests, aiding in publicity, and distributing door prizes. Parent organizers scheduled this event during what would have been their last PTA meeting, bringing in more PTA members to participate.

African Drum and Folktale Night cost \$250 to implement, and was funded by a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Centers grant and Title I

funds. For little cost, families enjoyed watching a live performance and learning about African music, dances, and communication styles.

*Stacy Dabney, Parent Involvement Facilitator  
(757) 896-3737*