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NEWS RELEASE

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LOCAL SEVENTH GRADERS TO SEE OBAKUNLE AKINLANA AND FRIENDS AFRICAN CULTURAL ARTS PROGRAM

Seventh graders in local schools will enhance their study of Africa with a performance by Obakunle Akinlana and Friends next week, thanks to the Cabarrus Arts Council's *Students Take pART in the ARTs* program.

Akinlana is a storyteller who uses shekeres, drums and other African instruments to immerse audiences in the culture of the Yoruba people of Western Nigeria. A published writer, recording artist and producer of the Igunnuko African Heritage Festival in Charlotte, Akinlana has performed throughout the United States and West Africa. For these interactive performances, he will be joined on stage by an African drummer and dancer.

Performances will be Tuesday-Friday at each Cabarrus County middle school, Kannapolis Middle School and Cannon School. Teachers received study guides to help them incorporate the program into the curriculum.

This is the seventh consecutive year that the arts council has partnered with the Cabarrus and Kannapolis public schools and participating private schools to bring professional performing artists to students in local schools. This year approximately 25,000 students and teachers will see drama, opera or storytelling. *Students Take pART in the ARTs* is sponsored by Windstream Communications, First Charter, *The Independent Tribune*, Concord Printing and the North Carolina Arts Council.

Other Cabarrus Arts Council programs in local schools include the Art Enrichment program, through which volunteers take replicas of famous works of art to elementary classrooms for a short lesson, and arts-in-education residencies, in which artists spend a week or entire day at a school working with students.

For more information on *Students Take pART in the ARTs* and other Cabarrus Arts Council programs, please call 704-920-ARTS (2787) or visit www.cabarrusartscouncil.org.

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