



BLACK BEANZ



NEWS RELEASE

For more information, contact Shanti Community Farms at 330-329-2554 info@blackbeanzakron.com

Akron's Black Beanz African Dance Boy Band debuts 18 dance numbers, completes 22 appearances, introduces singing as one of Ohio's Top 10 Pre-professional Youth Dance Groups at OhioDance Festival in 2023

January 14, 2023 (Akron, OH) –The Black Beanz dance troupe burst on the entertainment scene of Northeast Ohio in 2021. The group of all-male East African performers range in age from 14-17 years old. They feature three of the top trending African dance styles in their lively performances: Tanzania's Bongo Flava, Congo's Ndombolo and South Africa's Amapiano combining traditional East African dance beats with hip hop, reggae, gospel, R&B and rap!

Before they were discovered dancing during lunch breaks as part of Yard Corps, a summer outdoor youth worker program, the Black Beanz performances were limited to personal videos posted on TikTok, Instagram and YouTube. "Because these guys were able to dance at our clients' worksites, our business nearly tripled last summer!" says Tom Crain, Director of Shanti Community Farms and its Yard Corps program who also serves as their co-manager. "Clients hired us for landscaping jobs just to see these guys dance!"

Shanti Community Farms, a Northeast Ohio non-profit organization that works with immigrant youth and their families to enhance their agriculture heritage, recognized the unique talent of its Congolese youth workers and stepped up their staging, costuming and dance practices while gaining bookings for them at local summer festivals, events and parties. The youth named themselves "Black Beanz" to showcase their agricultural heritage as well as dance "style"—most of whom either lived or worked on farms while confined to their camps in Tanzania and Uganda after their families fled the civil war of their home country of The Democratic Republic of The Congo.

"I am so proud of these young men, balancing two cultures, assimilation, teen angst, home country traumas, school academics and extracurricular activities including soccer and Yard Corps, as they polish their 'show biz' prowess and celebrity status," explains Crain. "They are self-taught and also do all their own choreography."

"These young men have proven to be not only great artists and performers with their African dance heritage since the age of three or four, but also great immigrant youth ambassadors when making appearances on and off-stage," says David Brooks, President of Akron-based 36 North Consulting who now serves with Crain as co-manager. "The audience eats up their positive energy, spirited humor and unique athletic abilities beyond their traditional dancing talents. Every one of their dances tells a story and the joy they share on stage is totally contagious."

MORE ON THE BLACK BEANZ For more information and to book the Black Beanz at your next event, contact Shanti Community Farms at 330-634-6489, info@blackbeanzakron.com. Check out the website blackbeanzakron.com