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ONE LITTLE GIRL. ONE BIG HOPE.

LITTLE AMAL VISITS AKRON ON SEPTEMBER 23



Photo: Little Amal in Toronto; (c) Luminato Festival, The Walk Productions. Photography by Taku Kumabe.

LITTLE AMAL'S VISIT TO AKRON IS PART OF
AMAL WALKS ACROSS AMERICA:
A NATIONWIDE JOURNEY SPANNING MORE THAN
35 CITIES & TOWNS, 100 EVENTS, 300+ PARTNERS

The City of Akron, Gum-Dip Theatre, Akron-Summit County Public Library:
North Hill Branch, North Hill Community Development Corporation and
The National Center for Choreography, Akron Welcome Little Amal

The Story of Little Amal

The 10-year-old Syrian refugee girl, will arrive in Akron on September 23 as part of her epic 6,000-mile journey across the United States this fall. Throughout the two-month trek, which will span more than 35 U.S. cities and towns for 100+ events, some of the country's most influential cultural institutions and artists will come together to greet Amal and add their unique color to the rich tapestry of America's story.

Little Amal has traveled through cities, towns and villages across Turkey, Greece, Italy, France, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium and the UK in 2021, and Ukraine, Poland and the Netherlands in 2022. Most recently, in the fall of 2022 she completed a journey through the five boroughs of New York City. The walk is a celebration of art, hope and shared humanity that aims to unite communities and refocus attention on the urgent needs of refugees, immigrants and asylum seekers, and to highlight the rich cultures and contributions immigrants bring with them.

AKRON VISIT DETAILS

During her stop in Akron, the **City of Akron, Gum-Dip Theatre, Akron-Summit County Public Library: North Hill Branch, North Hill Community Development Corporation (NHCDC) and The National Center for Choreography-Akron (NCCAkron)** will create a series of theatrical "events of welcome" for Amal. Little Amal's Akron walk will take place in the North Hill neighborhood, known as Akron's International District and a home for many communities, including immigrants and refugees.

Event organizers note that Amal arrives in Akron as many refugees do: looking for a place to stay and find community. Community members of all ages are invited to join Amal on her route from 2-5pm on September 23. Little Amal's walk in North Hill will begin near Waters Park at 2pm and will continue down Main Street, stopping for various creative and community activations until she reaches People's Park. A NHCDC International Day of Peace Celebration also takes place on September 23 in People's Park; [details here](#).

"The story of Amal is one shared by many in the Akron community: finding a sense of safety and belonging while carrying the burdens of navigating a new place," commented Katie Beck, Co-Artistic Director of Gum Dip Theatre. "The community will be welcomed to share about the weight they carry while also celebrating their resilience, all through the symbolism of bricks."

"Serving a multicultural neighborhood, we are passionate about creating intersectional spaces to share our lived experiences," shared Justin Chenault, Executive Director of North Hill CDC. "This year we will also celebrate the 3rd Annual International Day of Peace. This year will focus on Actions of Peace, honoring North Hill residents, creatives and businesses that embody the 17 sustainable development goals."

"We are honored to connect arts and culture in Akron with a national initiative like Little Amal's visit," shared Christy Bolingbroke, NCCAkron Executive/Artistic Director. "Believing that all roads dance through Akron, this special collaboration across local organizations will be the latest entry in Akron's long immigration history and reinforce the city's place as far as how people move through the world."

AMAL WALKS AMERICA DETAILS

“Amal From Afar” will provide off-route opportunities for Americans to engage with Amal. To celebrate the first night of Amal’s U.S. journey on September 7, anyone from anywhere in the country is invited to host their own version of “Tonight I Am Not Alone.” As the sun sets across the U.S., leading cultural institutions will stage their own events inviting communities of every kind to explore the power of a welcome to a newcomer. Details of how to take part are available now on walkwithamal.org.

People who wish to participate in this movement and are curious to learn about Amal’s story and corresponding themes can peruse a Little Amal reading list, as well as an educational pack for adults will also include a series of “simple acts,” which will suggest ways in which Americans can participate in migrant and refugee-supporting initiatives within their communities. Additionally, there will be video content available throughout the journey that everyone of all ages can engage with, which will be shared across The Walk Production’s social media platforms @walkwithamal on Instagram, @littleamalthewalk on TikTok, and at walkwithamal.org.

Amal Walks Across America is partnering with Welcome.US, Students Rebuild, Welcoming America, Libraries Without Borders, American Federation of Teachers, and others to involve school-age kids in the journey. Available in English, Spanish, Arabic and other languages, the free curriculum will be available at WalkWithAmal.org and include activities and challenges that explore Amal’s journey from her home in Syria to the many steps of her migratory journey.

Students Rebuild will continue their partnership with Little Amal through a number of community participatory events along the route where young people will be invited to create art for Amal as part of the Students Rebuild Extraordinary Earth Project. For every piece of art created for Amal, the Bezos Family Foundation donates funds to support community-based organizations serving youth around the world.

“Amal stands for unity and hope, and we couldn’t impart this message without the hundreds of partners, large and small, coming together to support us as we embark on this journey,” said The Walk Productions Artistic Director Amir Nizar Zuabi. “Each artist, organization and institution has a story to tell about their unique slice of American history and culture, and is inviting Amal and all Americans to learn about what makes this country’s heart beat.”

“We’re overwhelmed by the outpouring of interest that we’ve received from partners who wish to welcome Amal to their communities,” said The Walk Productions Producer David Lan. “These partners have not only supported on-the-ground efforts to create memorable in-person experiences, but also lent their support to our off-route efforts through ‘Amal From Afar,’ which Americans from all 50 states can engage with during the journey.”

Amal Walks Across America is produced by The Walk Productions in association with Handspring Puppet Company, which also guided Amal’s journey through her initial 5,000-mile walk across Europe in 2021 and through all five boroughs of New York City in 2022 in partnership with St. Ann’s Warehouse.

Since the beginning of her journey, Amal has been welcomed in communities across the globe at various artistic-led events that are authentic and meaningful to the local people she meets. During her travels through Europe, Amal participated in events hosted by prominent cultural organizations and changemakers, including at an installation in Turkey that paid tribute to those who lost their lives crossing the Mediterranean in search of refuge and an appearance at Glastonbury alongside the Refugee Choir Citizens of the World Choir and global rock superstars Elbow. In New York City, she was welcomed at events hosted by world-renowned cultural institutions, including the American Museum of Natural History and the Brooklyn Children's Museum.

This schedule traces Amal's journey across the United States.

The Walk Productions is led by David Lan and Tracey Seaward. Playwright/Director Amir Nizar Zuabi serves as Artistic Director, Sarah Loader is Executive Producer, and the Associate Artistic Directors are Khadijat Oseni and Enrico Dau Yang Wey.

The U.S. Producing Partner for Amal's journey is THE OFFICE performing arts+film, a global producing and production company that leverages art for social good. Amal's Impact and Outreach will be led by The Soze Agency, a social impact creative agency located in Brooklyn, NY. Marketing and advertising for Amal's journey will be led by Cause Lab, a human-centered advertising agency.

Amal was designed and built by the Handspring Puppet Company of South Africa, creators of the award-winning puppets for the hit show *War Horse*.

Amal is inspired by a character in Joe Murphy and Joe Robertson's play *The Jungle*, about a refugee camp in Calais, France. The Walk 2021 was a co-production with Good Chance Theatre.

FUNDING CREDITS

Amal Walks Across America was made possible with an inaugural investment from the Doris Duke Foundation, as well as leadership support from the Bezos Family Foundation. Additional generous support was provided by the Backstage Trust, the Barr Foundation, Sunny Bates, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Choose Love, The Conrad Prebys Foundation, the Donald A. Pels Charitable Trust, Ruby Lerner, the McMillan Stewart Foundation, the Mellon Foundation, Opportunity Fund, The Shapiro Foundation, Students Rebuild, the Thorne Cox Family Foundation, and Barbara Tober in honor of Diane Love.

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