

Tessa Musa  
2022 CARTHA Fellow  
Iowa City, Iowa

Tessa Musa currently serves as the Youth and Community Outreach Director for the Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County-Iowa. Tessa has a B.S. degree in Psychology from Iowa State University and is interested in pursuing graduate studies in Urban Planning. She currently serves a member of the Iowa City Parks & Rec Planning Committee.

Tessa grew up in Ames, Iowa. Her mother had been forced to flee Sudan and landed as a refugee in Iowa, along with Tessa at a young age. Tessa credits her stepfather (who has a Ph.D. in political science) for being very influential in her academic and career pursuits by teaching her at a young age about political science. Tessa formed the first Arabic Club in her high school and has always been interested in advancing humanitarian causes.

Tessa became aware of CARTHA when she participated in a planning meeting in October 2021 around CARTHA's "Musicality in Parks" program. Tessa and CARTHA Founder Usha Balakrishnan immediately bonded over their shared interests as singers and the vast possibilities for using music as a coping skill for grief-relief and stress-reduction that can then further enable daily healthfulness in individuals and communities. Tessa and Usha thus joined forces to begin designing a novel "Inspiring Creativity" educational workshop (along with Cassidy Slater-Scott, an art student and intern at Iowa City Parks & Rec) aimed at underprivileged children. This program, which includes field trips to the Singing Nook at Willow Creek Park (during warmer months), is being offered from Spring 2022 and received funding support of \$500 from the Iowa City Noon Rotary Club. Tessa continues to participate in planning meetings with Carthans and city officials.

Tessa Musa was designated as a CARTHA Fellow in 2022 in the "Healing Children through Musicality in Parks" program.