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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Xavier University of Louisiana Welcomes Internationally Celebrated 12-foot-tall Puppet of a 10-year-old Syrian Refugee Girl

New Orleans - [Little Amal](#), the internationally celebrated 12-foot-tall puppet of a 10-year-old Syrian refugee girl, will be arriving in New Orleans on **October 14-15, 2023**, as part of her epic 6,000-mile journey across the United States this fall. [Xavier University of Louisiana's](#) Performance Studies Lab and other cosponsors of the event have created a series of theatrical "events of welcome" for Amal during her several stops in New Orleans. Amal's walk will shed light on refugee rights and the environmental impact of displacement on children.

Alongside Xavier, other cosponsors and coordinators of the special events for Amal's visit in New Orleans include [The Andre Cailloux Center for Performing Arts & Cultural Justice](#), [Courtney Bryan](#) and St. Luke's Episcopal Church, [Friends of Lafitte Greenway](#), [Goat in The Road Productions](#), [The Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra](#), Mudlark, [Mondo Bizarro](#), [Music Box Village](#), [No Dream Deferred-NOLA](#), and [The Preservation Hall Foundation](#).

On Sunday, October 15, from 4-5 p.m., Amal will take a walk from the Bayou Choupic (Bayou St. John) to the Andre Cailloux Center for Performing Arts & Cultural Justice. People will meet at the Magnolia Street Footbridge at 4 p.m.

Led by the [Preservation Hall Brass Band](#), Amal will follow [the path](#) that migrants and traders have followed for thousands of years. The event will begin with a water ceremony led by [Dr. Jefferey Darensbourg](#) (member of the Atakapa-Ishak Nation of Southwest Louisiana) at Magnolia Street Footbridge and end at the Andre Cailloux Center on Bayou Road. This specific welcome event is produced locally by Xavier University of Louisiana, The Andre Cailloux Center, Goat in The Road Productions, Mondo Bizarro, No Dream Deferred, and The Preservation Hall Foundation.

"As a co-founder of Xavier's Performance Studies Laboratory and an alumna, I think it speaks volumes to the University's ability to embody its mission of social justice and to understand the currency of the creative and performing arts to bring light to critical issues we're facing in these times," said Dr. Robin G. Vander, Xavier University of Louisiana's director of Women's Studies, co-founder and affiliate faculty of the Performance Studies Lab, and associate professor of English and African American and diaspora studies. "Partnering with other local theatre and performance organizations to create an event that connects us to what's happening globally, and to do so while also recognizing our own history and culture in New Orleans, from Bayou to Bayou Road, becomes our unique version of 'The Walk' with Little Amal."

All Little Amal events are free and open to the public and produced in collaboration with [The Walk Productions](#) in association with [Handspring Puppet Company](#). 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 which will also include a series of "simple acts," suggesting ways in which Americans can participate in migrant and refugee-supporting initiatives within their communities.

"Folks will come away curious about what's happening both here and abroad, consider ways they can be involved, and also understand why art matters. I hope Xavierites and the local community will come out and experience this moment with us," said Dr. Vander.

Video content of Little Amal's journey will be shared across The Walk Production's Instagram ([@walkwithamal](#)), TikTok ([@littlearalthewalk](#)) and [walkwithamal.org](#).

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The route map is [HERE](#). A press kit can be found [HERE](#).

Contact Nick Slie at 225-571-2929 or nick@mondobizarro.org with questions or for more promotional images.

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About Xavier University of Louisiana

Xavier University of Louisiana, America's only historically Black and Catholic University, is ranked among the top three HBCUs (historically Black colleges and universities) in the nation. Recognized as a national leader in STEM and health sciences, Xavier produces more African American students who graduate from medical schools each year than any other university in the United States. Additionally, Xavier's College of Pharmacy is also among the top producers of African American pharmacists in the country.

Established in 1925 by Saint Katharine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament as a place for African Americans and Native Americans to receive quality education, Xavier has since expanded its programs in art, business, education, biological sciences, chemistry, pharmacy and political science. More recent additions in robotics, bioinformatics, engineering, data science, neuroscience and genetics, in addition to new STEM-based master's programs, have provided Xavier students (3,419 students) an unbeatable combination of traditional classroom study, hands-on research, service-learning opportunities and life experiences. Xavier students collaborate with world-renowned faculty, who are experts in their fields, to produce award-winning research and notable work. The winning Xavier formula provides students with a well-balanced curriculum and an environment that nurtures their intellect and feeds their souls, thereby facilitating a more just and humane society for all. For more information about Xavier University of Louisiana, visit us online at www.XULA.edu or contact Melissa Newell at (504) 520-5240 or XULANews@XULA.edu