Dance Arts Now!

The official NHSDA Newsletter for Middle and High School Students
Holiday Issue 2016

Dance ~ The Gift of Giving

Welcome to our holiday celebration!

In this issue, we discover how our dancers share their deep love of the art form through performance, poetry, painting, friendship, and community service, which means…
Supporting each other both onstage and in life.

Best wishes,
~ Dance Arts Now! Editorial Staff

Photo courtesy of All That Dance

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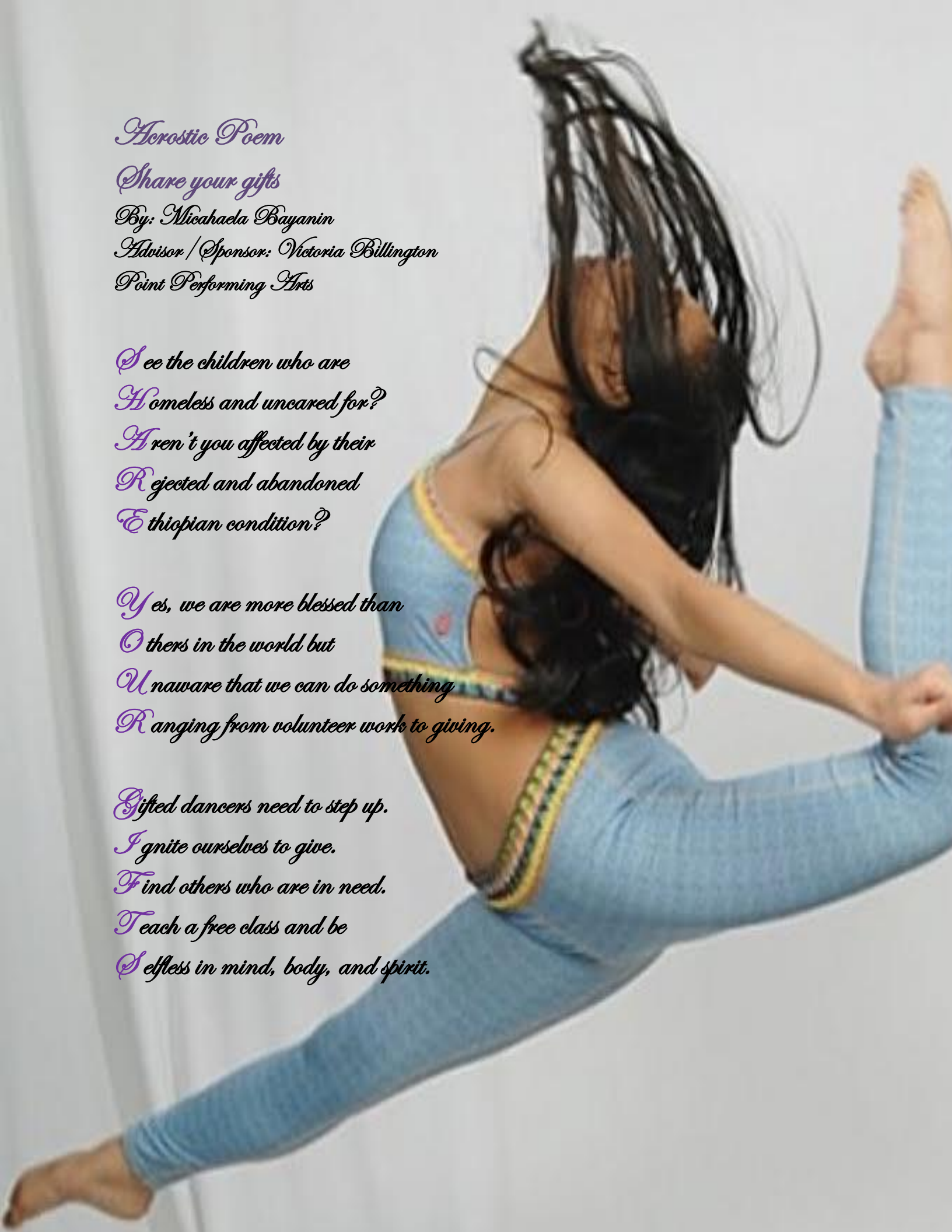


Acrostic Poem

Share your gifts

By: Micahaela Bayanin
Advisor / Sponsor: Victoria Billington
Point Performing Arts

See the children who are
Homeless and uncared for?
Aren't you affected by their
Rejected and abandoned
Ethiopian condition?

Yes, we are more blessed than
Others in the world but
Unaware that we can do something
Ranging from volunteer work to giving.

Gifted dancers need to step up.
Ignite ourselves to give.
Find others who are in need.
Teach a free class and be
Selfless in mind, body, and spirit.

My Passion ~
My Artwork, My Dance

By: Edilia Sevilla Otero
Advisor/Sponsor:
Amanda Kinnaird
Maryvale High School

My passion for dance
inspired me to create
this acrylic painting on canvas….

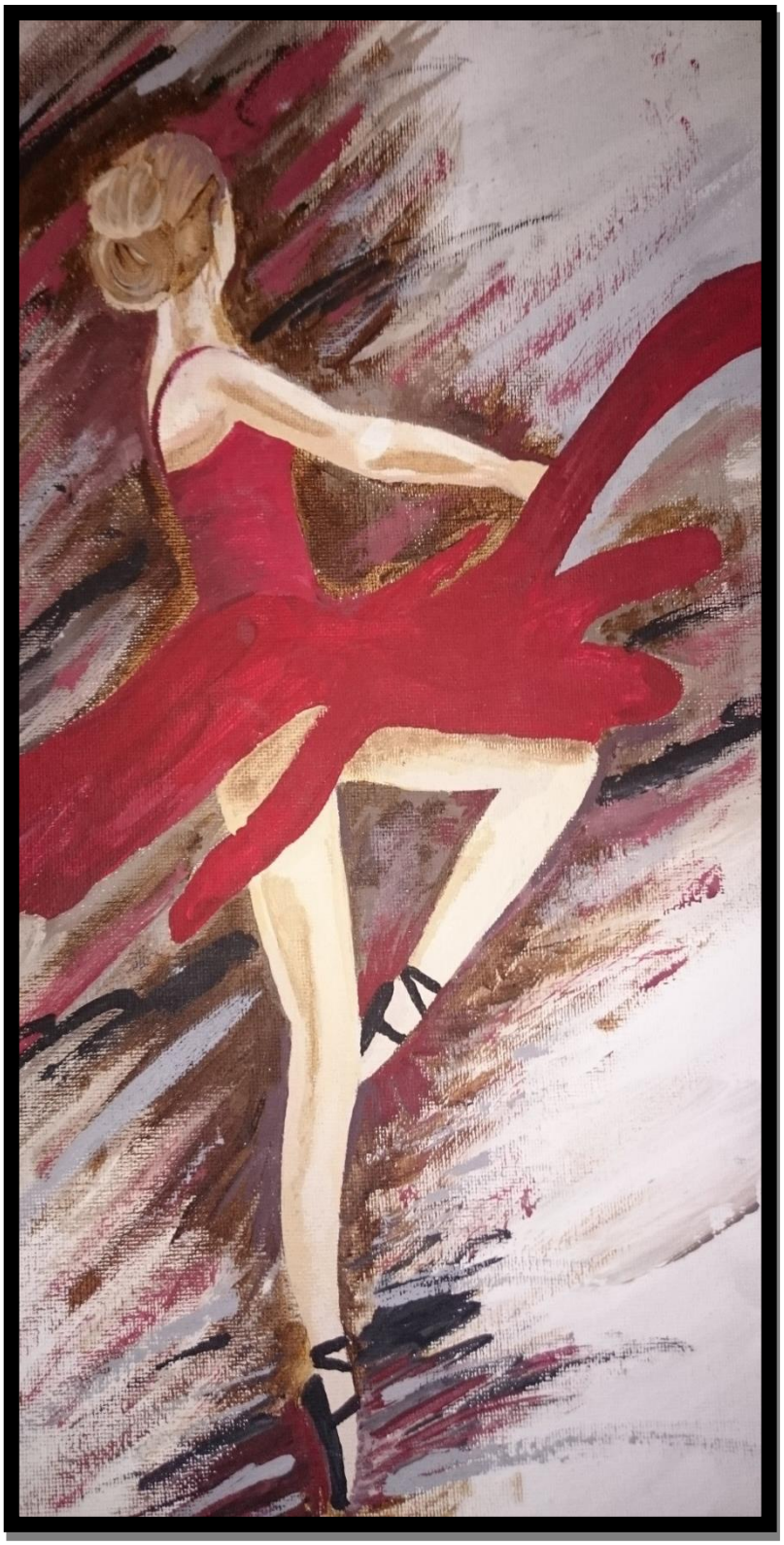
I developed a great connection
with dance in a short amount
of time, and I fell in love
with the art form as a
beginning level dancer.

I wanted to create this painting
for my dance teacher to show
her how much I appreciate
everything she has taught me.

I have been dancing just
a few years, and am
now a member of the
Maryvale Dance Company.

I hope to double major in both
Nursing and Dance after
high school. Before I graduate,
my goal is to inspire
as many people as I can,
especially dancers.

Dance has served as my escape
and deep solace, and now that
I have found it
I cannot ever imagine
a world without it.



NEWS

NHSDA Chapter Challenge!

#NDEOThankADanceTeacherDay

Benefit concerts, workshops, and more! Honor your teachers, your dance program, *your* NHSDA chapter.

#NDEOThankADanceTeacher Day is a global movement that spotlights quality dance education and the teachers who inspire us.

This program helps support NDEO's Professional Development Scholarship Fund in conjunction with Giving Tuesday, developed by the 92nd Street Y and the United Nations Foundation to counter the negative aspects Of consumerism with this positive cause during the holidays.

All participating NHSDA chapters will be listed as donors on the NDEO website ~
The top 3 NHSDA chapters that raise the most funds for this event will be profiled on our blog and featured in our social media

Learn more: ndeo.org/ndeothanks2016!

Photo courtesy of Terri Smith

Follow NHSDA on Social Media!

Facebook: National Honor Society for Dance Arts - NHSDA
Twitter: @NHSDAofficial
Instagram: @nhsdaofficial

Go to www.nhsda-ndeo.org/nhsdaaward to learn more!

Community Service Builds Leadership

By: Joy Giuffre
2016 NDEO
Artistic Merit, Leadership, &
Academic Achievement
Award Winner
Advisor/Sponsor: Jennifer Keane Ackermann
Passaic County Technical Institute School
Of Performing Arts Dance

Among her many accolades, Joy is also recipient of the Governor's Award for Artistic Excellence and Leadership in Dance and attends the University of the Arts

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Both inside and outside of school, I have held diverse roles and attribute many of my skills to my experiences as a dancer. I have been both a follower and a leader within dance groups, which has trained me in both integrity and teamwork. Thankfully, I now apply these experiences with confidence and purpose, to successfully mentor a group.

In school, I was a platoon commander in my NJROTC program. NJROTC teaches the Navy values of honor, courage, and commitment to high school students. I trained cadets in moral integrity for the Area Manager's Inspection, a major event for NJROTC units, as well as other serious assignments.

I have been a Girl Scout since kindergarten, and I love to lead younger scouts in the importance of listening, respect, and perseverance. I have taught them dance at Encampment, an overnight Girl Scout weekend, and have helped other troops earn their dance badges by training them in safe ways of warming up and approaching technique with the art of performance.

My future plans are numerous and bright. After I graduate this year, I will focus on earning my BFA in dance and minor in journalism. After college, my career goal is to be a performer.

I have a passion for theater and have been in several productions, so I would love to be on Broadway, performing in musicals. However, I love contemporary dance as well and would relish working with such a company.

While dance is my true passion, I must ensure that I can still flourish in the arts field even if not on stage. I foresee applying my journalism minor to write articles about dance-related subjects ~ from an insider's unique point of view.

After a successful dancing career, I would then become a writer, choreographer, and teacher. Hopefully I will garner enough skills, knowledge, and experience to educate the next generation of dancers!

Regardless of what path my career takes, I will remain centered in dance. I must continue to create ~ and I must live life with my greatest passion.

Joy shares her skills in teaching dance with her Girl Scouts. Photo courtesy of JG

Tap ~
Purely for Love and Joy

By: Catherine Marrone
Finalist, NDEO Artistic Merit, Leadership and Academic Achievement Award
Advisor/Sponsor: Gina Korrell
24/7 Dance Studio

In December, Catherine will return to Germany for her second year to compete in the World Tap Championships

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Approach… the dance that is holistic, honest, and true
~ Savion Glover, *Epiphany*, 2016

I love tap because of its unique qualities that fuse movement with a multitude of sounds, all syncopated by intricate footwork. Although other dance styles might use these to enrich their work, tap alone bases its technique on these exciting phenomena. I performed my original tap solo to the song, "I Know What You Did Last Summer," by Shawn Mendes and Camila Cabello. Every time I played this music, I could hear catchy beats that I wanted to put to my feet.

The 24/7 Dance Studio is so welcoming and heartwarming that we all have opportunities to be creative, and everyone ~ from the staff to the students ~ is inspiring. I participate in a choreography class with instructor Yara Perry who emphasizes different skills that are molded into a dance. In tap class, I enjoy improvising steps into phrases that inspire me to further develop into a piece. These experiences prepared me for this unexpected yet rewarding opportunity to choreograph.

My solo evolved after being asked to substitute, rather quickly, for an injured instructor. I developed a last minute combination for two tap classes and afterward, I shared this routine with my tap instructor, Joe Dodd. He enjoyed my work and encouraged me to expand it into a solo.

Some of the challenges of choreographing dealt with developing moves that would travel around the floor, discovering an emotion or mood to fit the song, and not repeating the same steps. A tap routine often is more difficult than other dance styles because of the restriction of predominantly using one's feet to form sounds with intricate patterns.

Nevertheless, the rhythms of the selected song were so catchy I found myself naturally moving my feet.

Choreographing is both a difficult and rewarding process, and I enjoyed the ability and freedom to express myself with my own movement.

My routine evoked pure rhythms with no specific story behind it, and therefore is untitled ~

I simply created the dance for the joy that tap brings into my life.

To learn more about the NHSDA awards program and to view Catherine performing her original choreography, link to **http://nhsda.clubexpress.com/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=661544&module_id=227035**

A Gift For My Friend
AKG, My Inspiration

By Anizia Fulmore
Advisor/Sponsor: Ashlee Ratigan
Charleston School of the Arts

Since writing this article, Anizia has become an English major, with a concentration in professional writing and minor in educational studies, at Winthrop University. She continues her friendship with AKG

Ashley Kaylynn Green is the epitome of dance. She is a young, motivated and passionate artist. She may become the next big star but to me, she is Ash, AKG, my best friend. Ashley inspires in many ways. She urges me to continue pushing through my technique even when I think I cannot and when she is hurt or sick, she always finds the strength to perform.

At Charleston School of the Arts, everyone wants her to pull out a move in the breezeway. The teachers describe her as *iconic* because in our class solos, she transforms a beautiful masterpiece ~ executed perfectly. Her emotions are expressed so passionately upon her face while dancing with an energy that fills the entire stage.

Her dedication demands sacrifices. It takes a lot for a young woman to give up spending time with friends or to go to special events in order to pursue her dreams. She stands steadfast, dedicated to her craft. She practices every day after school and has travelled many weekends to the city of Columbia to train with Dale Lam, a nationally recognized choreographer and teacher.

No matter how much she might want to stay home just to have fun, she pushes herself through, spending late hours in the studio. Yet she still manages to uphold a high academic standard. I admire her motivation, her talent, and her encouragement for both of us to strive on in the pursuit of our passion ~ the love of dance.

…And so, my gift to Ashley is this collection of written words ~ I cannot wait to see my dear friend show her great potential to the world!

Ashley performs. Photo courtesy of AF

ACTING OUT
DANGEROUS SCENARIOS
IN SAFE SPACES
Success Stories of Dance Driven
Anti-Bullying Campaigns

Photo courtesy of Dale Dong Photography

…Integrating Dance with a vision of hope and possibility to those who have struggled with the indignities of bullying and other social injustices

~ Mary Verdi-Fletcher, Dancing Wheels Company

The Dance Arts Now! staff wishes to thank all of the groups that contributed to this series on how dance empowers us to erase bullying and to create a healthy school environment with respect and understanding for all.

In Part One (Summer Issue), film projects set up within two Arizona schools revealed in both words and movement what the students experienced. In Part Two (Back-to-School Issue), members of the Footlight Dance Centre discussed how they successfully collaborated with the community in a "No More Bullies!" campaign. And in Part Three, in our Holiday issue, the Dancing Wheels Company shares the sweet "inner-Dumbo" within our hearts.

Part Three
Embracing Dumbo

Mary Verdi-Fletcher founded the Dancing Wheels Company as a professional, physically integrated dance group with the mission "to educate through compelling dance." She often dramatizes classic stories such as the heartfelt tale of Dumbo, the little elephant ostracized for being "different." She explained. "To me, it was one of the original children's stories that brought the reality of bullying to light."

Her ambitious *Daring to be Dumbo* brings to life recognizable characters within a contemporary setting: a junior high school student triumphs over ridicule for her "defective" ears. Like the re-imagined character, professional wheelchair dancer Verdi-Fletcher herself has demonstrated throughout her career how resolve can overcome a condition such as her spina bifida.

Verdi-Fletcher further strengthened her mission to produce *...Dumbo* by collaborating with choreographer David Rousseve. She explained how he, being a standing dancer, needed to clearly grasp the concept. In a rented wheelchair, he developed movement that he believed was "grounded in reality, incredibly nuanced in tone and feel and that torso movement could be really expressive and beautiful." Verdi-Fletcher decided that their production "would relate better to kids today if staged in a modern setting, such as a school which again is a familiar place. David crafted the story so brilliantly that it took shape in a vivid way that was sincerely understood by all ages."

The rights were then procured to adapt four of the Disney film's songs. Jeremy Allen composed additional music and the production then proceeded through a grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture.

Performing Three-Fold

Daring to be Dumbo evolved powerfully as a formal performance, a documentary, and an educational outreach program that included residencies and assemblies.

Imagine as the curtain rises:

Accompanied by recordings of thirty musicians and three singers, fifteen physically-integrated dancers dressed in street clothes or circus-like uniforms perform with life-size puppets that travel across the stage with spatial/temporal movement. Tilts, turns, wheelie work, and propulsions all form part of the choreography. A thirteen-year-old girl, performed by dancer Dezare Foster, plays the Dumbo character ~ in overly large, theatrically constructed ears ~ whom others ostracize. The choreographer boldly cast some of the seated dancers as bullies, rather than portray them only as victims.

As the story unfolds, the stand-up dancer playing the heroine realizes she is not alone when she finds a friend in a wheelchair-bound dancer. The lullaby 'Baby Mine' gently reminds us, 'Don't you mind what they say, Let those eyes sparkle and shine.'

Photo courtesy of Dale Dong Photography

In a follow-up to the performance, two sit-down and four stand-up dancers brought onstage highlights to local schools. Enchanted young audiences were quizzed:

- What kinds of bullying were acted out on stage?
- Did anyone make Dumbo happy?
- How can we pledge to "Stand up against bullying?"

Glimpses of both rehearsal and performance were included in the documentary that commemorated *Daring to be Dumbo*. Host Al Roker discussed the staggering statistics of bullying, followed by cast members and viewers "chosen to speak because they had personally experienced bullying but had redirected that experience to go on to great accomplishments."

Among these who told their stories on film was young victim Tina Kovach who luckily found a teacher to mentor her throughout her high school years. This guidance empowered her to "pay back forward" by also becoming a teacher. Through her diligence, Kovach secured a VSAarts Ohio grant to bring in Dancing Wheels members to instruct her 4th and 5th graders in a special residency.

From Combat to Genuine Caring

In another interview, teacher Kovach discussed how her students had "previously just co-existed, but when they participated in the *…Dumbo* residency and worked extensively with each other, they truly became a class." In a mirroring exercise, for example, partners stood face to face as they pressed each other's palms together. This taught respect for personal space and trust for each other.

Kovach emphasized, "This experience brought out the best of what makes us human ~ empathy, courage to take risk, and team work." One child told her teacher, "The workshop changed my life. It made me think about myself in a wonderful way" ~ her feelings had forever metamorphosed by 50 hours of dance. Another girl who had once harassed a classmate was now dancing with her with "genuine care." The students all developed strong socialization and study skills ~ with great cheers and love.

Students meet the cast of 'Daring to be Dumbo'. Photo courtesy of TK

Photo courtesy of All That Dance

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