



Dance Arts Now!

**The official NHSDA Newsletter for Middle and High School Students
Back-to-School Issue 2019**

"We are all individuals from different backgrounds who share a passion for dance...."
~ Katelyn Gaffney, Radio City Rockette

Welcome Back to School!

As we chassé with our dancing friends across our school halls, let's remember Katelyn's message above that, although we have different backgrounds, we share a united love of dance.

Read Katelyn's inspiring story of how being a part of the Radio City Rockettes means being a part of an extended family (pp. 11-12).

Plus: Discover how improvisation and choreography keep us on our toes while dance education builds confidence, which, in turn, reaps infinite rewards.

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- ***"To Overcome Depression"***



PC Radio City Rockettes

Improvisation Difficult...At First

By: Jenna Tormey (Graduate)
Paramus High School
Advisor/Sponsor: Claudine Ranieri

Jenna wrote this freeform poem when she was in high school. She is now an undergraduate at Muhlenberg College.

Improvisation was...

*Difficult,
At first,
Because
I was brought up
In a technically trained
Studio.*

*Exploring this
Creative Method
Transformed
Me
Into an
Artist.*

*In fact, it has
Not only
Impacted my
Dancing,
But also,
My life.*

Improvisation now...

*Keeps me
On my
Toes
In all
Situations.*



PC Jenna Tormey

News



PC South Coast Conservatory

Dedicated to the Arts & to All People

The South Coast Conservatory and its NHSDA chapter are dedicated to the arts with passion for helping people, and the resulting programs benefit both their dance family and the community. Dance Discovery Scholarships are made possible through generous donations and the dedication of volunteers.

The annual Dance-a-Thom fundraiser, ***“Kids Helping Kids Through Dance,”*** supports such programs as Dancers Against Cancer, OC Grip Dance Project, and Rising Stars Special Needs Program.

Fun is had by all with games, performances, master classes, and prizes!



PC All That Dance



Love Your Body Week (LYBW)!

Nov. 17 – 23, 2019

“Dance is truly for every body ~ ‘Love Your Body Week’ has been such an important part of our school since 2005, and we are excited to see even more chapters celebrating together in 2019!” ~ Mary Pisegna Gorder, co-founder LYBW, All That Dance

NDEO invites our NHSDA members to celebrate ***“Love Your Body Week,”*** the national campaign for developing healthy body images within positive studio and school environments. Go to the NHSDA website for more information.

NEWS (cont.)

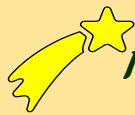


Take the Challenge! Reach High for Dance Advocacy!

NHSDA needs your help in advocating for quality dance education ~ at the local, state, and national levels. This goal strengthens our voice to confirm dance as a vital component within the curriculum and in lifelong learning. **Climb Capitol Hill!** Learn how you, your friends, and mentors may become leaders in Dance Education Advocacy: ndeo.org/howtoadvocate



PC Youth Performing Arts School



NHSDA Star!

Congratulations to Reiko Serrato of Flagler Palm Coast High School (FPC), who achieved the Florida Dance Educators Organization “*Merit Scholarship Award*.” She was invited to perform her winning solo at the Florida Honors Concert in Tampa and, also received a scholarship to the New World School of the Arts. Her advisor, Ms. Janice Monsanto, noted: “She is an amazing young woman.”

See more FPC news on pp. 5-6!

PC Palm Coast Observer



News (cont.)

Dance Company Celebrates All Year!

By: Ekatareena Kouzina
Flagler Palm Coast High School
Advisor/Sponsor:
Janice Monsanto

Under the guidance of Ms. Janice Monsanto, our chapter sponsor, we as dancers had ample opportunities throughout the past year to engage the school and community as we embraced our passion for the arts.

We began with a pep-rally performance tailored to the homecoming ***Pirate*** theme so that our production entitled “***Castaway***” would complement our shipwreck idea. This was the perfect opportunity for first-year dancers, upperclassmen, and studio competitors to collaborate on creating a beautiful piece while fueling school spirit.



All PC Flagler Palm Coast High School

Shortly after, the team took on ***Insanity Games***, a fun, messy, athletic relay which included more students in homecoming week festivities. With a solid foundation, our close-knit family continued with ***Dance Around Flagler***, a holiday showcase, and the ***Starlight Parade***. These events demonstrated our dedication and passion for our parents and citizens of Flagler County.



Pictured L-R: Janice Monsanto (Advisor), Ekatareena Kouzina, Caroline Smith, Cassandra Ventura, Reiko Serrato

...And, our activities didn't stop there!

To start off the New Year, we hosted ***Dance for Love Day***. On February 14th, students with special needs were invited into the studio to celebrate this sweet afternoon with treats, games, activities, and, of course, dancing. Then, the Fine Arts Dance program began planning our Spring Showcase, ***"The Show Must Go On"*** ... a culmination of choreography by guest and volunteer instructors, plus student-lead pieces!

From solos to full production pieces, we celebrated contemporary, hip-hop, jazz, musical theater and tap. Before the premiere, the school student body enjoyed a free Pre-View Show during 5th period (a fabulous marketing strategy). Additionally, FPC Dance Company

members were invited to a Child Abuse Prevention Block Party to support an important cause, as well as to visit a local retirement home to bring good spirits to the residents.

As our finale, the Dance Department sponsored an end-of-the-year banquet where students were inducted into NHSDA, with awards presented and a recap of the year displayed, all while seniors swarmed with good luck and farewells.

Without the commitment and pure love for dance that our students, alumni, and Ms. Monsanto share, this chapter would not be where it is today ~ And we will continue this exuberant spirit throughout the upcoming year!



FPC Dance Company pre-performance hugs and well-wishes!

2019 National NHSDA Award Winner

"Realizations"

By: Yoshi Sanders

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

Advisor/Sponsor: Felice Santorelli

As a member of his school's "Catalyst" modern dance company, Yoshi both performs and choreographs. His work was accepted to the Regional High School Dance Festival's "Outstanding Student Choreography Showcase" and the "Dance Up" presentation at the 92nd St. Y in New York City. He also dances at Heckworth School for the Performing Arts and has been a Dance Education Laboratory (DEL) member for over six years.



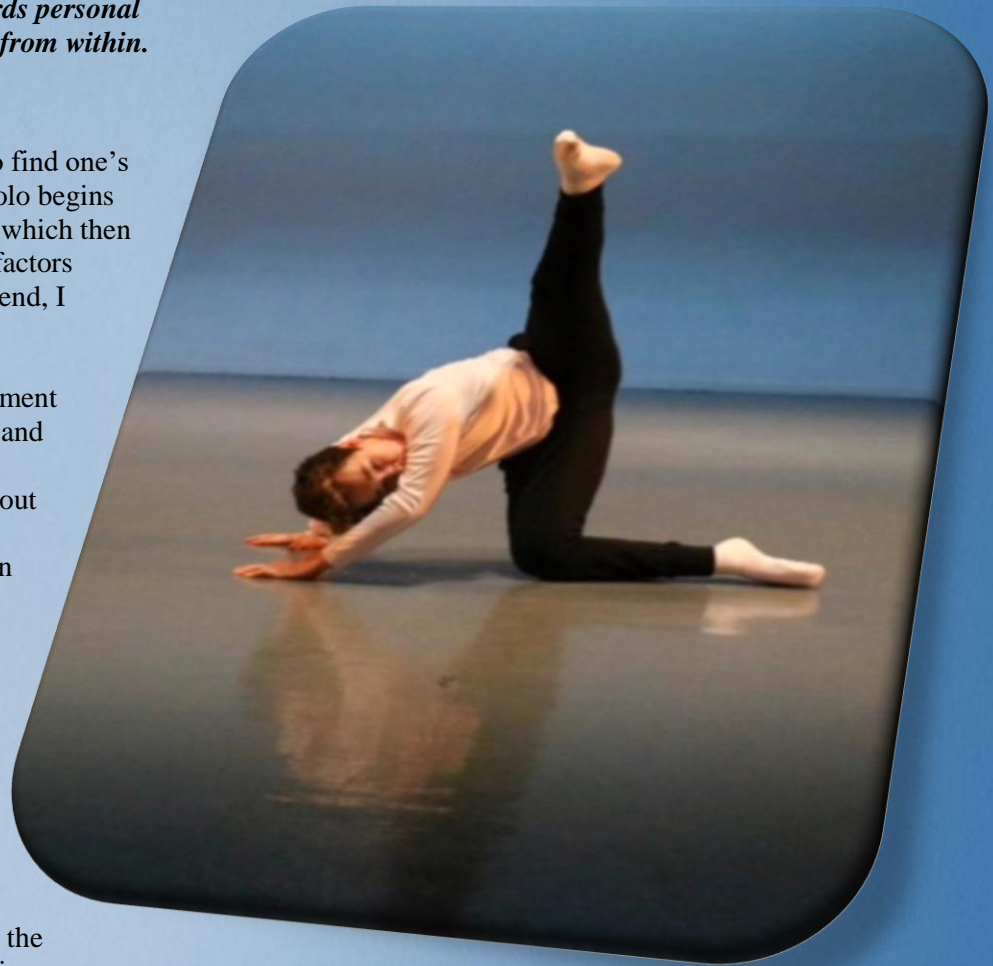
I have learned that the path towards personal betterment and fulfillment begins from within.

"Realizations" depicts a journey to find one's most authentic embodiment. The solo begins in a lost and trapped state of mind, which then progresses as I overcome external factors that were holding me back. By the end, I realize my **truest self**.

I choreographed this solo as a testament to the journey I have gone through and continue to travel, amid developed vocabulary that progresses throughout the movement. The use of embellishment and repetition within some of the phrases throughout the work represent **how**, although I remain the same person, I continue to evolve and become a more complex version of myself.

Several times my hands took the form of a mirror as a motif throughout, representing the constant self-critique that can plague me. Each time I retreated to the upstage corner, I found myself getting lost, having to restart the sequence.

As a male dancer pursuing my artistic passion, I have had to overcome constant judgments both from myself and society. While I develop my voice and become more confident in my identity, these negatives have begun to fade. I am able to become a more confident yet humble



PC Yoshi Sanders

version of myself ~ therefore finding my true identity.

It was an incredible challenge to put these realizations into movement and to tie this movement to a piece of music.



Matthews

Dance & Music ~ The Best Therapy

By: Aliza Matthews

National NHSDA Award Finalist

Arendell Parrott Academy

Advisor/Sponsor: Amanda Hort

PC Aliza Matthews

★ ***I love this piece because it takes me back
to the day life changed for me forever.***

The seven autistic students I taught at a Broadway camp for special needs children inspired my contemporary piece, entitled “***Remedy.***” In my first volunteer dance class, it was difficult for the young participants to speak clearly, move on tempo, or focus. However, through the customized therapeutic combination of music and dance, they sang loudly and clearly, executing every move to perfection. This was their positive remedy.

In the choreography, I wanted to share our combined metamorphosis through my own vision, which was most challenging because getting to know these children was the best moment of my life. I was pushing myself to create a dance that would represent exactly how I felt while teaching my seven new friends. Yet, I thought the piece could never be good enough.

As soon as I accepted the fact that this dance could not be as great as meeting them for the

first time, the pressure I put on myself disappeared. I was then able to focus on telling the story and, remarkably, the piece came together quite quickly and naturally after that. The children’s “ticks and quirks” inspired many of my sequences in a respectful way. For example, grabbing my dress at the beginning, or wrapping my arms across my body, resembled the children who were quick to fidget if quick to fidget if they became uncomfortable.

The dance evolved into its own entity, which reflected my experiences with these wonderful students... through the art of dance.



***Body Image ~
Body Acceptance
As Choreography***

**By: Ani Rosen
National NHSDA Award Finalist
Winward School
Advisor/Sponsor: Alesia Young**

All PC Ani Rosen

Women constantly feel their bodies are not beautiful enough, and I have experienced this firsthand. Diagnosed with Crohn's Disease at the brink of my high school years, my body weight has fluctuated dramatically. I lost almost 30 pounds due to my symptoms, gained it back as I grew healthier, and continued this cycle through multiple hospitalizations. My peers praised me for how skinny and "good" they thought I looked, though they did not realize the darkness I had experienced that resulted in this trauma. Initially feeling like my beauty was fading, as I became stronger, I began to realize as a dancer that my body was my power.

To bring awareness to all the young women who have felt pressure to be the ideal woman, I created this slow dance entitled

"Body Acceptance." Because my body is my vehicle for expression and elation, I have finally grown to love and embrace it at any weight. Through my soft movements, I wanted to convey vulnerability that we deal with daily as we constantly grapple with insecurity. I wanted to underscore these same movements with powerful, intricate movements to emphasize the strength it takes to defy these societal standards and live confidently.

With the media's favoritism for skinny, overly edited ~ yet stunning ~ models, and the pressure to fit a perfect social media persona with perfect make-up and clothing, we must find ways to appreciate our bodies for what they are, not how they superficially should be.

Choreography is the perfect vehicle to deal with this serious issue.





All PC Youth Performing Arts School

Synopsis:

Dancer & Choreographer Responsibilities

By: Kimberly Herndon Mangilla (Faculty)

Youth Performing Arts School

Advisor/Sponsor: Lora Ruttan

Edited from the Original Document

Youth Performing Arts School, a division of DuPont Manual High School (KY), offers a choreography intensive to build student commitment, integrity, and creativity. All participant must put great effort into each production, and it is stressed that “It’s not ok to just quit or give up before the performance.” Here follows an adaptation of the ***Basic Rules:***

Dancer Responsibilities

- Accept dances that fit availability when cast
- Dancer(s) & parent(s) must approve & sign relevant paperwork based on school policy for the safety & success of all participants
- Provide choreographer all contact information; respond in a timely manner when contacted
- Attend all rehearsals & performances, unless officially excused
- Provide 48-hour notice to choreographer & advisor if necessary to miss a rehearsal due to illness or an emergency
- Respond to all choreographer’s communications in a timely manner
- Be respectful & open-minded to choreographer’s feedback
- The choreographer may be a friend, but during rehearsals give the same focus, respect, & professionalism as with a faculty member

Choreographer Responsibilities

- Provide dancers with all rehearsal/performance dates & times
- Provide 48-hour notice to dancers & faculty mentors if canceling rehearsal due to extenuating circumstances
- Provide advisor with final cast list via email
- Create performing opportunities for all dancers
- Respect the physical safety & technical skill of dancers in creating choreography plus conducting rehearsals
- Send & respond all communications in a timely manner; remain open-minded to peer feedback & other issues

Great advice to help ensure positive outcomes!



***Special Feature:
Living Out Her Dreams with
Her Radio City Rockette Sisters***



Katelyn (center) with her Rockettes family. All PC Radio City Rockettes

**By: Katelyn Gaffney
Dancer, Radio City Rockettes
Somerset County Vocational and Technical High School (Graduate)
Advisor/Sponsor: Maureen Glenn**

The Radio City Rockettes are a sisterhood unlike any other. We are all individuals from different backgrounds who share a passion for dance and get to live out our dreams of dancing together on the Great Stage of Radio City Music Hall. I grew up with only brothers, and now being a Radio City Rockette, I can honestly say I have sisters.

I have idolized the Rockettes since I was a young girl going to see the ***Christmas Spectacular*** and now, as one of them, I truly idolize these women even more. The strength, power and love that emits from each and every one of these women is overwhelming and incredible.

The Christmas season is our busiest time of year, and with many of us away from our homes and loved ones, we create a family at Radio City. Because we perform in up to four shows per day, six days per week, we spend a lot of time together at Radio City during the holidays. In spite of that, we typically stay in the dressing rooms to hang out after our shows because we just don't want to leave each other! When we are not in season, we are usually found together celebrating other special and important times in our lives or just simply grabbing some pizza!



All PC Radio City Rockettes

I am always impressed at how quick all the Rockettes are to help one another and engage in giving back to our community. This season, knowing how important finding a cure for ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) is to me, my Rockette sisters surprised me with a birthday donation to a charity dedicated to a cure. My heart bursts for these women and I cannot even begin to express how thankful I am to have gained this family.

As Rockettes, we put our bodies and minds through rigorous training and rehearsals (we also rehearse six days a week, six hours a day for six weeks leading up to the *Christmas Spectacular!*). Every time one of us feels like we just can't kick again, you can find a fellow Rockette telling us we can do it. No matter the challenges we may face outside of the studio or theatre, I feel confident knowing that I have 79 sisters that constantly have my back. We all support each other with our whole hearts in every aspect of life.

In such a competitive career path, I'm inspired by how the Rockettes choose community over competition. We quite literally fall into each other's arms on stage during our iconic "Parade

of the Wooden Soldiers" number. And off stage, we often fall into an embrace. I couldn't be prouder to be a part of this family.



Check out the latest Radio City Rockettes News: <https://www.rockettes.com/>





All PC Kaia Fullmer

To Overcome Injury & Depression: How Obstacles May Lead to Success

By: Kaia Fullmer

El Cerrito High School

Advisor/Sponsor: Jessy Kronenberg

Never in my life had I felt such a sense of unbelonging or uselessness. Everything moved in slow motion for weeks after the break: the trip to the emergency room, the surgery, the pain. Time was passing me by, and I was forced to let it. I was wasting away. I had never broken a bone before then; I had never had a serious injury until that day. The sickening crack still haunts me. Breaking six bones in three seconds wasn't the part that bothered me ~ it was sitting back and watching life move on as if it didn't matter that I wasn't involved. I was out of school for almost a month, and it was terrible. I began drowning myself in waves of self-loathing, whether it was hatred towards my body, mind, or any actions I did or didn't take. I was depressed.

When I could go back to school, I hadn't realized it, but my lens on life had already shifted to the negative. I was only observing all the upsetting or frustrating aspects of my life, and it only enhanced my self-pity. Nothing seemed to help. I didn't care about school anymore, and when others spoke of their future, I could no longer seem to picture mine. One of my main joys in school prior to the break had been dance, but seeing as dance had caused the break, it was now also the source of my own frustration. An art that had once brought me endless joy was now only reminding me of my

inability. I was slowly losing myself to my depression, and I was letting it swallow me.

There is no snap-back-to-happiness after almost a year of overwhelming sadness; it is a slow and complex journey. I tried everything I could: I went back to dance when I was allowed, I talked to a therapist, I even considered medication...but nothing helped. There was a long time at school when I couldn't be bothered to participate in classes because I didn't see the point anymore. I lost friends and I stopped talking to my family. I closed myself off because I thought that would be best for everyone. I was seriously wrong, and I was lucky enough to realize that ~ before it was too late.

It took a lot of effort, but I was able to bring myself back to *"okay"* through self-reflection and getting back into schoolwork. I poured everything into my studies because I didn't know how else to get back on track. I started choreographing again and trying to take on roles of leadership in classes. I finally felt like I knew what I was doing. My mom and I became closer. I made new friends. My grades were going up ~ everything was working out.

In all honesty, I still don't feel complete. As I said before, there is no bounce back from depression; it is slow and often painful, but I'm working on it, one day at a time. And I am stronger through my struggle.

"...there is no bounce back from depression; it is slow and often painful, but I'm working on it, one day at a time. And I am stronger through my struggle." ~ Kaia Fullmer





Dance Arts Now!

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Our Editorial Staff invites student inductees and their chapter sponsors to contribute stories, poems, articles, chapter news, photos and other creative works for our future editions!

Learn more: nhsda-ndeo.org/danceartsnow



Welcome Back to School!



*Teacher Shakia Johnson and Pioneer Valley Performing Arts volunteers (in blue shirts), share dance with Leeds Elementary School classmates.
PC Daily Hampshire Gazette*