



Dance Arts Now!

The official NHSDA Newsletter for Middle and High School Students
Spring Issue 2020

*Spring in Our Step
Brings A Spring into Our Creativity*

*As flowers blossom beautifully, we discover that our dreams
awaken to new and exciting realities. In this issue, we honor our
mentors and explore how dance teaches us so many positive lessons,
which then grow into compassion and enlightenment.*

Contents

Poem

News

*Teaching...How to Serve
Somebody...*

A Blank Slate...

PC Olivia Netland



The Soul of Dance
By: Olivia Netland
Advisor/Sponsor: Ashley Mott
Park City High School
PC Olivia Netland

If it makes a mistake, it continues to learn.
If it's perplexed, it will try, it will crash, it will burn.

If it's sore, if it hurts, it continues to advance.
If it breaks, if it shatters, it moves on, despite the circumstance.

If it's battered, if it's bruised, if it's broken, if it's tired,
It continues to excel; it becomes more inspired.

It's powerful, it's strong, it makes the body keep going.
It jumps, it leaps, and no matter what, keeps going.

The soul of the foot is what helps one to dance.
The soul of the heart is what gives it that chance.





PC A. Mario Loiederman Middle School

Dance Class for Athletes!

★ *“Please come prepared for dance class ... just as you would by bringing your math book to math! Being prepared shows your commitment to growing....”*

The A. Mario Loiederman Middle School offers the course *“Dance for Athletes”* for 6th ~ 8th graders who want to enhance their athletic performance. No dance experience is required but students must participate in all aspects of the program. Agility, flexibility, footwork,

balance, and endurance are addressed to improve one’s ability to perform on the sports field. Grading is based on assignments, tests, performances, and “how each student demonstrates respect for others with an honest willingness to analyze and complete tasks.”

Modeled after *The National Core Arts Standards in Dance*, this beginners’ program enhances a well-rounded education for each athlete.



Check out the NDEO guest blog “Behind the Curtain,” which includes dancers’ personal experiences! Topics include flamenco, hip-hop, homage to choreographers, body positivity and self-care, and more:
ndeo.org/behindthecurtain



NEWS (cont.)



Dance Speaks Many Languages

HealthQuest Dance Academy is proud to include the American Ballet Theatre (ABT) national training curriculum. Comraderies among the dancers unite in the studio's mission, which incorporates elements from the French, Italian, and Russian schools. The focus: coordination, proper alignment, and artistry. Students prepare for internationally recognized examinations conducted by an ABT adjudicator.



PC HealthQuest

Our Precious Gift of Water ~ National Water Dance



PC National Water Dance. Photo by Miana Jun

National Water Dance is a collective body of dancers, including NHSDA members, and other leaders who are physically engaged in drawing attention to and action on water issues and climate change.

On **April 18, 2020**, National Water Dance will perform on the National Mall in Washington, DC as well as across the United State and Puerto Rico. Learn more: <http://nationalwaterdance.org>



NEWS (cont.)

Oldfields School "Dance A Difference Week" & Beyond

The hallmark of an Oldfields School education ~ "There are limitless opportunity to grow, whether a girl has little or no experience or has a unique talent and extensive training."

The OS curriculum offers a variety of techniques and interdisciplinary components. Regardless of the dancer's level, she will be involved in choreography and perform in concerts, assemblies, and other special events. The **Oldfields Dance Company** and after-school **Dance Sport** group both provide more advanced training. Students work with guest artists and participate in the **SWAT Dance Intensive**, which



PC Oldfields School

challenges them to complete 60 hours of classes within two weeks. The student-run **Dreamcatchers Hip Hop Dance Team** is a crowd pleaser on and off campus. Community events they have performed in include:

- "Independent Dance Network" Annual Festival
- "A Community Calling" for the Ailey Camp Baltimore Summer Program
- "Design in Motion" Annual Benefit Dance Concert to support our Wounded Warriors
- "Susan Ina Dance Studio" Annual Benefit Dance Concert to support Sarah's House (shelter for women and children)
- "Project More Love: Benefit Dance Concert" to support education for girls in Uganda
- "Maryland Dance Alliance" event



All PC Dance Explosion

Dance Explosion



Dance a Difference!

By: Stephanie Weinsier, NHSDA graduate

The Dance Explosion holds community activities throughout the year. These include hosting drives for their local pantry, Jubilee Soup Kitchen of Hollywood during Thanksgiving (Harvest Food Drive), and Valentine's Day (Have A Heart Food Drive), and collecting plastic bags for The Lion's Club to recycle into city benches. The members introduce children to dance classes and promote arts in education during ~ **Dance Difference Week!**



NEWS (cont.)

Mark Your Calendars!

- ✓ Dance A Difference Week, March 1-7
- ✓ Thank A Dance Teacher, May 7

Learn more about how you and your NHSDA chapter can celebrate ~ contact NDEO headquarters today.



PC Dance Explosion



PC Siamak Poursabadian.
www.arpanarts



PC National Park Service/Nathan King

Arts in Action! Celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

In memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the High Point High School Dancers in Beltsville, MD, perform for such community venues as the Riderwood Village Pastoral Ministries, which serves a local senior citizen facility.

Truly inspiring is the students' desire *"to share our deep expressions of standing for social justice and equality."*



PC High Point High School

NEWS (cont.)



NDEO Outstanding Dance Educator Recipient - PreK12

Ms. Susan Griffin has taught dance for all ages since she graduated from college. She was an Associate Instructor while pursuing her master's degree, has performed with professional companies, and is now teaching at South Mountain High School (AZ). Many of her students are now successful teachers and performers, including dancing with the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company.



*Want to share how your teacher inspires you?
Want to Thank Your Dance Teacher?
Go to the NDEO website!*

Excerpt from A Student Support Letter:

"[Ms. Griffin] was a mentor, a counselor, a mom, a cheerleader, and so much more. Walking into her class, you knew you were going to learn more than just dance. Her studio was a safe place that fostered teamwork, leadership, creativity, and diversity. Her approach to dance was not one-sided. She encouraged us to use our voices and bodies to express how we felt. She invited individuality while teaching us how to work as a collective. There was always a greater message behind every piece she created for us. From immigration to border patrol and self-respect, her choreography was accompanied by research and facts. She took us to see dance outside of the classroom. She welcomed the hard conversations and answered the tough questions. She taught us movements along with the steps."



Ms. Griffin (front) dancing with her students. PC Susan Griffin

NEWS (cont.).



PC Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

Great Inspiration: The Dance Education Laboratory (DEL) & Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School (PVPA)

DEL Program Founder: Jody Arnold

Directed by Ann Biddle, DEL Founding Faculty, with Felice Santorelli, PVPA Dance Dept. Leader

The PVPA Dance Dept. partners with DEL to help middle and high students broaden their understanding of dance education while acting as role models for younger students. Based in NYC at the 92nd Street Y, the program emphasizes connections to literature, social studies, and science. This unique combination of community service, mentoring, collaborative teaching and learning has proven to be successful with both the PVPA students and their mentees. PVPA DEL students also travel to NYC and Jacob's Pillow for performances and professional workshops.

Special Notes:

PVPA dancers will be featured in a documentary film about the program, which PBS will air in 2020...Look for "PS Dance! The Next GENERation."

And check out NHSDA award winner Yoshi Sanders' article about DEL immediately following this news item!

Student Response: "Thanks to our Dance Dept. Leader, Ms. Santorelli, and DEL!"



Teaching Children, Children Teaching

By: Yoshi Sanders

NHSDA Award Winner

Advisor/Sponsor: Felice Santorelli

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

I am standing at the front of the classroom, leading an energetic and bubbly group of fourth graders through a dance improvisation. It is an odd juxtaposition: the small cramped space with the desks pushed aside, usually meant for silent learning, is instead overflowing with movement, enthusiasm, and pure physical joy. I see the kids' smiles beaming with curiosity and raw excitement as they explore through the space in totally new ways. I see myself in the eyes of one boy staring innocently up at me, a shy and quiet kid who has yet to realize the possibilities dance can have in his life.

I am teaching in the classroom through my work with the Dance Education Laboratory (DEL), a professional development program for dance educators based in New York City. I have been trained in the DEL model as a high school mentor to teach a residency in an elementary school, introducing young kids to something wonderful, perhaps never presented to them before ~ **Dance**. Through my work as a DEL student leader and ambassador, along with my training at my school and in my studio, I have developed a love for dance that I so eagerly want to share with these children and with everyone.

Dance has helped me develop a poetic and mature voice that has guided me throughout

my daily life. It is the language I speak. It has stimulated parts of my brain that enhance my inner creativity, which in turn allows me to access new ways of experiencing the world. It keeps my mind fluid and ever evolving, which has led to a massive growth in self-confidence inside me...to guide me through this time of searching for my identity. This form of self-expression will forever get me through difficult circumstances.

I will continue to work on the best version of myself that I can possibly be, and dance will aid me greatly in this process. The leadership skills I have gained through teaching will always assist me in the future. I will carry the discipline and work ethic of dance as I pursue many new skills. The way I have challenged myself through dance I can apply to many other experiences. The skills of thinking creatively and collaboratively are transferable to other disciplines.

A dance teacher once told me that dance "feeds the depths of our soul." Yes, dance feeds my soul and I want to be that kind of mentor. I am teaching much more than steps. I am a role model to children who see that they too can use dance as a vehicle for self-expression and discovery.

I grew with the up message that boys don't dance, which limited me from pursuing my

passion to its fullest capacity. I feel lucky that I was able to break through the shell of self-doubt and social criticism that existed around dance as a boy growing up in a sports world. With the aid of my students, teachers, and family, I have never felt more encouraged to be the person and dancer that I am today. I want to be that kind of mentor, especially for other young boys.

In our lives, we face moments in which we must overcome adversity to reach personal fulfilment. Dance helps us find a voice and be able to overcome any obstacle to reach personal fulfilment. When I am teaching, I am showing my students the universality of movement ~ that dance is fundamental within us all and should be accessible to all!



Yoshi with his students. All PC Yoshi Sanders



Dance Teaches Us How to Serve

By: Aliza Matthews

National NHSDA Award Finalist

Arendell Parrott Academy

Advisor/Sponsor: Amanda Oakley Hort

Dance entertains, teaches, challenges, brings people together, tells a story, and most importantly, heals. I started dancing at the age of two, and since then I haven't stopped. I have been blessed with so much in life, and much of who I am I owe to dance, but there is one amazing gift that I will cherish forever... but my biggest blessing is sharing this art form with others. Dance has taught me how to serve others for a more enlightened, compassionate world.

Having had four wonderful great-grandparents, I learned how special it is to spend time with family. I wanted to bring this caring aspect to nursing homes and so, with a close group of singers, dancers, and musicians, we organized arts presentations for the elderly. My friends and I loved sharing with the residents and so we would also pass out baked goods and have conversations with this extended family. It was rewarding to see them so involved with our performances, and their excitement inspired me to share the arts with more people.

My next initiative spread to the Community Dance Company (CDC), which offers classes for dancers who cannot afford private studios. This program was giving so much to so many, I was inspired to help. Within a week, I raised \$1,500 through a *Go Fund Me*

account, which provided the company with seriously needed dance equipment. I have been teaching at CDC for over four years now and am grateful for this opportunity.

The Boys and Girls Club is another of my investments. While volunteering as a STEM tutor, my students expressed their interest in dance. I then started a program that offers them both ballet and jazz. Since these members come to the Boys and Girls Club every day after school, they don't get to do afterschool activities and I am grateful to offer them dance classes in their own facility. This program has been very successful, and I have great plans for its future.

My passion would extend beyond the United States and with people who, despite their terrible losses, still longed for comfort found only in the arts, I then traveled with my 501C3 professional dance company, OM Grown, to Puerto Rico. It is well-known that this island has experienced massive damage from hurricanes and earthquakes, and many places still have not recovered. Even after our company performed and offered community dance classes, we continued to organize arts-centered fundraisers to help, especially in San Juan. We remain honored and humbled by this amazing trip and with such kind people who continue to thank us for our help.



All PC Aliza Matthews

Continuing upon this lifetime journey, one summer I was able to take my initiative to Pinehurst, North Carolina to a theater camp for children with special needs. These young ones are not often afforded the opportunity to perform, but this amazing place gave them that chance. I oversaw choreographing and teaching their dance movements and, although often challenging, it was one of my most rewarding experiences so far.

The pride everyone shared for their children was very moving and my heart lightened when the parents personally thanked me for my efforts ~ and therefore this camp has inspired me to dedicate my life to sharing the arts for children with special needs. Out of all the opportunities dance has given me, this experience remains the most rewarding. I thought I had known the importance of dance, but my seven young campers showed how the arts reveal a true power of healing.

Because of these incredible experiences, I want to become an occupational therapist and notably to teach. Every child should feel confidence and joy, and I want to realize this with as many young ones as possible. It is a blessing to experience how the arts can treat people with dignity. I want to dedicate my life connecting the arts and science, pushing the boundaries of treatment for disabilities and for those who search for inspiration and strength, both physically and emotionally.

Dance has enriched my past and helps me discover my future.



All PC Hallie Walters

Something Else

By: Hallie Walters

NHSDA Award, Honorable Mention

***South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts
& Humanities***

Advisor/Sponsor: Irina Ushakova

My original choreography, entitled ***“Somebody Else”***, was inspired by a feeling that I frequently encountered. As a senior, I faced uncertainty and change in my life. I found I was evolving into someone who was independent, mature, and honest. While these were all good features, at times I couldn’t recognize myself because I had gone through so much change.

I saw this dilemma happening in the people around me as well, which saddened me to realize that some of those once closest to me were no longer the people I had grown to love. This feeling wasn’t something I could put into words, but I knew I could portray this evolution through movement ~ and I had been given the outlet to do so.

When first choreographing, I was scared; I had so much freedom but no idea what I should do with it. For a long time, I could not get started...*nothing felt right*. Never the most naturally gifted and, with a lack of coordination, dance was undeniably hard both physically and emotionally for me. I had to fight for every ounce of turnout in my body.

So why was I continuing to enter the studio every day? Was it an abusive relationship? I would argue that it was not, because while it could be trying, it was also the most rewarding experience I knew. Dance taught me “hard work beats talent when talent does not work, and this was to be a lesson I would continue to remember in my everyday life.

With this realization, I had a feeling of momentum that I needed to return to the studio. It was at this point I came up with movement phrases that felt natural, fit my style, and helped me develop a story that I could make sense of. Dance was giving me an outlet to express what I had thought could not be put into words or even begin to identify. Yet it was making me bilingual; I was lucky enough to speak a language that so many could understand, and then I found a song that would both contrast and complement my movement.

Once I began, the rest of the choreography could not be stopped because...

Dance has a lasting impact on my life, both in and out of the studio; it teaches the importance of hard work, discipline, and perseverance. I feel that dance takes care of me and shows me how to truly love.



A Blank Slate Leads to...Creativity & Choreography

By: Rush Johnston

Graduate, South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities

Advisor/Sponsor: Irina Ushakova

Rush wrote this article when she was a high school senior. She is now pursuing her BFA in Dance at the Peabody Conservatory, Johns Hopkins University.

I started with a completely blank slate when I began to flesh out my senior solo. I did not know what style or movement quality I wanted. I had no music, no theme in mind to spring from. All I knew was that I wanted something completely different from what I was used to. I was seeking a way to push myself even further as a choreographer and this was the perfect opportunity.

I spent several evenings in the studio with the curtain pulled across the mirror, experimenting with what movement quality felt the most authentic at the time. Once I had a sketch of what I was looking for, I searched for seemingly more obscure musicians and stumbled upon a piece called **"Introduction; Nothingness"** arranged by Hayden Calnin and inspired by the Alan Watt's lecture **"The State of Nothing."**

Both the accompanying instrumental music and the spoken word felt so natural in my body. I knew the concept of nothingness, as well as finding the right balance between subtle gestures and grander movement, would be challenges that I would face within the piece.

Finally, I knew this speech would address the audience in an unexpected way and evoke deeper thought than just the form of the movement, which was what ultimately lead me to choreograph...

Nothingness





Dance Arts Now!

Editorial Staff

Susan McGreevy-Nichols,
NDEO Executive Director
Colleen Hearn Dean,
Senior Editor

Melissa Greenblatt,
Managing Director
Kari Schrade,
Program Coordinator

Dance Arts Now! is a publication of the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO)
National Dance Education Organization (NDEO)
8609 2nd Avenue, Suite 203-B Silver Spring, MD 20910 301.585.2880

©National Dance Education Organization, 2020, All Rights Reserved

Disclaimer:

The National Honor Society for Dance Arts (NHSDA) recognizes the outstanding achievements of dance students in both the public and private sectors. To foster this true art form, we encourage freedom of expression and speech with respect for philosophical, cultural, and religious beliefs. Reference herein to any specific religious beliefs or practices does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by NHSDA or the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO). Views and opinions expressed in this document are those of the article authors and do not necessarily state or reflect those of the National Honor Society for Dance Arts or NDEO.

Contributing writers, or their institutions, submitted all photos unless otherwise noted.



Be Published! Dance Arts Now! is the official newsletter of the
National Society for Dance Arts™ (NHSDA) Junior and Secondary Programs.

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