

OUR STUDENT REPORTER VISITS

“CENTER STAGE”

BY TALIA EHRENBERG, AGE 12

Talia has been a student at Joy of Motion since 2014. For her bat mitzvah service project, she is volunteering as a “student reporter,” writing a series about Joy of Motion programs in the studio and in the community. For this piece, she also volunteered in the theater before and during the show. Visit our blog to see the other pieces in her series. Thank you, Talia! Stay tuned for more.

For National Choreography Month (or NACHMO), choreographers from all over the nation create original choreography during the month of January. On February 17th and 18th, Glade Dance Collective produced a showcase of DC choreographers, with Joy of Motion and NACHMO DC co-presenting the show at the Jack Guidone Theatre. This performance was something so original and creative and the passion for dance was bursting through in each piece.

I was able not only to attend a NACHMO performance, but also see all of the hard work from both dancers and volunteers, working both behind the scenes and on the stage.

The dance studio atmosphere made me skeptical of how a studio could be turned into a theater. But the volunteers, including me, removed the wall between the two studios, pulled seating risers from the back wall (which normally go unnoticed during class), and positioned lights and speakers in order to create the magical, theatrical feel. With big curtains draped across the windows and beautiful lighting on the stage, as well as a tech booth, I was certainly amazed.

Everyone who was a part of this really had the goal in mind of sparking joy and passion. Particular pieces brought

something so original, including a piece about social justice and rights in the United States or (one of my favorites) a large group of multigenerational performers demonstrating the importance of life through the power of dance. I noticed that as the dancers put more emotion and drive into their dancing, the audience responded, waiting to see the rest of the story and eager to see how everything turned out. It was very clear that the music and dance spoke to the audience, and they listened.

This is so important for everyone to be able to experience. Joy of Motion carries their mission out into the confusing and stressful world we live in and shares something as simple as joy, which we can all understand. The universal language of dance is uniting people across the nation.



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WHAT'S NEXT?

- In early May, we will present the fully-produced spring concerts for our Youth Dance Ensemble, American Dance Conservatory, and Youth Performance Company programs at American University's Greenberg Theatre.
- In early June, our adult Dance Institute program, LEAP!, will present their year-end concert at the Jack Guidone Theater.
- Of course, the “most populous” event upcoming event is the Joy of Motion Dance Festival (aka: #JoyFest), our year-end celebration of the Community Dance School's youth programs. With more than eight hundred youth performers in Fort Reno Park on June 10th, JoyFest is always fun for the whole family.

WHO WE ARE

OUR MISSION: to unite dance professionals, students, and audiences by providing exceptional dance education and performances that stimulate a universal love of dance.

OUR VISION: a thriving, creative community that celebrates its diversity through dance.

STAFF

Vanessa Rowan, Interim Managing Director & Director of Operations • Helen L. Hayes, Interim Program Director & Dance Institute Director
Julia Harman Cain, Director of External Relations • Sarah Chapin, Director of Production • Krystal Odom, Director of Community Education
Kourtney Ginn, School Program Coordinator & Core Faculty • Maggie Walker, Marketing Manager • Maddie Maranto, Graphic Designer
Alex Schools, Studio Manager • Andrea D'Annunzio, Assistant Studio Manager • Kerry Gallagher, Assistant Studio Manager • Bekah Elles, Studio Assistant
Aja Neal, Studio Assistant • Desmond Jordan, Studio Assistant • Stephanie Lamoreau, Studio Assistant • Cheryl Odametey, Studio Assistant
Jennifer Dobbins, Youth Dance Ensemble Co-Director • Kelly Kunst, American Dance Conservatory Director • Elizabeth Malone, Youth Dance Ensemble Co-Director

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A DOZEN YEARS OF YDE

A piece by long-time Youth Dance Ensemble student Serena Baldick

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A DOZEN YEARS

of Youth Dance Ensemble

by Serena Baldick, age 17

Get to Know
Krystal

This February, longtime faculty member Krystal Odom became our new Director of Community Education. Krystal has been teaching at Joy of Motion for more than 10 years, so many of you know her already — but we wanted to give you a glimpse into her new role!

Q: How and when did you start dancing?

A: I grew up in a family of dancers, so it was very natural and normal for me to start dancing. I began my formal training at 4 years old, but I had grown up in the studio.

Q: What is a favorite dance memory from childhood?

A: My favorite childhood dance memory is performing in *The Nutcracker*, in which my sister was Clara and my mom was the director.

Q: How did you start teaching at Joy of Motion?

A: Oddly enough, my sister, who was a professional ballet dancer, was a Workstudy. She overheard that Joy of Motion was in need of an outreach teacher, so I applied and got the job.

Q: What is a favorite memory (or two) from your teaching career?

A: My favorite memories are when I see happy faces of my dance kids coming off stage because they just had a great performance. When they succeed in dance, I succeed.

Q: What does being the Director of Community Education entail?

A: It entails planning and scheduling classes, getting to know each studio, and learning what the best classes are for each studio— as each have their own identity and population. I also get to know students and instructors so that I am able to meet the needs of both. I like to make our students a little happier in their dance experience here!

Q: What are you excited about in the coming year?

A: I am excited to see the continued growth of Joy of Motion. I am also excited about new classes and workshops for adults.

Q: What is your advice for new adult students?

A: Come and try something new! You never know what you could fall in love with! Also, keep coming back, dance is a discipline that needs nurturing, time, and dedication. Just keep coming back!



My name is Serena Baldick, and I am the first student to have gone through twelve years of training in Joy of Motion's Youth Dance Ensemble. It is impossible for me to look back on my childhood and not think of what YDE taught me. Successive videos of my progression through the levels reveal how YDE transformed me as a dancer. In Level 1, I was a gangly and uncoordinated six year old leaping over imaginary ponds in my rainbow tutu. Twelve years later, I could jeté over my first grade self and choreograph a phrase along with it. With that said, dance is not the only thing YDE has given me. Having spent 3,744 hours of my life in JOM studios, it is no wonder that YDE became my second home and the teachers and students part of my extended family. I could not forget the past dozen years, as the lessons I have learned physically, mentally and intrinsically will always be with me.

"My biggest takeaways are the lessons that translate to my everyday life."

"Strong minds, strong bodies" is an apt YDE slogan; but when asked about what I have learned most, the answer is not just movement

repertoire, improvisation technique, or memorization ability. In fact, my biggest takeaways are the lessons that translate to my everyday life. Helen Hayes, my YDE dance mother, taught me what it means to be a good leader, including the responsibility of knowing when to step back. The natural turnover of dancers and occasional change of instructors taught me to be adaptable and personable. Having been a Company member since 8th grade, my school work ethic was partially dictated by YDE, requiring me to stay organized both in and out of the studio. With over a hundred costume pieces sitting in a box at home, I could not be a literal or figurative step

behind. Ultimately, YDE taught me about community and companionship. When I graduate in a few months, I will walk away from the brightly-colored walls of the Bethesda studios knowing that the relationships with my mentors and friends will hold strong for the rest of my life. Some may say these traits are irrelevant— helpful in life but nonsensical in dance. My YDE career says otherwise.

In my first year, Ms. Helen led a full company rehearsal for a then-annual piece entitled *Joyful Motion*, back when the entirety of YDE could fit into one studio. I remember gazing awestruck at the much older YDE Company members, dressed in black leotards and smiling at each other. I remember blushing when they called us cute, praying I could be like them when I grew up. Today, I put on my black leotard with pride remembering the years that brought me to this point. In May, I will be presenting my senior solo, the culminating symbol of what I have learned, but it will really only reveal a fraction of that. The night before, I will be folding my costumes after fishing them out from the twelve-year-old box filled with child-sized leotards and sequined shirts. That afternoon, I will be helping the Level 1s get into their costumes, giving their teacher a break from their boundless energy. An hour before, I will be doing the makeup of my best friend while another does my hair and I try to quiet the butterflies I still get no matter how many times I have performed. Minutes before, I will be squeezing the hands of those friends while collectively trying to take a calming breath before our big finale. And finally, when I perform in the Greenberg Theatre for the last time, you may see a high leg and dramatic face, but that will only portray part of my YDE self. I am so much more than what you can see from your seat in the audience, and YDE helped me get there.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: Allison Feierabend

This past fall, Allison (a longtime student and supporter of Joy of Motion) became the first donor to the Promise Scholarship, which encourages and applauds participation in conservatory-style training among those who are traditionally under-represented in the art of dance. In her own words:

"Everyone, especially our youth, deserves a chance to explore and cultivate their natural talents.

"For many years, Joy of Motion has provided need-based financial aid to young students from families with limited means. This year, Joy of Motion complemented the financial aid program with a new, merit-based scholarship that could be awarded to a talented student who might not otherwise be eligible for assistance.

"When I was offered the chance to provide financial support for this new

program, I jumped at the chance because arts education is so beneficial to students -- and arts education funding for public schools is so limited. Joy of Motion's Youth Dance Ensemble provides a robust dance education program for so many young people and I'm proud to be a supporter."

Learn more about Youth Financial Aid & the Promise Scholarship right here: bit.ly/promiseJOM