

Dance Arts Now!

The official NHSDA Newsletter for Middle and High School Students
Spring 2016

*Spring Brings Hope and
A Renewal of Creativity*



Dancer Athyna Galaviz. Photo by Jessica Martinez

As flower buds break through the last blankets of snow, spring brings a feeling of rebirth and hope. With this image, we will read how dance can metamorphose us emotionally and physically ~ and ultimately, our creativity will be amazing.

Congratulations to Outstanding Dance Educator Amanda Kinnaird, her students, and to our other writers for their contributions, which make this a most meaningful issue.

~ Dance Arts Now! Editorial Staff

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Student Dance Day Skines

On October 17, 2015, a joint collaboration between CREDO, NDEO, NHSDA, and Virginia Beach Gifted Dance Education Program presented the exhilarating **Student Dance Day** workshop. Registrants included members of the Virginia Beach Gifted Dance Program, the City Dance Theatre of Richmond, and students from both North Carolina and Virginia studios. Eight Norfolk State University (NSU) volunteers took charge of set-up and registration and participated in the informal showing.

Planner Mary Ann Laverty “wanted to offer classes that were not available in either the school or dance studio settings,” and so the day was divided into specialized master techniques.

Certified dance therapist Valerie Winborne led a large group “think/pare/share” activity, which afforded students the opportunity to collaborate with young people from other schools. Goal: six groups performed original choreography “on the spot.”



Students engaged in creative collaboration. Photo courtesy of MAL

Master Classes

Caribbean, West African, Horton, Ballet, Contemporary, Modern, Fusion, Body Modalities, Contact Improvisation

Guest Artists

Lydia CoCo – Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre

Pamella Washburne – Urban Bush Women

Sunshine – Dance with Sunshine

In the afternoon informal demonstration, students exhibited the pulsing movements of Fusion and West African rhythms. City Dance Theatre dancers glided across the floor in a modern ballroom piece; NSU dancers inspired the audience with a spiritual, and the Virginia Beach Gifted students presented a sensitively developed modern duet. Peer reviews and discussion provided positive reflections.

Standards based dance education ~ highlighted by new elements of cultural form ~ broadened collaborative creativity through prompted guidance. Students, parents, and guest artists all reiterated that they “would love to have the day evolve into an annual event!” Thank you to all who made **Student Dance Day** a success.



Afternoon performance. Photo courtesy of MAL



Students perform in the gym. Photo courtesy of MAL

NEWS (Cont.)



Outstanding Dance Educator Amanda Kinnaird with her students. Photo by Jessica Martinez

NDEO Outstanding Dance Educator K-12

The National Dance Education Organization recently announced the recipient of the Outstanding Dance Educator K-12 award ~ NHSDA chapter advisor Amanada Kinnaird. She has worked in the Phoenix Union High School District for eleven years.

Ms. Kinnaird has taught at Maryvale High School (Phoenix, AZ) as the Dance Company Director for the past decade, and is now the Department Chair of the Performing Arts Program on her campus. She received her BFA in Dance Education from Arizona State University, as well as a MEd in Secondary Education and MEd in Educational Leadership from Northern Arizona University. She developed curriculum in the Phoenix Union High School District and assessments at the district and state levels. She served on the Arizona Dance Standards Revision Committee through the Arizona Department of Education. Awards: the Katherine Lindholm-Lane Scholarship, the Collegiate Community Partnership Award, Maryvale HS Employee of the Year, and the Bill Evans Excellence in Teaching Award.

Read more about NDEO award winners,
http://www.ndeo.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=893257&module_id=189263

“Throughout the entire process of learning and developing my technique, I had Ms. Kinnaird by my side cheering me on. She offered me insightful feedback, allowing me to better my performance, and I had self-discipline to continue working so that my movements would be accurate and beautiful.”

~ Saul Moreno
Senior, Dance Company Member

“The way Ms. Kinnaird moves and explains every aspect of dance inspires me to become an even stronger dancer. When she sees that someone makes a mistake, she encourages him to keep trying...This boosts the confidence and ability of her students. I’m grateful for my experience in this program.”

~ Daniel Alvarez
Junior Beginning Dance Student

“I feel excited every single day to see Ms. Kinnaird and learn more about dance, to gain new skills, to focus on my technique and to add on to our movement combinations.”

~ April Olivas Rivera
Junior, Beginning Dance Student

To Move Rhythmically...Amazing

By: Saul Moreno
Maryvale High School
Advisor/Sponsor: Amanda Kinnaird

Saul is a gifted senior and member of the Maryvale High School Dance Company.

Dance is to move
Rhythmically to music
A set sequence of steps
Whether it's freestyle, ballet,
Contemporary, or another style,
You can always personalize it to
Show more than you can say

In my belief, dance is a
Unique form of art that allows
One to express one freely
...without having to think twice
About what comes next
I believe that dance has helped me
With many situations in life

If I'm going through a tough time
Or just having a bad day
I know with just one click
From my playlist
My body begins to move
This then helps me to release
What I'm going through at that time

I rely on dance on so many levels,
It's unbelievable
My past experiences, my emotions,
Talented dancers who are
Not afraid to take risks,
All inspire me to continue dancing
And to find myself even more

These things have helped me accept that
Different
Is certainly okay, especially
In my dance environment
No matter what, movement
Will come out of you naturally
And will look amazing!



Saul dances with student partners. Photo by Jessica Martinez



Dancers explore creative movement in class.

Dance as Emotional and Physical Well-Being: Eight Perspectives

**By: Daniel Alvarez, Giselle Molina, Renique Smith, Edilia Sevilla,
Reyna Preciado, April Olivas Rivera, LaQarin Davis, Maria Gomez
Photographer: Jessica Martinez
Maryvale High School
Advisor/Sponsor: Amanda Kinnaird**

Maryvale Dance Company Members, Giselle and Edilia, as well as the beginning dance students, have responded with their insight in these writings. Jessica exhibits tremendous talent in both photography and dancing and also participates in the school's yearbook program.

Jn this series of essays, honors students discuss how dance empowers them to explore life positively ~ in body, mind, and spirit.

Daniel ~ *“Dance means a great deal when I express my emotions with each movement that I perform. I then forget all of my problems outside...I look forward to every day, learning a new genre as we move through the year. I especially like ballet because it grips me emotionally and the movements clearly stand out.”*

“The dance experience offers an outlet to express how I'm feeling on the inside. And to nourish this, I am more aware of my diet and cautious about what I eat. I need strength and energy to perform well in class. Stage fright was once one of my biggest fears, but dancing in front of my class built my confidence to get one more step closer to becoming an even stronger dancer ~ and performing on the big stage.”

Giselle ~ “Everyone has a reason to dance and most might say ‘to escape my problems’ or ‘to express myself.’ Personally, I don’t dance to escape my problems....for me, dancing is a way of dealing with them! I can really show everyone what I’m going through, with body language and movement, rather than saying it verbally.”

“This gives a sense of relief about everything...my problems, my life.” “Once you start dancing, you cannot listen to a single song without starting to improvise. I love how much music and dancing impact my life. Dancing is a way to be goofy, funny, serious, sad...all without ever feeling judged. Let’s not forget what a good workout we get from dancing as well!”

Renique ~ “Dance is much more than just connecting movements and patterns that flow together. It is a way to express oneself emotionally...to move out of my comfort zone, to be free. I like to think of it in the same way as a laugh. Laughter is universal, and needs no translation. There are many styles of dance, but a story can be told through any of these forms.”

“In addition to its expressive nature, dance supports anatomy so that we become familiar with muscles that aren’t typically used in daily life. With that said, dance helps me in many sports, especially with my balance and focus as well as my flexibility and strength. I have gained confidence and feel more comfortable just being who I am. Dance has opened my eyes to see that everything has a different perspective.”

Edilia ~ “Day by day, dance benefits me physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. It helps my physical health by pushing my body beyond its limit ~ mentally through the memorization and coordination of movement with music, emotionally because dance helps me to forget about my problems, and spiritually because after a long session of dance, I feel at peace with myself.” “...I have definitely learned to have patience with others as I teach them movement phrases and to work as a team when creating choreography. I take chances through my choreography and...being unique is something to be proud of, and there is never a wrong answer when creating movement.

“Dance is a way to express everything I feel without a need to use words. It means wearing my heart upon my sleeve, as I move to the rhythm of my emotions. It is a way to let go of all the bad energy I may have within me, while creating something beautiful and expressing something positive in the process. It is an escape from my life at home, school and work. Dance makes each day better, I look forward to it each and every day.

“Dance is my passion!”

Reyna ~ “The concept of being surrounded by those who radiate the same positive energy as I do, while taking advantage of the freedom to spiritually and physically let myself go, is the overall reason behind my choice to dance. Since the moment I joined cheerleading, my awkward way of moving in a tight and restricted way has been evident. These sharp, structured motions restricted me from being able to release the stress buried beneath my cheer uniform. This was brought to my attention, to the surface, last year when I witnessed my first dance concert. The dancers’ anger seemed as if it had rolled off their shoulders and spiraled away as they turned, and as they walked off the stage I noticed an expression that I missed ~ a smile.”

“At that moment my determination to be in dance was to become a reality. I then chose dance as my primary elective. From my first class and onward, dance has been so much more than just an elective; it has become an intimate source of happiness. Every aspect creates a more positive perspective on life. It constantly ignites me with a need to improve myself and it provides me with inspiration....While the rest of my schedule consists of AP and honors classes, I finally experience a release shared with positive people who are just as happy to be dancing, and the chance to challenge myself in an emotional, even spiritual way. I understood educational challenges, but the idea of challenging ‘who I am emotionally’ was unfamiliar. Now, thanks to dance, I am able to find myself, which gives me something to look forward to on a daily basis. For once, a classroom is my getaway to happiness, to truly experience ~ yes, a smile.”



April ~ *“I dance to express the feelings in a song. By moving in a specific way, it speaks for the song in a physical manner. When I feel stressed, dancing gives me an adrenaline rush that helps me to think more positively. It helps me learn technique through various dance forms. I love dance because I can just be myself and show people that I’m good at something and passionate about the art. It also helps me to improve my flexibility, strength, endurance and coordination. Dancing allows me to be more open and to meet new people, and it helps with my self-esteem to be more confident in my own skin, to overcome my shyness when performing for others.*

“I feel so blessed to have the ability to move...I hope to keep dancing throughout my entire life and to inspire others to overcome their fears of trying new things. Dancing is my passion and will stay with me forever.”

LaQarin ~ *“To me, dance is not just a workout, it’s a chance to show the world who I am. Not just physically, but mentally, emotionally and even spiritually. Anyone can dance, and I mean anyone. Dancing gives us the opportunity to express beyond words. Would we rather hear a speech about ancient Greece, for example, or would we rather have a dance about ancient Greece capture our attention completely? We never know what is to come from someone who dances. We can always expect a surprise.*

“Why? ...Because dance is something that has no limits. We can move in a crazy or silly way, be wild, to perform with grace and elegance...or any combination of these. No matter how we decide to move, we can always keep our audience guessing about what we will do next. This is the excitement and wonder of dance.”

Maria ~ *“The reason I like to dance is because I get to make art through movement. Dancing allows me to express my thoughts and emotions in many ways that words just can’t describe. Dance has increased my flexibility and my balance. Not only that, but it has helped me overcome my fears of performing in front of strangers on a stage. Being in dance makes me feel like I’m important and that I matter. I feel like I am part of a team or part of a family in my dance class.” “Dance means to overcome. It is my little safe haven, my little piece of paradise. I escape the many daily problems going on at home. I dance because it lets me express my emotions, all while getting exercise...”*





Students demonstrate team work in the choreographic process.

Twists and Turns ~ In the Choreographic Process

**By: Emma Havighorst
Ridge High School
Advisor/Sponsor: Rachel Miranda**

*Emma is a captain and choreographer for the Ridge Dance Collective, a modern student -led group, plus a member of Ridge Dance Team. She interns at a local marketing firm, tutors, and writes for websites and online publications.
Note: All photos are courtesy of the Ridge High School Dance Program.*

In my Dance II class at school, we were assigned a group choreography project in which we were to create at least a two and a half minute piece based on a specific type of choreographic study or element. The process was intensive but well worth it when the dance evolved and was finally performed on stage.

From the beginning, my five-member team imagined creating a text study based on the last line of F. Scott Fitzgerald's novella *The Great Gatsby*,

"And so we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past."

We then examined two options from the 2013 film soundtrack: "Gatsby Believed in the Green Light" by Various Artists, and "Together" by The XX. Originally we were leaning towards the first selection, but we fell in love with the instrumental version of "Together" by SigmaCat.

After analyzing the music, we decided that a prop study would work with the tempo and quality of song. It didn't take long to decide to use a rope; in fact, all it took was another choreographer yelling out "ROPE" for us to agree that it would create an interesting visual and a great choreographic element to add to our dance. From there, we decided that by using this

tool we could focus on weight sharing with positive/negative space. Although this change in direction from a text to a prop study forced us to abandon the connection to Gatsby, the movement potential with the rope was worth the challenge.

We all agreed that we should begin entangled in the rope, then slowly break away throughout the composition, creating movements and shapes with varied emphases ~ finally returning, entangled again at the very end. This inspired the naming of our piece: *Tangled*. This more literal concept with the rope translated into an abstract - based dance, which allowed viewers to decide for themselves what its meaning was, and to see how it played a role in our movement.

Over the entire span of choreographing, everyone contributed equally and worked together very well. If one person felt something wasn't right, she spoke up, so that we all compromised. In response to required forms and class outlines, everyone took part in commanding at least one, which balanced the workload throughout the group.

When the piece was performed at the Spring Dance Showcase, I was incredibly proud of our work and appreciative of the positive feedback we received from both dancers and the audience. The performance was really strong and I felt fully confident with the rope and how we manipulated it. Overall, I loved this student choreography piece and I'm so happy to have been part of such an amazing class of girls creating a fun and interesting dance.



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