

Heart of Dance



2016/2017
ANNUAL
REPORT



Celebrating Two Years of Heart of Dance!

“At first people didn’t want to hold hands with each other, but when they got the hang of it they wanted to, and it didn’t matter if they were Somali, white or black...they still danced with each other. And then at the end they cared about each other and if they messed up they kept on trying and trying.”

Nia, Minneapolis fifth grader

Inspired by the award-winning documentary *Mad Hot Ballroom*, Minnesota nonprofit Heart of Dance introduced Dancing Classrooms to Twin Cities fifth graders two years ago. Now Heart of Dance is the fastest-growing site of this proven global Social and Emotional Learning Program. New York-trained Teaching Artists teach students Merengue, Tango, Rumba, Foxtrot, Waltz and Swing (now Salsa for eighth graders) during their ten-week residency. They work with teachers to coordinate dances with other subjects.

Dancing Classrooms uses elegant ballroom dance as a vehicle to teach essential life skills: Respect, Elegance and Teamwork.

“Nowhere else do kids learn elegance, grace and gender respect.”

St. Paul parent



“The key lesson is how to treat others...how to treat each other with respect.”

Principal James Clark, Windom Dual Immersion School, Minneapolis

92% of principals and 81% of teachers saw a positive change in the way children treated each other.

“Fifth grade saw a decline in behavior (issues) and increase in positive student relationships.”

“Their level of respect toward one another increased each lesson.”

“It was lovely to see students grow in confidence and encourage each other. Some of our quietest students were shining stars on the dance floor.”

58% of principals believed Dancing Classrooms had a positive impact on academic performance (remainder said “Don’t know” or too early to assess).

“I don’t think it was a coincidence that we had dance and had the most significant growth as well as proficiency compared to the rest of the school.”
(Fifth grade teacher, Minneapolis)

“Students worked more effectively together in the classroom.”

“Dancing Classrooms made the classroom want to write more.”



75% of principals saw a positive change in school climate and 78% of teachers said their classroom experienced positive change after starting Dancing Classrooms.

“I noticed an increased trust from the get-go. Usually, that kind of trust-building takes weeks.”

“They loved it and I felt like it brought out confidence and an inner strength they didn’t know they had.”

“It was a great community-builder and positively impacted all four of our classrooms.”

75% of parents saw positive change in how their children felt about themselves during Dancing Classrooms.

“He felt proud. We were proud. He felt more grown up.”

“Comparte mas sus emociones: She shares her emotions more.”

82% of parents would recommend Dancing Classrooms

“I’ve witnessed my son teaching our daughter how to be polite. He even opened the door for her.”

“Who knew 10 and 11 year olds could do it? They didn’t know. Thanks for stretching their expectations of themselves.”

Above results and comments come from 2016-17 Dancing Classrooms surveys of Twin Cities educators and parents, or from video at www.heartofdancemn.org.

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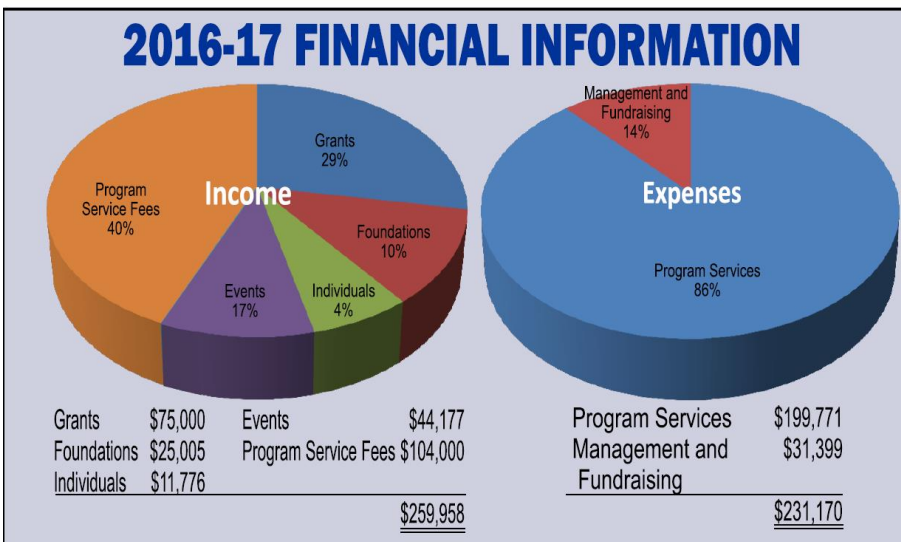
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1,760+ dancing fifth graders. 24 schools. 80 classrooms.
All in our first two years. We couldn't have done this alone.

As fifth grader Jose told us, **"Dancing Classrooms builds bridges."** You are doing the same. We are grateful to our donors and funders large and small, to our dedicated Classroom Assistants and other amazing volunteers, to our Heart of Dance staff team including our talented Teaching Artists, and most of all, to our educator partners who took a chance to journey with us.

Because of you, we will serve 2500+ students in over 100 classrooms in school year 2017-18. We will grow our fifth grade classrooms and launch our inaugural eighth grade residency in the Twin Cities. We will welcome our fifth grade partner schools in Duluth and Rochester, Minnesota.

Thank you for helping to transform young lives and build community within our schools and beyond.

Dennis Yelkin, Board Chair

Andrea Miranda and Ember Reichgott Junge,
Co-Presidents



"I liked Dancing Classrooms because it did not just teach us how to dance. It taught us how to make more bridges with our classmates, like a better friendship and getting to know someone better. Everyone knows there is nothing stronger than love in the world and I think that was really important from Dancing Classrooms."

Jose, Maplewood fifth grader

Help bring Dancing Classrooms to a child you love!

- Connect us to educators and parents
- Volunteer as a Classroom Assistant
- Audition to become a Teaching Artist
- Make a financial gift in any amount
- Become a Classroom Sponsor to grow more classrooms



info@heartofdancemn.org - www.heartofdancemn.org

