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HEART OF DANCE MAKES ONLINE SOCIAL DANCE EDUCATION ACCESSIBLE FOR STUDENTS OF ALL AGES WITH NEW PROGRAMS

Virtual Partner Dance Programs Available to Minnesota Schools, Students, and Community Groups

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, Twin Cities, MN – Heart of Dance, a Minnesota nonprofit that has cultivated essential life skills in more than 8,000 children since 2015 through evidence-based Social Emotional Learning programs built on the joyful art and practice of social dance, has developed new online learning opportunities in partnership with Dancing Classrooms Global for those who are currently unable to attend school, after-school activities, or adult group fitness classes due to COVID-19.

“Our kids are struggling right now, desperately missing their peers, teachers, and artistic mentors,” says Nancy Kleaver, Dancing Classrooms Global Executive Director. “As an organization renowned for its pioneering social dance curriculum and SEL outcomes, it is our duty to offer safe spaces for young people to move, connect with one another, expand their understanding of the world through dance, and continue developing the critical soft skills that they need to stay well through this crisis and beyond.”

The new series of programs remain grounded in the elements of Dancing Classrooms’ proven instructional framework, the Dulaine Method, which includes fostering positive verbal and body language, respect, compassion, self-awareness, humor, and joy.

“Parent feedback about Dancing Classrooms consistently points out how students become friends with classmates they don’t normally talk to. Breaking down those barriers is what our society needs and our Barriers into Bridges workshops support adults that same way,” says Heart of Dance Executive Director Andrea Mirenda. “We know seniors can feel isolated, and that has been magnified by the current pandemic. Our Dance for Life program, even in a virtual format, helps alleviate the depression created by that isolation, while improving balance, fitness, mental clarity, focus, and so much more.”

Details on the new programs being offered this summer and fall are outlined below:

- **Dancing Classrooms: Homeroom Edition** – Residencies are available to students from third to eighth grade in Minnesota, facilitated by Heart of Dance Teaching Artists and staff with input and guidance from each school partner. In a series of 12-20 lessons, students will be introduced to six American and Latin social dances and a variety of line dances. These unique residencies stay true to Dancing Classrooms’ vision by stressing the importance of social and emotional wellbeing and providing students a much-needed opportunity to connect with each other, their families, and world cultures through movement. Designed to accommodate the complexities and potential inequities of remote learning, the Homeroom Edition residencies include original prerecorded instructional videos with flexible follow-up assignments, live virtual instruction and

check-ins from Teaching Artists, engaging assignments connecting dance to other subject areas, virtual peer-to-peer sharing celebrations, and a live family-friendly dance party. This program is available to all district, charter, and private schools in Minnesota, after-school organizations, camps, and community groups. For more information, email daniellek@heartofdancemn.org.

- **Dancing Classrooms Summer Intensives** – This program is open to both returning and new students anywhere in the US, with a diverse lineup of one-week dance intensives for children ages 10 to 18 years at all skill levels. Taking place July 13-17 and July 20-24, students will be immersed in a variety of dances, ranging from Lindy Hop to Salsa to Tango. Each week-long intensive course will include a one-hour class each day, Monday through Friday, and will culminate in a live online performance on the final day. Dancing Classrooms NYC is proud to partner with its affiliates in territories across the US to offer the classes to students at a weekly rate of \$125 per course, and families can build a schedule with multiple classes per day, with sibling discounts and package rates available as well. To find out more information, and to be notified when registration opens for the summer program, please email summer@dancingclassrooms.org.
- **Dancing Classrooms Academy** – This weekend program for young people who completed a Dancing Classrooms in-school residency further develops their dance skills and connects them with budding social dancers from other school communities. Through recorded lessons this spring, students have logged on to continue dancing with one another. The program continues this fall, either in-person or virtually as determined by COVID-19 restrictions. If your child participated in Dancing Classrooms at their school and you are interested in more information, please contact christyd@heartofdancemn.org.
- **#DCDanceBreak** – Enjoy free dance lessons for every age and experience level on social media from Dancing Classrooms Global. They include casual #DCDanceBreak videos intended to give dancers of all ages and abilities a break throughout the day in addition to short, instructional videos that make up the #DCDanceAtHome series, easily accessible on the [Dancing Classrooms at Home Vimeo channel](#). They also include the popular #DCDancePartyLive dance parties by teaching artists from New York City and Dancing Classrooms affiliates across the country and around the world.
- **Dance for Life** – Heart of Dance has developed this 10-week program for older adults that improves four key areas many seniors struggle with; balance and fall prevention, physical fitness, isolation and depression, and cognitive decline – while sparking joy and passion! Research shows that frequent social dancing, more than any other mental or physical activity studied, can delay or reduce dementia by up to 76 percent. Since seniors are one of the most vulnerable populations for COVID-19, a live stream version of the program will be available soon.
- **Barriers into Bridges** – This is a one to four-hour professional development workshop that engages entire teams in a series of collaborative exercises to examine our inherent assumptions about ourselves and others and addresses how those interfere with communication and real human interaction. For details on either of these innovative programs for your organization, please contact christyd@heartofdancemn.org.

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About Dancing Classrooms Global:

Founded in 1994 and made famous by the 2005 documentary film *Mad Hot Ballroom*, Dancing Classrooms cultivates essential life skills in children through evidence-based Social Emotional Learning programs based on the joyful art and practice of social dance. Its vision is to create schools and communities where every child feels connected, respected, safe to make mistakes, and confident to contribute their unique gifts. Research has shown that the Dancing Classrooms model helps students develop SEL skills like motivation, grit, empathy, connection, and listening. Year after year, school principals, teachers, and parents witness the elevated self-esteem, strengthened community and increased engagement of each Dancing Classrooms cohort that propels enhanced performance in the semesters that follow. Dancing Classrooms has a network of affiliates across the United States and around the world.

About Heart of Dance:

Founded in 2015 by dance educator Andrea Mirenda and former Minnesota state senator Ember Reichgott Junge, nonprofit Heart of Dance has served more than 8,000 students via Dancing Classrooms programs in schools throughout Minnesota. It also offers innovative new programming for work teams and older adults which result in improved confidence and self-expression, as well as stronger personal connections and deeper communication. For more information, visit heartofdancemn.org.