

MINNESOTA

# DANCER

July 2017



FUN DANCING

2017 Heart of Dance Colors of the Rainbow Team Match

Photo by C. J. Hurst



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# Heart of Dance

## Ballroom Dance Steps and Life Lessons

By Ember Reichgott Junge and Andrea Miranda,  
Heart of Dance Co-Presidents

The energy in the elegant ballroom was at a fever pitch as parents, classmates and family members cheered on their fifth-graders as they shook “what your mama gave you” while dancing the merengue with their partner. Ten pairs on the dance floor showcased respect, elegance and teamwork as they represented each of ten schools in the all-school Colors of the Rainbow Team Match May 7, hosted by Heart of Dance at the Intercontinental St. Paul Riverfront Hotel.

And the teams were just getting started. Dancers showcased the rumba, foxtrot, tango, and other dances they learned in their ten-week Dancing Classrooms residency spring semester. They danced before volunteer professional ballroom dance judges Amy Anderson, Nathan Daniels, Donna Edelstein and Shinya McHenry. Every school received a trophy and every dancer a medal.

Two days later, over 200 attendees joined Heart of Dance at Midpointe Event Center to celebrate the first two years of Dancing Classrooms in Minnesota. They

celebrated the 1,762 fifth graders in 80 classrooms in 24 Twin Cities schools who have learned life lessons through ballroom dance. Students like Jackson, who doesn't have the use of his legs and dances in a wheelchair, who wrote this poem:

“When I am dancing I feel Enhancing.

Sometimes when I dance I feel heat on my feet.

When I have a chance, I enhance.

When I am happy, we start clapping.

Sometimes the song goes long.

When I am low, I feel the flow.

This is my rhythm that gives you Freedom.”

Or students like Jose, where in his Salvadorian culture, dancing is very big:

“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.

Being a part of a family is important, not just my normal family but --other people getting together-- and everyone knows there is nothing stronger than love in the world and I think that was really important from Dancing Classrooms.

It was important to get into the shoes of someone else and feeling different types of feelings and I think Dancing Classrooms can do that for you to feel something else than just doing the dance. It can teach you more than that.

I want to thank Ms. Griebel for bringing Dancing Classrooms to Harambee. Everyone should have the experience of getting to know different dances and feeling the dance inside of your body. It is beautiful to feel the dance and to feel the emotion in it. Dancing Classrooms was really big, it was not just dancing but bringing a lot of emotions, a lot of feelings, and a lot of friendship and I think everyone should have that in their

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school. It's really beautiful.

Dancing Classrooms was fun and I can't believe it has to stop. But I think having that time in my brain and in my body was really beautiful. I'll still have a part of Dancing Classrooms in my heart because that was really strong and I'll never forget it. It was so awesome."

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Heart of Dance is grateful to the many members of USA Dance Minnesota Chapter who offered their support and volunteer time over the past two years. Special thanks goes to the volunteer Classroom Assistants who assisted the Teaching Artists in spring semester: Dede Ouren, Coordinator; Susan Blohm, Ligaya Carlos, Kim Dirr, Catherine Dodge, Susan Hervey, Leslie Koepke, Bill Lawrence, John Sandgren, Joyce Thompson, Leslie Whitney and Dianne Zepeda.

Would you like to bring Heart of Dance to a school or student you love? Do you want to be a Classroom Assistant or audition to be a Teaching Artist? Might you sponsor a classroom or provide a financial gift? Contact Co-Presidents Andrea Mirenda or Ember Reichgott Junge at [andream@heartofdancemn.org](mailto:andream@heartofdancemn.org) or [ember-rj@heartofdancemn.org](mailto:ember-rj@heartofdancemn.org) or go to [www.heartofdancemn.org](http://www.heartofdancemn.org). We are grateful to all who join us on this journey.

## Photos of the Colors of the Rainbow Team Match in May 2017

Photos by C. J. Hurst and Rory Thomas



