



*Transforming lives and communities  
through the power of dance*

# Our Journey through 2018



# Mission & Vision

## MISSION

The Mission of The Gabriella Foundation is to transform the lives of underserved youth in Los Angeles through high-quality dance instruction.

## VISION

Our Vision is for The Gabriella Foundation to be nationally recognized as a model for transformative work in the artistic expression of dance and creative youth development, nurturing and uplifting communities where youth foster a lifelong appreciation of dance, are leaders engaging positively in their communities, serve as role models and mentors to new generations, and possess the self-discipline, confidence and sheer drive to reach their full potential.

## Welcome,

As we close a very busy year of significant expansion, we invite you to join us on a journey of transformation that will vividly illustrate – through images, words and video – how the growing work of The Gabriella Foundation is *transforming lives and communities through the power of dance*.

The journey starts with a focus on the dance classroom, where you will witness the strong bond that develops between a teaching artist and student as they explore elements of creativity, discipline and teamwork that, together, cultivate a true appreciation of and commitment to dance. The journey continues with attention to the family, where parents and siblings not only see the technical progress in the dance studio, but also observe a new confidence, diligence and determination that is benefitting the young dancer in other facets of life. Serving thousands of families each year, you will then experience the ripple effect extending to our larger community of teachers, students and families learning together, addressing challenges, celebrating accomplishments and achieving boundless transformation that we have seen firsthand.



But the journey doesn't begin or end there for teachers, students or families.

We welcome new families into the Everybody Dance! community through a low-cost summer camp that offers students a taste of the program's quality and rigor as well as the opportunity to bypass the lottery and start a full dance season. We inspire teaching artists to join the Everybody Dance! team through our newly-launched Energize Your Career professional development workshops that extend our successful in- and after-school teaching techniques and methodologies to the larger dance community.

And when it's time to say good-bye, we create pathways that bring everyone back! As teaching artists sometimes move away from dance instruction to focus more intently on their professional careers, we encourage them to come full circle with Everybody Dance! by returning as mentors, master artists, choreographers and workshop facilitators. When our high school seniors graduate from Everybody Dance! to take on college and career, we close the circle once again by inviting them back as mentors, members of the Everybody Dance! Alumni Program, teaching artists and administrative staff.

It is this transformative lifecycle of opportunity experienced by every member of the Everybody Dance! community that is enabling The Gabriella Foundation to stand out among youth-serving organizations and the creative youth development movement.

We hope you will read on and see for yourself ... and then join us once again as we take our next bold steps in growth and transformation.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of The Gabriella Foundation, our deepest gratitude for your confidence in and future support of our work.

**Jane Jelenko & James DeWitt**  
Board Co-Chairs

**Julia Miele**  
Executive Director



Dear Friends,

By the time you read this, Gabriella Charter Schools will be half-way through our 14th year operating charter schools. This past week, I have been interviewing school staff across many job categories. In exorbitant cost-of-living Los Angeles, we are determinedly looking for ways to retain and sustain our talented work force.

Our schools are doing well academically — this year, Gabriella 1 was awarded both the 2018 California Distinguished School Award and the California Exemplary Arts Program Award (one of only 12 schools throughout California to receive that award).

But, frankly, the only way we can sustain this success is with a better-paid team. A great instructional staff is key to getting our middle schoolers into great high schools. And matriculation from high-performing secondary schools is what drives college access and future employment success. As I speak with our employees, it's been heart-warming to hear how our schools are described by those who know them best.

*"We are giving kids opportunities and experiences that will change their lives"*  
one campus leader told me.

*"Just seeing our students' happy faces, believing in what we are doing, caring about one another, excelling at our work and reaching for high standards"* is what another staffer said keeps her going through our extra-long instructional day.

Of course, there were plenty of shared wishes — a dedicated Transitional Kindergarten class, more staff restrooms, shorter school days, more instructional aides, and less intense workloads were high on the list.

Still, I saw a deep commitment and dedication to what we do and a level of satisfaction and pride in what we are achieving daily.

Needless to say, none of this would be possible without your help. In the past year, you have generously helped us buy uniforms, underwritten field trips, and paid for professional development, teacher trainings and staff appreciation, thereby allowing us to keep giving our students the education they deserve and need.

**Thank you from the bottom of my heart.**

**Liza Bercovici**  
Executive Director, Gabriella Charter Schools  
Founder, The Gabriella Foundation & Gabriella Charter Schools



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Transforming Lives & Communities  
Through the Power of Dance

Join us

on a journey of transformation



1.

## FIRST STOP // Teaching Artist/Student

### Partnerships that open up dialogue & new opportunities

#### Harry & Kevin

"What dance has meant to me, first and foremost, is the connection to the youth. It's the thing I love most, beyond breaking or battling or performing, it's teaching. What I admire most about working with Kevin is his consistency. He received the attendance award three years in a row. He's always here, he's always ready to work, he's always looking for support." – **Harry Weston, Teaching Artist**

"I've been working with Harry since 7th grade and I feel like he's the one who really inspired me, to get into breaking more. Before I did hip-hop, but it didn't really intrigue me as much as now. It feels like Harry is my personal mentor in this dance because he leads me through. It makes me motivated to come every single day." – **Kevin, Everybody Dance! student**



Teaching Artist Harry Weston & student Kevin

\* Scan QR codes to watch videos!

#### Lesly & Leanna

"What I enjoy the most about teaching is that I'm able to give my students not just the technical part of dance, but I'm able to give them much more than that. I enjoy being able to give them skills that they can use beyond dance."

– **Lesly Flores, GCS Teaching Artist**

"I like working with Ms. Flores because she's really patient and she's very detailed about what she wants. She really helps me grow and she always pushes me to do better. It allows me to push myself further."

– **Leanna, GCS student**



Student Leanna & Teaching Artist Lesly Flores

## Ana Cruz and daughters Nathaly, Angeline & Diana



Ana Cruz and daughters Nathaly, Angeline & Diana

"Everybody Dance! has given my daughters more responsibility, allowing them to focus more on school and their studies, create different types of friendships, and increased interests in different dance forms. It has also kept them busy because when they come home all they want to do is watch TV and be on their phones or tablets, which are things that don't benefit them. The program helps them to be more focused in dance, in their activities, and to be BETTER EVERY DAY!"

"As a family, we have also learned to relate to and communicate with other communities and families through recitals and events, like field trips, allowing us to experience new things that we would otherwise not have access to."

## SECOND STOP // Student/Parent

2.

### A program that extends to the family

*The journey continues...*

#### Haicuihi & Manuel

"The way that dance has improved both Manuel and Daniel's lives has been amazing! They love to learn through movement and they even do it at home. When they get home, they dance...they show me how to do their ABC's through body movements and how to count through body movements."

– **Haicuihi, GCS II mother of Manuel & Daniel**



Haicuihi Sukiassian & son Manuel

#### Everybody Dance!

Our award-winning Everybody Dance! program provides high-quality daytime and after-school dance training to underserved youth ages 4 to 19. During the school day, Everybody Dance! offers a creative outlet for students, using dance as a tool for learning by incorporating movement into academic curriculum. Everybody Dance! after-school provides youth a safe space at the most vulnerable time of day, and teaches discipline, teamwork and a focus on technical mastery of dance forms. In both models, our professional dance instructors inspire students to achieve their very best by teaching life skills and instilling self-confidence, creative exploration, and a commitment to dance.



3.

### THIRD STOP // Family/Community

A strong community working and celebrating together



Ana, Isabella & Jose Garcia



#### The Garcia Family

"What I like about the program is that it's for the community. The whole community is involved. You get to meet great people, teachers, parents. It's just a fantastic program that they offer. You know it says "Everybody Dance" and it actually means EVERYBODY DANCE."

– Jose Garcia, father of Natali & Isabella

The journey continues...

"If you're having a bad day, you just come here and it's like your happy place!"

– Natali, Everybody Dance! student



Above: Teamwork building community



Top: The Everybody Dance! Parent Committee



Bottom/Right: Celebrating a successful dance season



### FOURTH STOP // Boundless Transformation

Transforming lives in dance, the arts and beyond!

4.

The journey continues...

"Dance has become an essential part of my life that I refuse to relinquish at any point in time. As a matter of fact, I have decided to minor in dance for personal fulfillment; dance offers me a sanctuary which filters any negative energy or stress I may be experiencing beyond the studio walls."



Top Left: Petra Johnson performs at The Lincoln Center; Top Right: Everybody Dance! student sees a professional dance performance for the first time;  
Bottom: 100% of Everybody Dance! students in the after-school program attend college



#### The Gabriella Foundation

The Gabriella Foundation was established in 1999 by Liza Bercovici, in memory of her 13-year-old daughter, Gabriella Axelrad, who loved to dance. Liza had a vision to bring the joy and impact of dance to underserved communities through the Everybody Dance! after-school program. Learning quickly that dance often improved academic outcomes, in 2005, she founded Gabriella Charter School, a dance-themed public school. Today, The Gabriella Foundation and Gabriella Charter Schools continually strive to bridge the opportunity gap in underserved communities through high-quality dance and academics.



BY THE NUMBERS

# Measuring the Scale, Impact & Sustainability of Our Work

## SCALE

Our numbers continue to grow:

- Everybody Dance! now operates in MacArthur/Echo Parks, South Los Angeles and Watts, with exploration underway in Boyle Heights
- 3,663 students grades K to 8 participate in Everybody Dance! school-day dance classes
- 914 students ages 4 to 19 are enrolled in Everybody Dance! after-school dance classes
- 344 weekly hours of dance instruction are offered at 21 Everybody Dance! sites
- In 2017-18, Everybody Dance! students participated in 47 in/after-school performances, 31 field trips and 14 master classes

## IMPACT

Everybody Dance! increases proficiency in the language and skill of dance:

- In our Spring 2018 after-school dance assessments, 93.8% of students were knowledgeable of dance curricula benchmarks and 66.4% achieved mastery.
- In our Spring 2018 in-school dance assessments, 87.8% of students were knowledgeable of dance curricula benchmarks and 51.3% achieved mastery.
- Gabriella Charters Schools students, who take daily dance classes, reported mastery of dance content at 96% for GCS 1 students and 95% for GCS 2 students for the 2017-18 academic year.

Everybody Dance! strengthens sense of community and positive self-development. In our April 2018 student surveys:



- Everybody Dance! has also opened doors of opportunity for numerous students:
  - Petra Johnson, 13, won 1st place in Classical and Contemporary Dance categories at the 2018 Youth America Grand Prix Semi-Finals, and placed top 12<sup>th</sup> at the YAGP finals.
  - Lissa Son was awarded an unsolicited \$41,000 scholarship from California Institute of the Arts in Valencia.
  - Twelve of our Everybody Dance! conservatory students were accepted to perform in Miami City Ballet's The Nutcracker, which will be performed on stage at The Music Center in December 2018.
  - 130 Everybody Dance! students from GCS and our after-school program performed during the halftime show with singer/actress Sofia Carson at the September 29 LA Chargers v. SF 49ers game (LA Chargers won 29/27)!
- Strong parent involvement continues to be a vital part of Everybody Dance's success:
  - 92% of after-school parents completed over 9,000 service hours for the 2017-18 dance season.
  - 100% of parents who completed our June 2018 parent feedback survey stated that their children's physical fitness, self-efficacy and self-esteem improved because of Everybody Dance!.

## SUSTAINABILITY

Everybody Dance! is anything but fleeting:

- On average, students stay with Everybody Dance! for 7+ years, the depth of learning they experience infused within them as they transition into post-high school college and career.
- Starting with Everybody Dance! at age 7, Evelyn Salazar spent 11 years in the program – ballet being her favorite dance form. After graduating from Goucher College in Towson, Maryland, Evelyn returned to Los Angeles and almost immediately joined The Gabriella Foundation team, first as a part-time Registrar, now as a full-time Administrative Assistant/Dance Office Registrar. Even before she applied, we already knew what Everybody Dance! had instilled within Evelyn, and we have seen it play out beautifully as a member of our team.



# TGF/GCS Accomplishments

## The Gabriella Foundation

We are delighted to share accomplishments from the 2017-2018 dance season:

**New Santee Site:** In response to growing demand for Everybody Dance! and cramped administrative offices, we successfully moved Gabriella Foundation headquarter offices to South Los Angeles, complete with two newly-renovated dance studios. We have already launched 15 weekly after-school dance classes serving the South Los Angeles community and students from Gabriella Charter School 2, just 1.5 miles away.

**LAUSD Arts Partner:** As a new member of the LA Unified School District's Arts Community Network, and with partnership agreements established supporting LAUSD's Central and South Districts, we were invited to bring Everybody Dance! to LAUSD elementary, middle and high schools with Arts Equity Index scores of 1 or 2 (non-existent, basic). At present, nearly 1,600 students from six elementary schools, three middle schools and one high school in Central/South Los Angeles and Watts are receiving school-day dance instruction from Everybody Dance!, including winter and spring productions for family and friends.

**Teaching Artist Professional Development:** To increase the number of professional development opportunities for Los Angeles teaching artists, and strengthen our own pipeline of quality dance instructors, we launched "Energize Your Career" quarterly training workshops in partnership with a consortium of high-quality dance organizations, including Career Transitions for Dancers and the Dance Resource Center.



## Gabriella Charter Schools

Now in its 14th year of operation, Gabriella Charter Schools is proud to share accomplishments from the 2017-2018 school year:

**Growth:** Gabriella Charter Schools opened its second campus – Gabriella Charter School 2 – in historic South Central, serving approximately 135 Kinder through 2nd grade students in our first year. GCS1 additionally was unanimously awarded a renewed 5-year charter petition by the LAUSD School Board, expanding our first school's capacity from 436 to 480 students.

**Awards:** GCS1 was awarded both the 2018 California Distinguished School Award and the California Exemplary Arts Program Award (only one of 12 schools in the entire State to receive that honor!).

**Academic Performance:** GCS1's most recent Smarter Balanced Assessments showed our students were performing better than similar students across the state. Even when comparing us with non-similar schools (e.g., schools with high socio-economic students), GCS1 performed above the 81st percentile for similar grade levels on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, ranking 10/10 amongst similar schools and 9/10 overall in the state according to the most recent ranking from the California Charter Schools Association.

**Dance Recital:** Our schools had their first joint recital – "Los Angeles, Our Home" – in May at the Ambassador Complex's Cocoanut Grove.

**Student-to-Technology Ratio:** Gabriella Charter Schools offered an approximate 1.5 : 1 student-to-technology ratio across our campuses, ensuring that our students have the tools to be successful in the classroom.

**LAUSD Annual Oversight Visit:** GCS1 received perfect scores in instruction, finance, governance, and operations from LAUSD at its Annual Oversight Visit.



# Donor Profiles

None of what you have experienced in this report would be possible without the passion, dedication and generosity of our donors. We are delighted to introduce you to some of them today!



### Anita Mann Kohl

Anita is all about our Everybody Dance! students. As a member of The Gabriella Foundation’s Artists Advisory Council, Anita has taught Master Classes to our most advanced dancers. Our students line up to sign up when Anita teaches a class, so inspired are they by her spirit, instructional rigor, and years of dance experience. A tremendously generous donor, Anita has also consistently supported the Everybody Dance! Scholarship Fund, which gives our most promising dancers the resources they need to pursue professional dance careers.



### Eleanore Vega, CBS News, West Coast Bureau Chief

“At five-years-old I began attending Logan Street school in Echo Park. Recently returning to Logan Street to visit with the kids at the Gabriella Charter School was surreal to say the least. While talking about journalism with two 8th grade classes, I knew I had come full circle after seeing the incredible work and dedication of the teachers at the Gabriella Charter School. When Executive Director Liza Bercovici told me how hard pressed some of the families were in buying uniforms for their kids to attend the charter schools, my childhood memories came flooding back of my family’s hardships. At that very moment, I felt compelled to help and gladly donated to help Gabriella families.”



### Heidi & Richard Landers

In the world of fundraising, it is inspiring to meet supporters who give without waiting to be asked. Heidi and Richard Landers are two such committed donors. Both support generously efforts to address the inequities of public education. Says Heidi: “Gabriella...has a wonderful track record of offering its students this ‘magic mix’ of academic preparation and personal development.” Adds Richard: “Gabriella seems to have struck a very special balance of high academic achievement within a caring supportive environment” preparing “young people for high school and [putting] them on the right path for life.”



### The Angell Foundation

The tremendous generosity of The Angell Foundation paved the way for The Gabriella Foundation to launch and grow the Everybody Dance! High School Enrichment Program, which currently supports 70 high school students as they navigate their post-high school career and college pathways. Enrichment opportunities include Mentor Match, Teaching Assistantships, the Student Leadership Team, DanceLab choreography and production, and college audition support.

# Where The Money Goes

Expansion of our award-winning programs is imminent as we look to the future. The Gabriella Foundation and Gabriella Charter Schools are dedicated to transforming lives through high quality dance and academics. Your continued support will allow us to maintain our programs, launch new elements, and expand our reach to new communities in need. **Every dollar makes a difference!**

- **\$100** pays for performance costumes for three young dancers, giving them the opportunity to showcase their mastery of dance forms with excitement and pride.
- **\$500** supports implementation of annual focus groups and surveys, which encourage students and parents to help us improve the Everybody Dance! program through their ideas and input.
- **\$1,000** sends two students to a two-week SummerDance Day Camp, opening up a new world of arts education and the many benefits it provides outside of the dance classroom.
- **\$5,000** supports 75 high school students as they are exposed to a variety of performance-related career opportunities and set academic goals for their futures through The Gabriella Foundation’s High School Enrichment Program.
- **\$10,000** gives 150 elementary students the opportunity to have increased focus, energy and motivation to succeed academically by taking 1 hour of weekly dance instruction during the school day for a full academic year.
- **\$30,000** invites 250 children and youth from underserved communities to enroll in high-quality after-school dance classes for a full year, a transformative enrichment opportunity to which they would otherwise not have access. In addition, their parents and guardians will join a community of caring families that are encouraged to engage with Everybody Dance! as leaders and program support partners.



There are many ways to support our work. We accept cash and credit cards, tribute or memorial gifts, gifts of stocks, and planned gifts such as bequests, annuities and real property. Whatever form your gift takes, please know that we will steward it wisely in bringing the highest benefits possible to the youth we serve. At present, 73% of every dollar we raise goes directly to programming, with 27% supporting our maintenance of a strong, expanding organization (we anticipate a reduction in this figure as we gain footholds in new communities and deepen our reach).





*Transforming lives and communities  
through the power of dance*

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My family and I are ever thankful for the lessons the staff and faculty at Everybody Dance! have passed on to me over the years. I received top-notch dance training through the program that has enabled me to travel the world dancing and teaching, but the most invaluable teachings are those that span beyond the walls of a dance studio. Through the program, I learned the true meaning of perseverance, dedication, responsibility, and accountability.

- Sandy Vazquez, Everybody Dance! alumna & Teaching Artist