

Transforming lives and communities through the power of dance

CELEBRATING



An Inspiring Legacy An Empowering Future

Dear Friends,

Hard to believe it's been twenty years since we lost Gabri.

The memory of the saddest and most difficult part of our lives was brought back recently as we grieved with close friends facing a similar loss.

Our path forward was to memorialize the life of our wonderful daughter and the things she loved most.

First, the dance program: I knew literally nothing about dance except the happiness it brought Gabri. That didn't matter. Friends and family showed me the way. With the help of talented staff like Vera Ninkovic, Joe Schenck and Steve Zee, led by the wonderful Carol Zee, we created a spectacular afterschool dance program in Los Angeles' inner-city.

I am full of pride when I see the results – not the least this year's brilliant production of Aladdin.

Then, our charter schools: Gabri wanted to be a teacher when she grew up. I firmly believe that our unique award-winning dance-themed charter schools, overflowing with happy children, are exactly where Gabri would have wanted to be, had she lived.



At the end of the day, whether through dance or schools or both, we are transforming lives and giving children in need the opportunities all kids deserve.

None of this would be possible without the love, kindness, support and generosity you have all provided unstintingly over the years. If we have had any success, it is because of you.

Heartfelt thanks. Liza and David

OUR HISTORY

The Gabriella Foundation was established in 1999 by Liza Bercovici in memory of her 13-year-old daughter, Gabriella Axelrad. In Gabri's short life, some of her happiest moments were when she danced. Liza's vision was to bring the joy and transformational impacts of dance to children in Los Angeles' most underserved communities, and to welcome any child who wanted to learn. To that end, the program was named **Everybody Dance!**

Everybody Dance! opened its doors in May of 2000 at The Townhouse, an affordable housing project located in inner-city Los Angeles, with twelve classes serving 35 eager, first-time dancers.

Within months, demand for classes was so great that a second studio was opened at a neighborhood church near MacArthur Park, one of Los Angeles' most impacted communities. As demand for the program swelled, studios were added at both sites and the program began coping with long waitlists and parents anxious to gain entry to the burgeoning, well-regarded dance program.

Over the next few years, parents and teachers began noticing a connection between dance and academic achievement. **Everybody Dance!** families reported that their children were more engaged, focused and ready to learn in school.

With charter schools paving the way for innovation in public education, Liza and The Gabriella Foundation Board decided to open the first dancethemed charter school in the United States – with the belief that the same rigor dance provided could be carried over into the classroom.

Gabriella Charter School opened in 2005. With dance integral to the curriculum, the principal, Susan Gurman, and her energetic young faculty created a culture of high expectations and a spirit of joy in the classrooms. Over the years, the school has grown into a unique, Title 1 K-8 school, winning recognition as one of the best charter schools in California.

In 2017, Gabriella Charter Schools 2 opened in South LA.

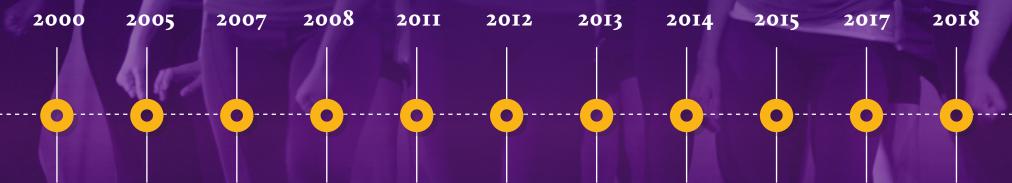
Today, The Gabriella Foundation and Gabriella Charter Schools continue to enhance their partnership through strategic collaboration and cooperation.



THE GABRIELLA FOUNDATION

A TIMELINE OF TRANSFORMATION

The Gabriella Foundation and Gabriella Charter Schools share a rich history of strategic collaboration and cooperation - working in concert to deliver the highest quality dance and academics.



The first 35 children sign up for TGF's Everybody Dance! program.

TGF opens GCS, the nation's first dance-themed elementary charter school. GCS wins
the Siart
Foundation
Excellence
Award &
exceeds the
State's 800 API
benchmark.

First full-length production staged, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.

GCS wins The
Music Center
Bravo Award
& full WASC
accreditation.

Dance! is "...
the best dance
education program
I have ever
encountered."

GCS becomes
a separate but
linked entity
to strengthen
governance.

Everybody

Dance! receives
a National Arts
& Humanities
Youth Program
Award from
Michelle Obama.

Julia Miele
succeeds Liza
as Executive
Director
of TGF and
Liza remains
Executive
Director of
GCS.

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GCS 2 opens at Trinity Elementary School in South LA. Everybody Dance! launches in Watts and South LA. GCS wins the 2018 California Distinguished Schools Award and TGF opens administrative offices and dance studios in South LA.

The Gabriella Foundation

Everybody Dance! Accomplishments & Future Plans

The Gabriella Foundation is truly transforming lives and communities through the power of dance! Our response to increasing demand for in- and after-school dance education has fueled our explosive growth - now serving nearly 5,500 youth at 23 sites in MacArthur Park, South Los Angeles and Watts - and paved the way for new partnerships, enhanced enrichment opportunities for students, and deeper impact across communities. – JULIA MIELE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- 100% of 2019 graduating seniors in the after-school program started college in the fall.
- May 2019 surveys showed that 94% of students reported improved self-esteem, 92% reported improved belief in the ability to succeed, 98% reported improved physical fitness, and 90% reported an increased sense of feeling supported by family and community
- June 2019 assessments revealed that 99.7% of afterschool students had knowledge of and 67.74% mastered dance vocabulary and movement goals established at the beginning of the year (80%/60% goals) because of Everybody Dance!
- June 2019 assessments revealed that 88.58% of inschool students had knowledge of and 62.18% mastered dance vocabulary and movement goals established at the beginning of the year (70%/50% goals)

Our future is bright!

As we enter our 20th Year, the tremendous generosity of donors like you will help us to:

- Deepen our presence in South Los Angeles by enhancing community engagement activities that introduce new families to the Everybody Dance! after-school program
- Partner with new high-need LAUSD, charter and parochial schools in MacArthur/Echo Parks, South Los Angeles and Watts to spark student creativity and boost academic performance through high-energy school-day dance classes
- Build our financial capacity to ultimately establish an afterschool site in Watts where we currently teach daytime dance to nearly 2,000 elementary and middle school students
- Always improve the quality of Everybody Dance! through new professional development strategies and dance curricula, an increasingly diligent assessment process, and refined evaluation strategies

Gabriella Charter Schools

Awards, Recognition & Future Plans

Since 2005, Gabriella Charter School 1, serving grades K to 8, has gained recognition for uniquely providing students from some of Los Angeles' most underserved neighborhoods with high-level daily dance instruction and rigorous academics. GCS 2 opened in 2017, and now proudly serves grades K to 4. Recent awards and recognition are:

- 2018 California Distinguished School Award
- 2018 Exemplary Arts Program Award
- Recognition by the Gates Foundation of GCS' distinctive special education program singled out as one of three exemplary programs from 60 successful nationwide programs
- USC/Innovate Public Schools recognized Gabriella Charter
 School as being among the very top schools state-wide serving
 Latino students in both math and English
- LA Times calls GCS 1 "one of the best [charter schools] in California ... Gabriella, which has a waiting list of students trying to get in, has won a string of accolades over the years, including a Distinguished Schools Award last year from the State." Los Angeles Times, 3.9.19

Our 15th year!

As we enter our 15th year of giving all students the opportunity to learn, dance and succeed, your continued, generous support will help us to:

- Insure that rigorous instruction is happening in every subject area at our charter schools. Notwithstanding our achievements, being "good enough" won't take us to the highest level our schools could be at
- Strengthen our acclaimed special education program through early intervention, co-teaching and by readying our middle schoolers for high school
- Introduce intergenerational staffing to support our youngest readers
- Build on our existing gains with literacy and math/science coaches at both campuses. In science in particular, we are not yet where we want to be.
- Give our teachers meaningful time for collaboration
- In our unique innovative dance program, continue to model classroom lessons through movement

Maria Lozano

Gabriella Charter School and Everybody Dance!



My name is Maria Lozano and I've been working for GCS for 15 years and was a parent of **Everybody Dance!** My daughter was 5 years old when her teacher told me that she needed to see a doctor because she was hyperactive in class. The doctor hesitated to give her medicine and suggested I put her in a sport.

I looked for different opportunities, including a gymnastics studio in Culver City that charged over \$500/month. My rent was \$450/month so I could not afford it. By sheer luck, I saw a flyer for Everybody Dance! I called and left a message and the next day Ms. Carol Zee called me back and invited my daughter to class. We went in on a Saturday and it all started from there. After two months, my daughter's teacher said she had changed! I noticed too. When she was in dance class, she was focusing, doing what the teacher told her, and not acting out. I was happy because she was happy. She changed her attitude and didn't need medication anymore.

I went with Liza to LAUSD when she was planning to open GCS. We told the District how we felt about the dance

program and how we wanted more. My interaction with Liza was always positive – I trusted her and I knew the school she was opening would help us and the community.

I later became involved with GCS when I was asked to translate during the first school application meeting. I helped that day and Liza and Principal Susan Gurman asked me to come back and keep helping! When the school opened, we had no idea how successful it would be. We only had grades K to 3 with 120 students and four or five teachers. It was a small team and everyone was helping to get it going because of Everybody Dance!.

I feel so emotional and full of pride representing something as positive and powerful as GCS and Everybody Dance! So many of our students have gone on to so many great things. They come back to show me their valedictorian certificates ... it is so powerful for me. And my daughter stayed with Everybody Dance! until she was in 11th grade and continued on with dance in college. Many of her professors ask her where she learned how to dance so well!





The Jamison Family

Gabriella Charter
School and
Everybody Dance!



Erick evolved with Everybody Dance! He was a quiet and shy little boy, but when he got onto that stage he became expressive and was like a completely different kid. At home, he's introverted and keeps to himself. On stage he's dynamic and confident.

I was even surprised to see him perform when he was picked to have leading roles in the recitals. I thought "Wow, that's the real Erick!" Erick is now at Cal State LA but he still dances every day that he can and is even thinking of minoring in dance.

The community at Everybody Dance! is like my second family. You're able to rely on each other in a way that's really special. When something happens in the community, everyone feels it. If something happens to a parent or student, we feel it too. We are always thinking of ways to help each other because we are a family here.



From pointe shoes to master classes to field trips to stunning costumes and performance opportunities, your continued, dedicated support will make these experiences possible!

- TINA BANCHERO, TGF ARTISTIC DIRECTOR







Jimmy DeWitt, TGF Founding Board Member Pictured with wife, Lynne DeWitt

I feel very fortunate to have been present at the inception of the Gabriella Charter School and the early years of **Everybody Dance!** In those days it was "all hands on deck". Board Meetings were conducted at Liza's kitchen table, dance classes were held in a storefront church, and all of us were to start a dance program and a public charter school from scratch resulted in the creation of a unique community of students, parents, teachers, effectively to bring about Liza's vision for an affordable, high-quality dance program for the most underserved children in Los Angeles. It was a challenge to keep up with Liza's energy and ambition but also a lot of fun.



Dulé Hill, Everybody Dance! Master Artist

One of the great joys that I have as an artist is when time presents the occasion for me to share a space of dance with the young artist students at **Everybody Dance!** The children are always so engaged, so talented and so overjoyed to express themselves through dance. Even though I arrive at the classroom as the "teacher" to share and give, I always leave our time together receiving and being filled by the unique light of each and every one of the students. I applaud you **Everybody Dance!** for all that you do. And I applaud all of the student artists who attend. Keep shining your light!



Carol Zee, Everybody Dance! Founding Artistic Director

I'm so proud to have played a part in the development of this wonderful organization! I remember passing out flyers to families in La Fayette Park letting them know about the new dance program that was about to begin at the Townhouse. We had no idea if anyone would come, and then, on opening day we had about 30 students at our door ready to join. The program trajectory from that moment to where **Everybody Dance!** is today is remarkable. Kudos to all who have played a role along the way and given their talents and gifts to keep this program going. Best of luck moving forward!

The Corzo Family, Everybody Dance! **After-School**

at Echo Park at the same time. I was trying to decide what to do vanted them to be in something that will give them physical activity

Nasha Thomas, Everybody Dance! Master Artist

It has been a great pleasure sharing the life and legacy of the late Alvin Ailey with the students at **Everybody Dance!** these past few years. How wonderful that Mr. Ailey was introduced to dance as a young teenager in Los Angeles too. As an educator I am inspired working with young people who find joy in dancing and are eager to learn. Congratulations to **Everybody Dance!** on 20 years of enriching the lives of our youth through dance.

Liessa Son, Everybody Dance! Alumna

Everybody Dance! was a significant factor in influencing my path. My spark to initiate my pursuit would've been feeble without support from **Everybody Dance!** It not only helped my dream pursuit turn into a reality, but it also largely inspired me to become the dancer I wanted to be. Therefore, I am currently able to attend my college, California Institute of the Arts, where it demands creativity and a strong base of technique. I will forever cherish Everybody Dance! in my heart and remember my appreciation.



Fernando Diaz-Ojeda, GCS Alumnus

To me, GCS represents a place of opportunities, academic rigor, meaningful companionship, a place I'll forever love. During my time there, I had amazing relationships with my peers, teachers, and advisors. Everyone is caring, compassionate, and above all, there for you. I could always count on my teachers to help me with my academic endeavors, as well as personal struggles. GCS pushed me in all the right ways. I was never told to give up, or given the easy road. I was told to pursue my goals with resilience. It's these lessons that have stuck with me and shaped my essence. And the dancing ... it's amazing! What school does that? To this day, I still dance – it has become a part of my identity.



Tatiana Blackington James, TGF Past **Board President**

Dancers transform their bodies through daily practice and as a result can feel in their bones - literally - the power to shape their own futures. That's valuable for anyone, but especially for kids needing broader horizons. During the years I served on the Board, two as President, we dealt with rapid growth and demand but also with some philosophical questions. Intervening in children's lives, even in a positive way, comes with responsibilities. One thing we hadn't fully planned for was how to serve students of exceptional talent who outgrew our offerings. With the guidance of Master Artist Vera Ninkovic, those dancers became my personal project, and they returned the extra support we gave them with brilliant performances both on stage and in life.



The Lee Family, Everybody Dance! **After-School**

Coming to dance helps the kids relieve all of their other stresses. They are always so happy to be here. They enjoy the friendships they have made with other students and they love their teachers. Everyone is also so nice and tries to help each other. It is a really wonderful program and I think everyone should join! We started with Summer Dance and that was the



Ron Buckly, GCS Board Member/TGF Former

has faced over the years, the word "no" is not an option. Instead, she ncourages everyone to reach higher by asking "Why not?," or claiming "We can do that!" and when all else fails, insisting "We'll figure out a filled with the anticipation of learning something new, I know Liza's vision has succeeded beyond her dreams. Here's to the next 20 years



Transforming lives and communities through the power of dance

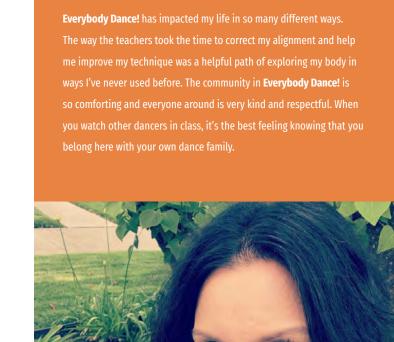
CELEBRATING



An Inspiring Legacy An Empowering Future

WITH YOUR SUPPORT,

The Gabriella Foundation and Gabriella Charter Schools will continue to transform lives and communities through the power of high-quality dance and academics - as a living legacy for a girl who loved to dance and dreamed of being a teacher.



Lila Tsang, GCS Alumna

Chippy Zuniga, GCS Dance Education Manager

When I was hired, I never could have predicted how much GCS/Everybody **Dance!** would shape the human I am today. Each student and parent poured love into my heart. I took a piece of knowledge from every dancer and classroom teacher. The administration and office staff felt like a family that had each other's back. Carol Zee and Lisa Rooney's mentorship and friendship gave me the confidence to try new things, encouraged me to reflect on what worked and what needed revision, and more importantly allowed me to make mistakes. The GCS/**Everybody Dance!** program was a success because of each of us, holding ourselves and one another to a high standard of excellence while loving each other unconditionally.

We are grateful to the many leaders, supporters, artists, students and families who have made us who we are today!



Stephanie Landwehr, Everybody Dance! **Teaching Artist**

I am continuously in awe of The Gabriella Foundation, the enormous number of youth it reaches and the dedication of Administration and Staff. Being a member of the team, and contributing to the well-being of the youth we serve, brings a unique sense of pride to me as a human, as a citizen, as a professional, and as a lover of dance. It thrills me to witness my students invest in themselves, in their self-confidence and self-pride through their dance experience and progression.

Lidia Lopez, GCS Alumna

Gabriella Charter School gave me a second home. I started GCS when I was in the 4th Grade and enjoyed every minute of it. Not only did GCS help me develop my passion for dance, but also helped me reach levels of education climaxes I didn't know I had. The amount of love and support that I received from the student body, teachers, and parents was one of the reasons why I was able to attend the Episcopal School of Los Angeles, a private high school located in the heart of Hollywood. Even after I had left GCS, I developed a connection so deep, that it still continues to this day. I definitely would not be at Kenyon College on a full scholarship if it wasn't for GCS. They taught me to always be resilient, which has helped me get to where I am today.

Meg Kasdan, TGF Past Board Chair

From the day I met her, I was in awe of Liza's courage and persistence. Turning a personal tragedy into joy for thousands of kids is a stunning act. As a Board member and then as Board Chair, my efforts were directed towards stabilizing The Gabriella Foundation. Over several years, our Board met in committees to create a mission statement, a strategic plan, by-laws, and a structure for interaction between the Board and the staff. Friendships blossomed during the long hours we spent together. I hope that our organization will become a permanent fixture in the communities we serve, instilling confidence and wellbeing in our students, and teaching them to move gracefully through

The Ray Family, GCS

We heard about the program **Everybody Dance!** through GCS, where my kids go to school. My kids LOVE to dance so when they saw other kids going to the after-school program, they wanted to sign up. We met some of the parents, talked to teaching artists and fell in love with it, so we applied and were lucky to get a spot. We've been loving it ever since! The program requires that parents do community service hours. I feel that when you do community hours it's about taking ownership over your hours. You put more effort into being here on time and being a part of the community versus just paying your tuition. The volunteer hours make us feel part of the process. We're here because of all of the work we put in together.

Anthony Languren, Everybody Dance! **Teaching Artist**

As a teaching artist in Los Angeles, I've had the opportunity to teach thankful for. Every day, I get to directly see the impact of TGF and jump out of bed so excited to get ready for my day and always look opportunities they have shared with me. Over my last four years at TGF, I have grown immensely – as an artist, teacher and human.

Susan Gurman, GCS Founding Principal, **GCS/TGF Board Member**

Forming letters with their bodies, tapping multiplication tables, shimmying through the digestive system. From the beginning, it was exciting to see GCS students engaged in active learning through the integration of quality dance instruction and rigorous academics. Today, dance teachers continue teaming with classroom teachers to impart lifelong learning skills. Students develop focus and respect a deliberate creative process that includes editing and revising. They use constructive criticism, work cooperatively, take artistic and intellectual risks and present with confidence. Many thanks to our dedicated staff, parent partners, volunteers, board members and donors for providing a stimulating, nurturing learning environment that promotes high achievement.



Mary Kate Torres, GCS and Everybody Dance! Alumna

Everybody Dance! has shaped my life by letting me come out of my shell comfortably, and expressing myself through dance. It brought so many opportunities that I never would have dreamed of and I am forever grateful for it all. **Everybody Dance!** is my second home and made me grow as the dancer I have become today and as a person



Vera Ninkovic, Everybody Dance! Master Artist

In spending 15 years of my life at The Gabriella Foundation sharing my art with children and watching them grow up, I have witnessed the positively profound effects that this environment has on young people. I was surrounded by peers who were compassionate and professional. We enjoyed our friendly staff meetings where we got to brainstorm ideas for performance opportunities and discuss the needs of our students. **Everybody Dance!** is not just a recreational dance program, the students here gain cultural and historical knowledge of various dance styles and some go on to establish professional careers. The Gabriella community has truly created a second home for thousands of children and their