CHSofNJ/TEDI 32nd Anniversary

Dancing through the DECADES 1989 - 2021

"Dance is art, paint your dream and follow it." — Steven Thompson

In Partnership with Trenton Public Schools District Board of Education

The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey®
A Message from Richard Bilotti, TEDI President

Everyone involved in TEDI believes that the arts can change children’s lives. We’ve watched generations of students from Trenton struggle and rejoice through the discipline, the challenges and the joy of dance.

TEDI was founded on the pedagogical principals of the National Dance Institute, created by the legendary ballet dancer and choreographer Jacques D’Amboise. In his autobiography, I Was a Dancer, he writes:

“Who am I? I’m a man; an American, a father, a teacher, but most of all, I am a person who knows how the arts can change lives, because they transformed mine.”

No one can say it better.

Thank you to all the dancers, teachers, administrators, TEDI staff, volunteers and donors who have made this program possible for thousands of Trenton students over the past 32 years. And thank you to Kayla James, our TEDI Artistic Director, and to John Williams, our Music Director, who provides live music. Both are dedicated to bringing out the best in TEDI students.

Richard Bilotti
TEDI President

“I felt good that I did succeed”
Message from TEDI Artistic Director Kayla James

“The show must go on!” is the perfect phrase to describe this crazy year. Life as we knew it was taken away in the blink of an eye. Classrooms full of students, the sound of music in the air, high-fives, hugs, and smiles turned into an empty and eerie silence. We knew we had to do something to reignite the spark in our students. John Williams, TEDI Accompanist, and I asked ourselves…. “How do we keep the TEDI spirit going under these peculiar circumstances?”

It was a long process of trial and error. Zoom classes, pre-recorded videos, new styles of dance, fresh choreography, diverse genres of music, and more! Our students were beyond friendly, patient, and willing to share their personal experiences from the past year. While we have never danced alongside one another physically, we have still laughed, twirled, supported one another, and smiled TOGETHER! The NDI pedagogy helps build their self-esteem and confidence, but also helps children learn to interact with others in a positive way all while accepting diversity, displaying respect, and showing empathy. TEDI allows for children to express themselves, imagine the possibilities, and explore creative avenues while teaching them to appreciate the artistic elements of dance and live music. There will never be enough words to truly encompass how proud and thankful I am for them.

The highlight of the TEDI program is an annual “End of the Year” event which showcases the talents of every single one of our students and inspires the community surrounding them. This year, the TEDI students will be presenting a music video to display their talent, kind spirits, and bring joy to your heart. “Bravo!” to our amazing TEDI stars! They accomplished the unimaginable and serve as a reminder to us all that even when the odds are stacked against you, anything is possible.

On behalf of our children, the TEDI staff, The Children’s Home Society, and myself, we THANK YOU for your generous support and kindness.

“Dance is your pulse, your heartbeat, your breathing. It’s the rhythm of your life. It’s the expression, in time and movement, of happiness, joy, sadness and envy.”

-Jacques D’Amboise

Kayla James
TEDI Artistic Director

“I hope the 4th graders got
OUR TEDI STUDENTS WORKING HARD REMOTELY

“I NOW KNOW THE MEANING OF TEAM WORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK.”
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“I loved the runs and
jumps part the most”
Thank you TEDl for inspiring, energizing and teaching the children of Trenton.

Richard Bilotti and Katherine Hatton

“I liked changing into costumes”
“Be strong, be fearless, be beautiful. And believe that anything is possible when you have the right people there to support you.”

-Misty Copeland  
Principal Dancer, American Ballet Theatre

I would like to thank all of the students and those involved in making our TEDI program as special for the families as it is to us.

-Crystal Moore

“I wish I had TEDI every year”
“A dance teacher helps their students find the song in their ❤️, the beat in their feet and a passion for life”

Kati and Steve Chupa
“Dance is the hidden language of the soul”
~Martha Graham

Renee and Michael Eckstut

“I lost a few pounds from dancing, it’s like a workout”
Reflection

It started around a table in 1989. National Dance Institute (NDI) had just wrapped up its 13th successful year of helping children achieve their dreams, and The Times publisher Richard Bilotti was inspired. Richard invited NDI founder principal dancer with the New York City Ballet Jacques d’Amboise to meet with him and a group of city and school district leaders in Trenton to discuss the possibility of a Residency program for Trenton youth. Joining Richard and Jacques at the table were Michael Newhouse, General Manager of The Times; Ed Meara, Executive Director of the Mercer County Chamber of Commerce; Carol Belt, Art Resource Specialist for Trenton Schools on behalf of Superintendent Crosby Copeland; and a representative of the Mayor’s office. Jacques captivated the room with stories of NDI’s successes and examples of the arts’ unique ability to engage children and motivate them toward excellence. His words sparked a passion and vision that would go on to change the lives of thousands of Trenton children.

Two fifth grade classes were selected to pioneer the NDI residency program in Trenton; one from Franklin School and one from Grant School. Superintendent Copeland, Assistant Superintendent Pat Maffei, Executive Directors Nicholas Burke and Julie Dixon Thomas, worked with school principals, educators, parents, and community volunteers to bring the Trenton’s first NDI Residency to life. For two weeks, students rehearsed in the auditorium of the Board of Education building, learning first hand from NDI experts Jacques d’Amboise, Ellen Weinstein, Kay Gayner, and Jerry Korman. The initial Trenton residency culminated in a spirited performance of “Fat City,” with students giving 13 performances on the Trenton Central High auditorium stage. The program was such a tremendous success that plans for the following year’s Residency began to unfold as soon as the show ended.

The years that followed took the Residency and its vibrant curriculum to new schools in Trenton, helping hundreds of children develop self-esteem, discipline, and an appreciation for hard work. In 1992, the NDI Residency program had grown to become Trenton Education Dance Institute, affectionately referred to as TEDI. TEDI is a non-profit 501(c)(3) dedicated to teaching the art and life skills of dance to students in Trenton Public Schools. The TEDI Artistic Team selects each year’s theme with careful consideration of curricular connections and ties to the NJ State Standards and District Ends Policies. Students keep written journals translating movement, feelings and emotions to words.

“I like TEDI because I love to dance and it inspires me to want to dance more”
Reflection

TEDI President Richard Bilotti, Vice President Dot Albert, Secretary Carol Belt, and Treasurer Nicholas Burke assembled a Board of Trustees to ensure the program flourished, and the board has been heavily involved ever since. Funding resources expanded to include not only the initial sponsors The Times and Trenton Public Schools, but also foundations, corporations and individual donors as buzz around TEDI grew. Under the guidance of Duftin Garcia, TEDI’s Artistic Director (2002-2013), the program grew from its initial week-long residencies to a full year, in-school program for all 5th grade students enrolled in TEDI schools. After completing the core TEDI program, selected 5th–7th grade students can attend advanced Saturday classes as members of SWAT (Scholarship for the Willing, Achieving and Talented) Team, and 6th–10th graders can audition for the TEDI Celebration Team, both conceptualized by Mr. Garcia.

In 2011, TEDI joined with The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey (CHSoNJ). With the help of CHSoNJ Director of School-Based programs Dolores Ijames-Bryant, and CHSoNJ Administrator of School-Based programs Louise McCants Shabazz, the two separate organizational cultures have blended seamlessly into one cohesive unit. TEDI’s artistic team maintains an open dialogue with teachers and parents, and whenever possible, incorporates other areas of study such as math, geography, or science into TEDI classes to reinforce educational concepts. The dream of expanding TEDI beyond Trenton into more areas currently served by CHSoNJ remains a goal that the agency continues to work toward.

The Trustees and staff of TEDI and CHSoNJ thank you for your support throughout the years, and for helping the children of this groundbreaking program develop the skills and confidence to achieve their dreams. Whether you have shown your support through charitable donations or attending a performance, you have given our TEDI students a priceless gift. After all, in the words of Earvin “Magic” Johnson, “All that kids need is a little help, a little hope and somebody who believes in them.”

[“I am less still”]
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Bruce Beasley, Riom II, 2018, stainless steel, 270 x 137 x 141 inches, 1/9,
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Building a Bridge of Hope
127th Anniversary Gala
Saturday, May 15, 2021
Virtual, online at 7 p.m.
Video Premiere:
https://chsofnj.ejoinme.org/gala2021
Silent Auction:

In-person event
TEDI Fall Fundraiser
November
(Time & Date TBD)

Turkey Trot
November
(Time & Date TBD)

32nd Annual NAIF-GP Golf Outing
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10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
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Brunch with Santa
November
(Time & Date TBD)

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DRIVES
TEDI PERFORMERS
Two years ago this spring, we lost an integral member of The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey family; Carol F. Belt. Carol was an arts advocate and a true leader in arts education who fought her entire life to keep the arts alive in our public schools.

Carol loved dance and the visual arts, so she followed her passions to the Rhode Island School of Design. Her love for the arts and her understanding of their impact on education and development motivated her desire to keep the arts alive for future generations. After graduation, Carol became an art teacher at Junior 3 School in Trenton. She excelled as an educator, and went on to co-ordinate the art department for the Trenton public school district. There, she created an arts curriculum able to encourage a lifelong appreciation for the arts in many of her students and colleagues. Carol was awarded the prestigious Kennedy Center Honor for her work in keeping the arts alive in schools.

Of her many achievements, Carol was most proud of her work in helping to establish and maintain the Trenton Educational Dance Institute, affectionately known as TEDI. TEDI, based on the principles of the renowned National Dance Institute (NDI), supported dance and programming for thousands of Trenton public school students for more than 25 years. In 2011, TEDI joined with CHSofNJ, thus beginning our wonderful partnership with this truly remarkable woman and friend.

Throughout her life, Carol has served as a Board member for a number of agencies committed to advancing arts in education, including the NJ State Council for the Arts, Young Audiences of NJ, Trenton Education Dance Institute, and The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey. Even when it seemed impossible that one person could give any more of herself, Carol always managed to find more for the children touched by these programs. Her loss is one that is felt by many. We are honored to share Carol’s beautiful memory with you this evening, and we thank her for all that she has done for the at-risk youth we serve.

“I love TEDI”
Dear Loyal TEDI Supporters

THANK YOU
for the lives you touch
We appreciate you
SO MUCH

BY THE WAY
I’M WEARING
THE SMILE
YOU GAVE ME!

~Pam Cipriano

“Now that I love dance,
I want TEDI next year too”
A Message from CHSoNJ President and CEO
Donna C. Pressma

Dear Friends,

Eight years ago, the Children’s Home Society of New Jersey first met Richard Bilotti and Carol Belt (who, sadly, is no longer with us), who were passionate about the Trenton Education Dance Institute (TEDI). They asked CHSoNJ to give TEDI an institutional home and welcome the program into CHSoNJ’s array of services in youth development. As supporters of the TEDI mission to develop skills through the medium of the arts, we at CHSoNJ said a resounding YES, and we are working toward certification by the National Dance Institute (NDI, founded by Jacques D’Amboise). Research conducted during the past eight years confirms that the TEDI experience has enhanced the lives of 300 Trenton participants a year, and we are proud that former participants’ children and grandchildren are joining our ranks. In this year of the COVID pandemic, TEDI is still dancing remotely over Zoom and giving more than 100 students a chance to grow in self-esteem and learn how to work as a team.

Our TEDI children acquire discipline by attending weekly classes and additional sessions to perfect their choreographed dance routines, as you will see when you watch our TEDI video, which this year replaces our annual end-of-year performance. Practice, practice, practice, even when something is hard at first, is a critical life lesson that leads to mastery and success as well as a love for the art of dance. The classroom participation and journaling exercises that TEDI students do all year, supervised by their teacher, also provide skills in writing, learning vocabulary, and learning to express their feelings and thoughts, another life skill necessary for success.

Following the rules in a TEDI class is wonderful preparation for discipline in school, in the workplace and in life. TEDI provides all of these life skills through its engaging, meaningful NDI dance curriculum in yearlong classes. The results you will view in the video celebrate these accomplishments. You will see the joy in our dancers’ faces as they perform. On our website are TEDI videos where you can hear their dreams and hopes and what they aspire to be when they grow up.* Thank you for caring enough to support TEDI and help us fund this life-enhancing program.

Please visit our program page to find out more about our program.
www.chsofnj.org/trenton-education-dance-institute-tedi/

President and CEO

“TEDI helped me be confident in myself”
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