

BalletRox Summary Report for FY2016

Achieving Our Goals

Our major goals for FY2016 were: 1) to continue to provide in-school dance programming to elementary school students in the Kenny, Mather and Hennigan Boston Public Schools, and to extend our reach into the middle schools at the Curley and Hennigan Boston Public Schools; 2) to provide more extensive dance training to students in our community dance program at BalletRox Dance! at Spontaneous Celebrations; 3) to expand the performance opportunities for students in both programs; 4) to bring more students and their families to professional dance performances; and 5) to increase the involvement of the Youth Council in all aspects of BalletRox Dance! In all program areas, our mission was to expose Boston youth to dance and opportunities for mastery and performance to which they would not otherwise have access, giving them discipline and a supportive community to succeed in life.

These goals were achieved, and more. Over the course of the year, we were able to expand our programming in several ways, thanks to generous funding from foundations, government grants, institutional and individual donors, and to the enthusiastic support of our staff, students, family members, school leadership, Board and volunteers.

1) In our Boston School Programs, we taught 5 days a week at the Hennigan, Curley, Kenny and Mather Schools. We expanded our curriculum to include classes geared toward 6th, 7th and 8th graders, focusing on identity and diversity through dance. Through our public school classes we reached over 600 students, including Sheltered English Immersion students, Social and Academic Remediation students, and PACE Autism students.

2) 75 students enrolled in BalletRox Dance! at Spontaneous, a 25% increase over FY1015. We increased our program hours by 50%, and added four new classes: Level IV Ballet with Pointe Class, Creative Movement/Beginning Ballet, Modern Soca Fusion, and Hip Hop Street Jazz.

3) We expanded our BalletRox Dance! Performance Program to include a *Winter Wonderland* Fundraiser on January 30th, *Wake Up the Earth Festival* on May 7th, *Dance for World Community Performance* on June 11th, and the final recital, *Cinderella*, on May 15th. We doubled the number of BPS recitals to include both mid-year and year-end recitals, and included the middle school BPS students in performing original choreography at the *Wake Up the Earth Festival*.

4) Through our field trip program we provided free or discounted tickets to over 175 students and their families to see the Russian Dance Theater performance of *Swan Lake*, the Broadway touring performance of *Cinderella*, and the spring performance of *Alvin Ailey Dance Theater*.

5) The Youth Council wrote scripts, choreographed dances, performed publicly, and wrote their own grant proposal to fund costumes and rehearsal space. They continued to act as teaching assistants and mentors to younger students in the BalletRox Dance! Program.

6) Students in both programs were invited to create original dances, interpreting the works of other youth artists, in an exciting multi-sensory art installation called *Consenses*, which was exhibited by the Massachusetts Cultural Council at the State House in late May, and at Boston Symphony Hall in June.

Successes and Challenges

Our programs have grown and deepened rapidly over the last several years, and we have had many successes, including those listed above. At the same time, we are mindful of the dual need to maintain high quality programming while increasing our capacity to serve. One of our biggest challenges is securing adequate, reliable funding. We have recently expanded our Board and are focusing on fundraising as the top Board priority for the coming year, along with doubling the amount of staff time devoted to development. Another major challenge is finding room to expand our class schedule in our tight, shared quarters at Spontaneous Celebrations. We are adding 8:00 am classes on Saturday mornings in FY2017 because this is the only time slot available, and we have lengthened some of the class times to ensure a better learning experience. A major challenge in our school programs this year was the unexpectedly large number of English Language Learners in the middle school dance classes. To address this we have hired a bilingual dance teacher for the coming school year, and will be incorporating more culturally relevant dance instruction into the curriculum.

Our Impact

In each of our programs we measured four arts related outcomes: confidence, focus, collaboration and accountability. We conducted student surveys and teacher assessments of all students in third grade and above on each of these measures. In FY2015, comparing the students at the beginning of the program year to the end, we saw a: 9.89% increase in confidence; 2.47% increase in focus; 7.47% increase in collaboration; and 6.13% increase in accountability. With the assistance of the Black Ministerial Alliance Capacity Institute, we made some necessary adjustments in our measurement tools at the beginning of FY2016. Because our program year has just ended, we are still analyzing the data for FY2016, and will report it later this year.

Through our programs we reached over 700 Boston youth and their families. They came primarily from the Dorchester, Mattapan, Roxbury, Mission Hill, Jamaica Plain and Hyde Square neighborhoods of Boston, and were reflective of those neighborhoods in terms of ethnicity and income. Approximately 40% of the students were Hispanic; 40% African American; 15% Asian and 5% Other. 90% of the students in our programs came from families whose incomes were at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. Over 50% were from families who had recently immigrated to the United States, and were English Language Learners.

Between the Boston Public School programs and BalletRox Dance! at Spontaneous, we reached an audience of approximately 10,000 people. In the BPS programs, families and the school communities were invited to attend multiple recitals, resulting in a total audience of approximately 1,200. At the Wake Up the Earth Festival, where our BalletRox Dance! and school-based programs performed in the opening ceremonies and on the stage, approximately 8,000 people attended. At each of the BalletRox Dance! mid-year and year-end recitals, approximately 350 family and community members attended. These events were publicized through school websites and newsletters, local newspapers, flyers distributed throughout the neighborhoods, word-of-mouth, mailings and email lists.

For More Information About BalletRox:

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If you would like a copy of our most current independently reviewed Financial Statement, or a copy of our recital video, please email us at: info@balletrox.info