



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 1, 2023

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DALLAS BLACK DANCE THEATRE ANNOUNCES NEW MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

ALL DALLAS BLACK DANCE ACADEMY STUDENTS WILL RECEIVE FREE MENTAL HEALTH SESSIONS BY LICENSED THERAPIST

PROGRAM BEGINS DECEMBER 2023

Dallas, Texas – **Dallas Black Dance Theatre's (DBDT)** is excited to announce a new mental health initiative for **Dallas Black Dance Academy (DBDA)** students that has been made possible through the support of an anonymous sponsor, beginning December 2023. Under this program, all new and existing DBDA students will have access to a free licensed therapist to provide holistic support for an array of challenges such as course work, family dynamics, bullying, mass violence, social injustice, and various forms of loss.

"Mental health sessions are proven to assist adolescents managing life stressors, adjusting to changes, understanding themselves better, making better decisions and living more emotionally balanced lives," explained Katricia Eaglin, Director Dallas Black Dance Academy.

"Depression, anxiety, and behavioral disorders are among the leading causes of illness and disability among adolescents," Eaglin continued. "Good mental health is closely related to positive outcomes in sports, academics, and the arts."

DBDA has previously worked closely with licensed therapists during their most recent Summer Youth Enrichment Program. After the positive response from that experience, this new initiative is meant to formalize and create the structure needed to ensure the ongoing support of these young dancers and their mental well-being.

ABOUT DALLAS BLACK DANCE THEATRE

Founded in 1976 by **Ann Williams**, and currently under the direction of Melissa M.

Young, **Dallas Black Dance Theatre's** mission is to create and produce contemporary modern dance at the highest level of artistic excellence through performances and educational programs that bridge cultures and reach diverse communities. As the largest and oldest professional dance company in Dallas, DBDT is the fourth-largest Black dance company in



the nation, the ninth-largest contemporary modern dance company, and ranked 36th among the nation's leading ballet companies. Located in the thriving downtown Dallas Arts District, DBDT has performed worldwide for over 4.6 million arts patrons and 2.8 million students in 33 states and 16 countries on five continents. The performances include two Olympics (1996 & 2012), the nation's most prestigious venues (**Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Broadway, Jacob's Pillow**), and for such luminaries as **Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II** and **South African President Nelson Mandela**. Since the pandemic began in 2020, DBDT performances have also been viewed virtually in 43 countries. The Company has been recognized by the **National Endowment for the Arts** as an American Masterpiece Touring Artist (2008) and received the **Texas Medal of the Arts Award** for Arts Education (2017).

For more details about **Dallas Black Dance Theatre**, visit www.dbdt.com.

ABOUT DALLAS BLACK DANCE ACADEMY

The official school of Dallas Black Dance Theatre celebrates 50 years of delivering dance instruction to a community of diverse backgrounds. It was founded by Ann Williams. The academy trained the first student in the nation to receive the Presidential Scholar Award in Dance in 1980. Students participate weekly in 36 dance classes, including ballet, jazz, tap, modern, and African on-site at DBDT's studios. Classes are held at Dallas Black Dance Theatre's studios and are open to students ages four to adult. The academy has three performing ensembles: Allegro Performing Ensemble, Dallas Black Dance Theatre's premier academy ensemble, Senior Performing Ensemble, and Junior Performing Ensemble.

For details on Dallas Black Dance Academy, visit www.dbdt.com/academy.