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DALLAS BLACK DANCE THEATRE AND THE NBA FOUNDATION EMPOWER YOUTH OF COLOR THROUGH DANCE AND EDUCATION

Dallas, Texas – **Dallas Black Dance Theatre (DBDT)** and the **NBA Foundation** are proud to announce a strategic partnership aimed at promoting school-to-career employment opportunities and skills training for Black youth and youth of color ages 14-24. This collaboration, made possible by a generous grant, will span the DBDT's entire 2024-2025 season, running from August 19, 2024, to May 31, 2025.

The grant, funded by the NBA Foundation, will have a transformative effect on the local arts scene by benefiting **Dallas Black Dance Theatre's second company, DBDT: *Encore!***, and simultaneously fueling the expansion of **the Dallas Black Dance Academy's Adopt-A-School** program.

Zenetta S. Drew, Executive Director of Dallas Black Dance Theatre, expressed her excitement about the partnership, stating, "This collaboration with the NBA Foundation is a significant step forward in our mission to empower young dancers and provide them with the tools they need for successful careers in dance. The grant will not only impact the lives of our DBDT: *Encore!* dancers but also the communities we serve through the Adopt-a-School program."

DBDT: *Encore!* serves as a vital platform for emerging talent, providing young dancers with professional opportunities and mentorship crucial for their artistic growth. Less than 15% of professional dancers in the nation identify as Black, and the NBA Foundation's support will empower these young artists, enabling them to thrive and contribute to the rich cultural tapestry of Dallas as they gain professional dance experience. In turn, these young professionals will serve as role models and mentors by providing dance instruction to aspiring dancers in middle and high school (age 14-18).



The **Dallas Black Dance Academy's Adopt-A-School program** has been a beacon of hope, bringing dance education to underserved communities. Thanks to the NBA Foundation's grant, this impactful initiative will extend its reach to three more schools, providing students with access to high-quality dance education, fostering creativity, discipline, and self-expression.

"The arts are a crucial pillar in the development of young people," said **Greg Taylor Executive Director of the NBA Foundation**. "Dallas Black Dance Theatre has a distinguished reputation of not only fostering artistic growth but also the life skills that will benefit youth well into their careers."

The strategic alignment between Dallas Black Dance Theatre and the NBA Foundation exemplifies the power of combining arts and sports to drive positive change in the lives of Black youth and youth of color. The grant will leave a lasting legacy, shaping the future of the dance community in Dallas.

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 seventh-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.