

Jody Arnhold Dance Magazine Awards Acceptance Speech

I am honored to be here tonight to accept the Dance Magazine Chairman Award.

I accept this award on behalf of the 500 certified Dance Educators teaching in New York City public schools, the multitude of teaching artists working for cultural organizations and dance companies, and the countless artist who find their way to working with young peoplethis is for you!

It is your commitment to educating the next generation of young artists that fuels me as a dance educator and advocate.

I hear this all the time "where is the next Alvin Ailey, Martha Graham, Paul Taylor, Jose Limon". I know where they are. They're in a pre-K through 12 public schools right now and they deserve a dance teacher!

Dance educators change lives, change classrooms, change schools, change communities, change the world. Imagine what our culture would be, if all children had a Dance Education. It might just save a democracy.

When you leave here tonight, remember this, there is no dance without dance education! Dance education is the grassroots effort for our art. We must all advocate for the next generation of Dance artists. We must include them in the Dance ecosystem.

I began teaching dance at PS 75 on the upper west side in 1977. Back then, Dance teaches were a precious few. It took me a while, but I figured out how to make Dance the soul of the school. Dance was connected to everything. You can make a dance about anything.

It helped that Ballet Hispanico and Tina Ramirez were in residence that first year, showing me that the model for Dance education in the schools is a certified dance teacher and a cultural organization working together. That is the goal for every school.

I saw the magic of the model at PS 75 and it made me think "What about dance in every school? What about dance for every child in every school? The lightbulb went off. I had my big idea!

I hope you all remember to say there's no dance without dance education.