Summer welcomes bright ideas and waves of movement. In this issue we explore brushstrokes, poetic dreams, juxtapositions, triumph over struggle, and more!

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Congratulations, Graduates!

PC Stephany Santiago

Note: All group photos were taken before the COVID-19 shutdown or within recent state mandates and CDC guidelines. Our chapters respect everyone’s health and safety.
Exiting the stage after a performance is unlike anything else.
Blood running through your veins; proud, energized, joyful
   A heart so full of love and appreciation
Hours upon hours of rehearsal with the ones you love
   All your hard work and dedication finally paid off
   Worries completely washed away
You realize your sport is unlike any other
   Dance has the most rewarding factors
      From when you learn new 'choreo,'
      To when you perform it for the last time,
Hearing the music of your dance for the last time is bittersweet.
   A song filled with so much work and preparation
      Slightly tired of it, but it holds unforgettable memories
         That you know will last a lifetime
Running off stage for the last time to hug your teammates,
   It is the moment when you realize how much dance means.
   It brought you so much ~
      The friends, the technique,
         the memories,
      the determination.
Dancing in a Box
Artwork By: Hannah Essig
Live Love Dance
Advisor/Sponsor: Valerie Gunnels-Meredith

I would like to call my painting, "Dancing in a Box."

My inspiration was dancing in my tiny living room during quarantine. Acrylic paints were the medium used for this piece.

Just as depicted here, I felt I had to dance on top of myself.
The Soul of Dance
Artwork & Poem By: Olivia Netland
Park City High School
Advisor/Sponsor: Ashley Mott

If it’s perplexed, it will try, it will crash, it will burn.

If it’s sore, if it hurts, it continues to advance.
If it breaks, if it shatters, it moves on, despite the circumstance.

If it’s battered, if it’s bruised, if it’s broken, if it’s tired,
It continues to excel, it becomes more inspired.

It’s powerful, it’s strong, it makes the body keep going.
It jumps, it leaps, and no matter what, keeps growing.

The soul of the foot is what helps one to dance.
The soul of the heart is what gives it that chance.
If it makes a mistake, it continues to learn.
If it’s perplexed, it will try, it will crash, it will burn.

If it’s sore, if it hurts, it continues to advance.
If it breaks, if it shatters, it moves on, despite the circumstance.

If it’s battered, if it’s bruised, if it’s broken, if it’s tired,
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The soul of the foot is what helps one to dance.
The soul of the heart is what gives it that chance.
Change has swept across our world, between this summer and the last.

Like sun spilling through walnut trees, constantly shifting toward the autumn,
Like the Zoom call watching me dance as it follows each jump and each bend,
Like the speakers blaring familiar voices, filling the air with jokes and encouragement,
Like empty streets lying quietly in front of homes turned into temporary dance studios.

But sometimes, dancing here, in the evening breeze, it seems some things have not changed at all.

Like dewy grass sleeping under my soles, as mosquito-infested as the summer before,
Like sweat beading on my neck and nose as I surge and twirl and compress and fly
Like the energy coursing through limbs as my heartbeat overlaps with melodies,
Like my lungs, filled with strength and creative unity transcending boundaries.

As the sun melts the horizon, I realize: the joy we cherish each time we dance, will always stay the same.

“This digital self-portrait, titled ‘Reflection,’ conveys my passion for dance. Sometimes when I dance, I feel calm and relaxed – represented by the muted, watery reflections in the background. Other times, I feel proud and confident, shown through the colorful circle in the background amid the dramatic lighting. I worked especially hard to convey movement through the strong shading on my shirt. All in all, I aimed to represent my emotions as a young dancer.” ~ Anish Aradhey
Congratulations to Jasmin ‘Ofamo’oni for receiving the Doug Risner Prize for Emerging Dance Education Researchers. Look for her paper “It Takes a Family to Graduate,” in NDEO’s Journal of Dance Education. Here she focuses on: “A talanoa (dialogue) with a Niuean graduate, as he reflects upon the challenges and motivations remaining connected to his Pacific cultural values and expectations while enrolled in a tertiary dance degree.”

Awarded a full doctoral scholarship, Jasmin teaches within the Dance Studies Programme of Creative Arts and Industries at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Her MANU Project collective, a Pacific contemporary-inspired team, tours internationally. In China, she inspired teenagers who attended her master classes (pictured above). The Doug Risner Prize recognizes emerging scholars for their writing excellence. Go to the NDEO website for additional information. Great inspiration!
Parking Lot Dancing!

During the pandemic, the All Stars Performing Arts Academy held an innovative summer “Parking Lot Classes” Series (no cars allowed!), including Hip-Hop and more. The offerings, held in this open space for all ages with plenty of fresh air and sunshine, created “fun times with safe social distancing ~ Dancing our troubles away!” Breaking News ~ the program should be back this summer along with other classes!

PC All Stars Performing Arts Academy

Sparks Fly with Hot Clogging!

Consuming Fire School of Dance & Gymnastics offers many dance styles, including Appalachian clogging, which utilizes hard-soled, heeled shoes with a double tap. Classes benefit all ages and abilities, bringing joy and healthy lifestyles across the Nebraska Panhandle!

PC Consuming Fire School of Dance & Gymnastics
In honor of our NDEO-sponsored “Dance A Difference Week,” West Genesee High School dancers joined forces with “Comfort Cases: Inspiring Communities to Bring Dignity to Youth in Foster Care.” The entire school community participated, and through their generosity, 55 backpacks were collected and filled with toiletries, pajamas, blankets, stuffed animals, coloring books with crayons, books, and journals with pens.

Noted chapter sponsor Caroline Brackett:

“Our students were all so grateful for the financial donations and the enormous number of backpacks collected and assembled. Special thanks to the families and friends of the West Genesee School District, without whose kindness this project would never have succeeded. Our NHSDA members hope to make this an annual outreach activity to reinforce our commitment to the community ~ especially being involved with the deserving children and youth in need.”

Learn more: https://www.comfortcases.org
Attention: NHSDA Seniors!

NHSDA Day of Recognition: June 9, 2021

All our chapter seniors are invited to submit graduation photos for the National NHSDA Senior Slideshow!

This online event will be celebrated on both our website and social media accounts on NHSDA Day of Recognition: June 9, 2021.

Deadline to submit your photos: Thursday, May 20, 2021.

Learn more at https://conta.cc/3wXPm
On March 16, 2021, eight people were killed in three spas in the Atlanta, Georgia, region. Six victims were of Asian descent; seven were women. While the investigations behind this attack continue, the murders fit a pattern of increasing crimes against Asian Americans and Asian immigrants.

Harmful rhetoric that contributes to these attacks lingers everywhere – from jokes to hyper-sexualized portrayals in political rhetoric, the media, hate groups, and sadly the arts, including dance.

To stop the violence, we must all work to stop the systems that flame these acts.

NDEO stands with the Asian American community, the victims’ families, and all those impacted by xenophobia and racialized, sexualized, and gender-based violence. In turn, NDEO has launched an audit through the powerful lens focused upon justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Read the complete NDEO proclamation with a list of essential resources:
Stop Asian Hate - National Dance Education Organization (ndeo.org)
An enlightening lesson to carry from this experience is that
We can dance anywhere and with any age as we share our love of dance and each other.

Last summer, instead of attending the usual dance intensive, I made a big turn as an assistant teacher with my Gotta Dance studio camp. I love working with children, but I especially love dancing with them. For everyone, lots of moving and growing filled the whole class time. Each day a Disney Princess waltzed into our hearts, which created a fun environment.

How excited the children were when they danced with a guest princess and even with me. Eye-opening how we, as older dancers, are a source of comfort and inspiration for the children. Their wanting to dance and turning to me when they needed help brought such joy as I understood I positively impacted them as a mentor.

Every precious moment we were dancing right at 8:00 a.m.; along with our warm-up, we imagined flying away to a magical place, make a pizza or an ice cream sundae, all blossoming with agile or graceful steps. Then we presented a sequence revolving around a special princess. For those shy children, I held their hands to guide and make them feel comfortable away from their parents so that they could show their inner creativity. For those already confident having a ball, I joined in their delight.

How imaginative the little ones were, especially with the Freeze dance! A sad day, yes, when the camp ended because we all had great fun dancing away!
Dancing with Scoliosis
By: Brooke Woodsmansey
Queen City Ballet
Advisor/Sponsor: Campbell Midgley

With scoliosis, I realize and accept that perfection is unattainable. This epiphany has been a gift that has allowed me to learn this liberating lesson at a young age.

Little did I know when I started ballet classes at age three, dancing would become one of my greatest lifelines for navigating through my scoliosis diagnosis. When I was 12, my orthopedic surgeon said I should start wearing a back brace for 18 hours every day to prevent my spine curvature from worsening. This news scared me as I realized my condition had worsened and might affect my ability to dance. I was worried I could not continue to spend so many hours practicing, rehearsing, and performing ballet.

A Brace & Freedom of Dance
Scoliosis is a lateral curvature of the spine that can rapidly worsen during periods of growth. When told I must begin wearing a back brace, my spinal curvature had progressed to 27 degrees. I needed to wear this immediately because if my scoliosis went untreated and my curvature worsened to 45 degrees, I would most likely require corrective spinal surgery. I knew this intervention would be invasive and leave me with metal rods and screws supporting my spine that could inhibit my ability to dance at my current skill level.

I took it upon myself to wear my scoliosis back brace faithfully ~ 18 hours a day from ages 12 to 15. It was not easy. My wearing the constrictive, bulky brace made sleeping difficult, especially during the brutal summer heat. Because this hard plastic device fit under my armpits down to my hips, I attempted not to stand out at middle school by concealing it with loose clothes.

During those precious six hours when I could throw off my brace, I chose to dance but then would wear it again at school. I looked forward to entering the studio. I can hardly describe my sense of freedom when the constricting apparatus was off, so to dance. This exuberance allowed me to

- feel stronger,
- express my thoughts,
- lengthen my spine, and
- strengthen my core muscles, lessening my scoliosis-induced pain.

Striving for perfection is a common goal of ballet. However, physical limitations might lead to self-doubt and body image issues for dancers. Because of scoliosis, the alignment of my ribcage, shoulders, and spine is abnormal, and therefore, dramatically challenges my attempts to execute specific ballet movements.

I am so fortunate my dance studio has been unceasingly supportive of my scoliosis and its limitations.
Moments my self-esteem has negatively been affected included participating in workshops with instructors unaware of my condition. While I am always grateful to receive feedback and corrections, it has sometimes been difficult to hear I need to fix my alignment. My anatomy may hinder my ability to apply this correction.

Power of the Will: Release and Freedom
After three and a half years, I was able to stop wearing the brace because I had reached my final height, and my spinal curvature had stopped worsening.

My spine is currently curved at 35-degrees but stable, and I still have x-rays every six months to ensure my curve has not worsened. I am now 17 years old, and although my scoliosis is currently holding steady, it will forever be a significant part of my life and experience with ballet.

Out of my brace for almost two years, I have spent much time reflecting upon my journey. In this process, I discovered The Curvy Girls organization, which provides peer-led support, encouragement, and education for girls with scoliosis. I immediately knew I wanted to be part of this wonderful organization to help others not feel discouraged by their condition. Many girls who must wear a brace might be dismayed and feel like they need to stop participating in ballet, sports, or other loved activities. I want to encourage them to continue healthy athletic activities such as ballet. I recently became the Curvy Girl chapter leader for Montana and, as a result, lead monthly virtual support group meetings in my state.

My hope for all dancers:

Do not feel discouraged by any physical limitations. Remember to dance for the joy and not solely for the quest for perfection. Be empowered to discuss your obstacles with your instructors and seek out a network of support and understanding. By advocating for yourself, you will best focus on your passion for dance and wonderful life!

To learn more about the Curvy Girls scoliosis organization, please click this link: https://www.curvygirlsscoliosis.com/

All PC Brooke Woodsmansey
Achieving complete self-discovery may never be realized. Yet, at 18 years old, there exists the pressure to decide one’s path. Making the ultimate decision may leave uncertainty, as paralleled in my solo, “Leap of Faith.” Putting movement to the musical crescendos evolved with ease; however, the transitional steps presented an unforeseen challenge. As I reached these moments, I reminded myself: “Simply tell my story.”

When I began my dance journey at five years old, I struggled with the inevitable process of being corrected. I was frustrated because it was the first moment that I felt perfection was unattainable. “Perfection” is the goal in dance, but it is the one thing each dancer knows will never be achieved. The simple truth is, I will always attempt to make my arabesque a bit higher, my foot slightly more stretched, and execute one more pirouette.

My biggest battles were fighting my self-induced expectations of perfection, attempting to do everything “the right way.” But when I felt I had missed that standard, I became distraught. This dilemma often led to my incredible shyness when interacting, especially with new people, because I put too much thought into keeping up appearances.

I thank dance every day for this critical Life’s Lesson. It is never easy to acknowledge our imperfections. However, once we do, we open ourselves to personal growth. I no longer view corrections as insults; instead, they motivate me to keep working to accomplish a goal.

Reflecting upon my time as a dancer, the moments I remember fondly are not when I placed first overall or received a significant award. I am most proud of when I finally landed the triple pirouette after weeks of trying or when my teacher congratulated me after I performed a step I was afraid to attempt. Of course, there were plenty of moments of frustration over the years, but I realize only now, each has led to my most triumphant victories.

Most importantly, this lesson has allowed me to gain the confidence to fulfill my role as a leader. I am no longer afraid to express my opinions because I realize debating breeds collaboration and understanding. I will bring forward these principles to foster positive conversation and allow everyone to be heard and appreciated for their contributions.

Thus, my mission as a future teacher is to instill in my students the hard work ethic while reminding them that they should never be ashamed to make a mistake or ask a question. I hope they, too, will look back on my class and say I inspired them to learn how to fly.
In my dance, I allowed my emotions, not my head, to carry me. Slowly, my choreography all fell into place. I began as someone afraid to face the changes ahead. When I pressed my mouth, then flailed my arms, I attempted to force the answers to dark secrets out, but nothing escaped.

Throughout the process, reflecting upon my life, I searched for the validating voice to confirm my decisions. It was not until the final moment when my hand floated up from my growing smile that clarity alighted. Then there were no more questions or doubts inside me.

None of us truly knows what the future holds. Thus, we only need faith in ourselves to leap into the unknown and trust our hearts to carry us to where we belong.
My piece, “The Vices of Technology,” showcases humankind’s dependence on technology and how that fixation gradually increases to control our lives. This piece inspired me to think critically about how much I use my phone each day as a distraction or a way to the point technology encompasses a large portion of my life.

My first activity in the morning is using my phone, and this routine increases throughout the day. To dig deeper into this topic, I logged the times I held it during the day ~ After reviewing, I realized the first time I did not have it was in dance class.

Parallel to my data, I analyzed similar effects on several youths, with concerns about:
- lack of attention span,
- limited physical activity,
- restless sleep, and
- reduction of interpersonal interactions.

All surmounted to be serious problems.

As I choreographed, I kept these ideas in mind, portraying technology as a big distraction from everyday functions. I edited the music to encompass phone sounds that fit with movement, as if checking a device for notifications and constantly seeking its presence.
My choreographic intent was born out of a place of frustration with my everyday routine. I frequently struggled to balance organization and spontaneity within my life, so I strived to create a piece that felt fresh and experimental every time I danced it. This inspiration throughout the creative process continues to inspire my ongoing journey with dance.

One obstacle that I constantly encounter in improvisation and choreography alike is my instinctual, repetitive movement patterns. There are ways that I am comfortable moving that can be difficult for me to break. While creating, I allowed these comfortable pathways to become a representation of my day-to-day routine that had become stale. The resistance to choreograph what felt natural then correlated to any light-hearted, spontaneous activities in my life.

When I finished the piece, I realized I not only created something that felt uniquely pure, like nothing I had ever created, but I made strides towards living a more exciting life filled with joy. The title for my work, “Peace of Mind,” ultimately represented what this project brought me. My creative mind finally took hold of my life for the better! I now look back on this experience with a whole heart and refreshed mind.
“Our Choice” is a self-choreographed piece that brings faith into reality. I examine my reflection, resembling the objective conscience to trust the instinct that anything is possible. Not executing our true feelings or natural characteristics but altering our interpretations, even distortedly, makes us quick to suffer self-doubt. Despite my vulnerability, I connect with my inner voice. In my piece, the gloves I wear resemble the skin I shed as I choose faith to step into a new perspective of freedom.

I tapped my little tap shoes to the beat from when I was three years old. I recall the joyful feeling of always having a smile. This pleasure remains indescribable. My first love, namely dance, has molded me into who I am today. Not only has it taught me rhythm and how to count off a beat, but to shift my perspective about life into a broader, respectful worldview.

Dance allows me to find the beauty that, in turn, influences how I express gratitude with every step toward what I hold close to my heart. It is my remedy to tune in with and express my emotions. Dance has multiple genres, and with each, I find an outlet to portray different personalities. When I train, I aim to achieve my goals, so when I accomplish them, I stand proud.

Nothing fills my heart more than to inspire. Whether on the dance floor or in the audience, there is no better feeling than encouraging people to feel something they never knew they could.

Dance drives me to be experimental and organic with the movement I choose to display because there are infinite ways to move the body and create in unison with the music. In and out of the studio, dance motivates me to fulfill a new pair of shoes every day. Finding transitions and shapes to create with my body was a challenging element in the process. I envisioned how we might get lost or trapped within a place we do not feel to be our own. However, choreographing allows me to impact others positively ~ and this joy of sharing my knowledge and seeing smiles on many faces is so rewarding that this would steer me forward.

Action to benefit all starts with one leader ~ a quality that dance has instilled in me. I will be a positive example, encouraging mindful activities like exercise, meditation, nature, and healthy eating. These qualities allow us to appreciate each other within the great world community.

In my choreography, I intertwine awareness motivated with the courage to take that extraordinary step forward, no matter the pace or obstacle. Even when circumstances get tough, let us set our wings free and keep gliding because I KNOW we can do anything.

Dance emboldens within us powerful choices, moving faith into reality.
Tap ~ a River of Creativity
By: Katrina Schneider
Honorable Mention, 2020
NHSDA Award
Ridge High School
Advisor/Sponsor: Rachel Miranda

Dancers learn to fill a room with an effortless stream of steps flowing from beginning to end. In my piece “Rivers,” I showcased how tap is as complex and passion laden as any style, while still the most entertaining. I knew immediately my solo was to be tap, especially when, compared to contemporary or ballet, it has been such a rare find to encounter another tapper.

As a tapper, since I was two years old, I was ecstatic to get my first pair of authentic black tap shoes when I was older. Eventually, I added other styles into my regimen, but this is the one style accompanying me through my entire life.

At first, in my piece, it was difficult to create original steps, keeping my upper body loose as my feet performed the hard work. Yet, I intentionally left my arms free as I traveled through the solo with my feet creating intricate sounds resembling couring water. The song accompaniment contrasted the movement’s fluidity with a more energetic sensation. Thus, I enjoyed choreographing alongside the music ~ all symbolic of how a lively river splashes and laps against the rocks.

Choreographic challenges with tap did not hinder completing my piece ~ making me proud to call “Rivers” my own.

PC Katrina Schneider
Grasping Trust
Julia Boberg (Graduate with Honors)
San Marino Dance Academy

Can I trust myself? Since adults make about 35,000 decisions each day, and contrastingly a child makes about 3,000 daily decisions, it begs an exploration concerning confidence. As I grow, speaking for myself is expected, but learning to trust myself has been difficult. The inspiration for “Don’t Trust Myself” stems from this conflict within.

How do I trust when I worry about past events that did not go perfectly and that my future might not be successful? I often feel society controls me, restricted by academic conformity, and bound by the judgment of whether I can make it as a dancer. In contrast, others decide to be scientists, authors, and doctors.

The inspirational Batsheva Dance Company and the Gaga technique, which requires trust through improvisation, helped expand my choreography.

There were moments when my environment created disarray; I paused, attempting to understand my personal growth. As the piece closed, I commenced to walk the path of discovery, but grasping for it, I stopped ~ unable to trust myself for now.

Improvisation was a big part of composing, of letting go and exploring without judgment. As I progressed, I juxtaposed from being lost to becoming secure, moving from chaotic to control ~ with a genuine feeling of freedom and trusting my body.

PC Julie Boberg
Congratulations to
Our Inspiring
NHSDA Graduates!

Artwork By: Nicole Beaudet
Ridge High School
Advisor/Sponsor: Rachel Miranda

Nicole, who graduated in 2020, submitted this artwork when she was a senior. She has been dancing for over 15 years in jazz, ballet, tap, hip-hop, and lyrical styles.

Her message to this year’s graduates is that dance has taught me much more than technique and stage presence; it has taught me confidence and commitment. My dance family is a bond that will last forever, and I am grateful to have shared the stage with my closest friends.
Be Published!

*Be Published!* is the official newsletter of the National Society for Dance Arts™ (NHSDA) Junior and Secondary programs. Our Editorial Staff invites student members and their chapter sponsors to contribute stories, poems, articles, chapter news, photos, and other creative works for our future editions!

Learn more: nhdfa-deo.org/danceartsnow

*PC All That Dance*
Happy Summer Sharing Dance!