

MINDS IN MOTION

A PROGRAM OF RICHMOND BALLET



^ *Minds In Motion* Ambassadors in Richmond Ballet's Downtown Richmond Canal Street Studios.

Richmond Ballet's acclaimed *Minds In Motion* program serves to fulfill the organization's mission to awaken and uplift the human spirit through excellence in ballet performance, training, and community engagement. Realizing one of Richmond Ballet's core beliefs – that dance has a special and unique power to enrich lives and reinforce community bonds – we actively engage students, teachers, and audience members around the Commonwealth and beyond in a shared experience of dance.

In 1995, after decades of successful and enriching ballet performance and training, Richmond Ballet established its *Minds In Motion* program to develop and expand its community engagement. Inspired by a program founded by former New York City Ballet principal dancer Jacques d'Amboise, the *Minds In Motion* program focuses on introducing children to the concept of seeking excellence within themselves through dance training. As an integral part of the school curriculum, rather than solely arts education, *MIM* is woven into the school year through collaborative efforts of the teachers and administrators to help establish the depth and quality of the experience for the students.

MIM brings in-school dance education to 4th graders in Richmond, Charlottesville, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Chesterfield, Henrico, and Israel. This year the program will reach close to 2,000 students, 160 classroom teachers and school administrators, and nearly 10,000 audience members at 23 culminating performances. Throughout the *MIM* experience, students discover themselves through cathartic exploration. They strengthen social competencies, develop collaborative skills, and channel energy into productive exercise while dancing, rehearsing, and performing for an audience which is directed toward taking skills and attitudes nurtured in the dance studio to future endeavors.

Arts education, particularly *MIM*, supplies or reinforces peer and social protective factors identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as correlated with violence prevention, academic

success, and positive social engagement. Additionally, the President's Committee on Arts and the Humanities found that business, arts, and education leadership groups each typically emphasize instrumental outcomes derived from high quality arts education in the following categories:

Student achievement - 96% of classroom teachers agreed that *Minds In Motion* reinforced the importance of arts in education.

Student motivation and engagement - 93% of students kept dancing when they felt physically challenged and 94% worked to figure out choreography or concepts they didn't understand

Development of habits of mind - In reflecting on their experience with *MIM*, students noted that they learned, "to try my best," "to work together," "to reach very far," "it is okay to make a mistake," "to share your story," "how to get to formations on time," and "how to be thankful for things."

Development of social competencies - 100% of *MIM* classroom teachers confirmed that the experience gave their students the opportunity to work cooperatively together. 96% of *MIM* students recognized the importance of others participating in the performance.

Recognizing the importance of the effects of *Minds In Motion*, the program serves as the pipeline connecting children with the joy of dance which can continue into expanded and diversified after-school dance training in the programs of *Team XL*, *MIM Ambassadors*, and *Bridge Training* into the School of Richmond Ballet. Our commitment to train students through 12th grade offers them the experience to develop an excellence in dance that can potentially manifest as a career as well as to develop life skills that will be useful in any profession.

We believe that there is an opportunity for everyone to participate in a community dance performance – no matter their background. This dynamic arts experience, distinctive in the Commonwealth and Israel, gives students tools for self-expression, builds self-confidence, and introduces exciting and engaging ways of learning. Richmond Ballet is thrilled to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the *Minds In Motion* program at the 2020 Annual Gala, *Gala in the River City*, where we will raise awareness about our community engagement with a focus on *Minds In Motion* and a fund the cause paddle raising. As Richmond Ballet continues to bring the power of movement and dance to young people, the support of and partnership with organizations throughout the community enables us to extend our reach deeper into the community.

