

Press Release

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Capital Dance Project Awarded California Arts Council “Local Impact” Grant

State funds support arts projects in California’s historically marginalized communities

Sacramento, CA – The California Arts Council announced its plans to award \$9,000 to Capital Dance Project as part of its Local Impact program.

The Local Impact program provides support for community-driven arts project for small and mid- sized arts organizations. The program fosters equity, access and opportunity for historically marginalized communities by cultivating community participation in art making, learning, and exposure.

Projects provide access to arts participation and representation of and by the community identified in the application. Historically marginalized communities include specific ethnic and tribal groups, LGBTQ+, individuals with disabilities, low-income and rural communities, and immigrant and refugee communities.

With the support a Local Impact grant from the California Arts Council, Capital Dance Project (CDP) will expand their outreach programming to present two matinee *Sensory Friendly Dance Performances* on Saturday August 18th at the Crocker Art Museum. By making accommodations to a traditional live dance performance, including: shortening the performance time and allowing the audience to move, sing and dance along as feels comfortable; lowering sound volumes; removing any flashing or bright lighting effects; providing noise canceling headphones; and creating a safe space in the theater with Behavior Therapists on hand and bean bag chairs, fidget toys and coloring activities available; CDP allows individuals with sensory disabilities to feel comfortable being themselves in an inclusive theater environment. Furthermore, by fostering a “No Apology Zone” CDP creates a welcoming environment in the theater where everyone is accepted just as they are. The Local Impact grant will also allow CDP to expand their programming to include a sensory friendly dance classes series leading up to the performances designed specifically for individuals with autism, or other sensory related disabilities. The *Sensory Friendly Dance Classes* will be led by CDP artists and Behavior Therapists, and will focus on creative movement, light stretching, and, above all else, encouraging participants to express themselves through the freeing movement of dance without fear of judgement. Thanks to the Local Impact grant, CDP will be able to offer free parking at these events as well as keep ticket prices at an affordable \$5 with no additional service fees. This sensory friendly programming will give individuals with sensory related disabilities, and their families, unprecedented access to dance and live performing art experiences in Sacramento.

“We are thrilled for this opportunity to expand our sensory friendly programming” says Alexandra Cunningham, CDP founding member and creator of CDP’s sensory friendly events. “Last year’s inaugural *Sensory-Friendly Dance Performance* was an incredible experience. As Sacramento’s professional ballet

dancers we were able to share our passion for dance with those who ordinarily would never have an opportunity to engage in our art form. Now, to be able to expand our programming, thanks to the Local Impact grant, will mean we can serve our community even more, and that is an incredible feeling as a local artist.”

Stacie Freichs, Executive Director of the Davis Arts Center and family member of a person with autism, attended last year’s *Sensory Friendly Dance Performance* and shared it was the first time in many years since they had been able to attend a live performing arts event as a family. “It was clear we were not the only family to experience this joy. There were children freely expressing themselves, even dancing at stage’s edge, and their families’ shared sense of relief at the event’s concept of a being a “No Apologies Zone” was palpable. ... As the ED of an arts organization myself, I can attest to the positive role of the arts in everyone’s lives, no matter their level of ability.”

Capital Dance Project is one of 133 grantees chosen for the Local Impact program. The award was featured as part of a [larger announcement](#) from the California Arts Council.

“The Local Impact grant program strikes at the heart of the issue of access and equity in the arts,” said Nashormeh Lindo, California Arts Council. “Capital Dance Project’s project is crucial to help arts and culture opportunities reach California’s marginalized communities, and to promote the unique creative expressions within that community.”

To view a complete listing of all Local Impact grantees, visit http://arts.ca.gov/programs/files/FY1718_ProjectDescriptions_LI.pdf.

For more information about Capital Dance Project and their sensory friendly programming visit: www.capitaldanceproejct.org

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Capital Dance Project (CDP) is an independent collective of professional dancers whose mission is to uplift the spirit of Sacramento through the production of diverse and inclusive performing arts experiences. Founded in 2015, CDP provides a platform for CDP artists to premiere their original dance works, collaborate with local artists and musicians, and by provides employment opportunities to dancers who come from all over the world but call Sacramento home. CDP represent the fulfillment of the dancers' longtime dream of creating a uniquely dancer-run company in which they harness their entrepreneurial spirit and connect and engage with their community by providing inclusive and accessible arts experiences.

The mission of the California Arts Council, a state agency, is to advance California through the arts and creativity. The Council is committed to building public will and resources for the arts; fostering accessible arts initiatives that reflect contributions from all of California's diverse populations; serving as a thought leader and champion for the arts; and providing effective and relevant programs and services.

Members of the California Arts Council include: Chair Nashormeh Lindo, Vice Chair Larry Baza, Phoebe Beasley, Christopher Coppola, Juan Devis, Kathleen Gallegos, Jaime Galli, Donn K. Harris, Louise McGuinness, Steven Oliver, and Rosalind Wyman. Learn more at www.arts.ca.gov.