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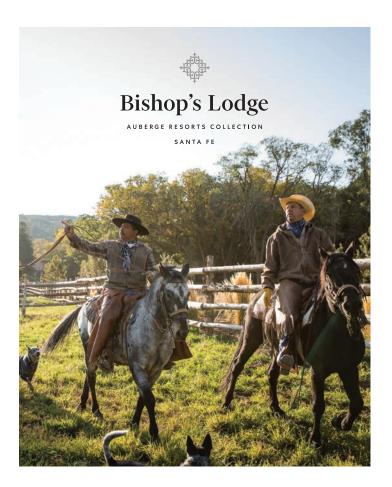








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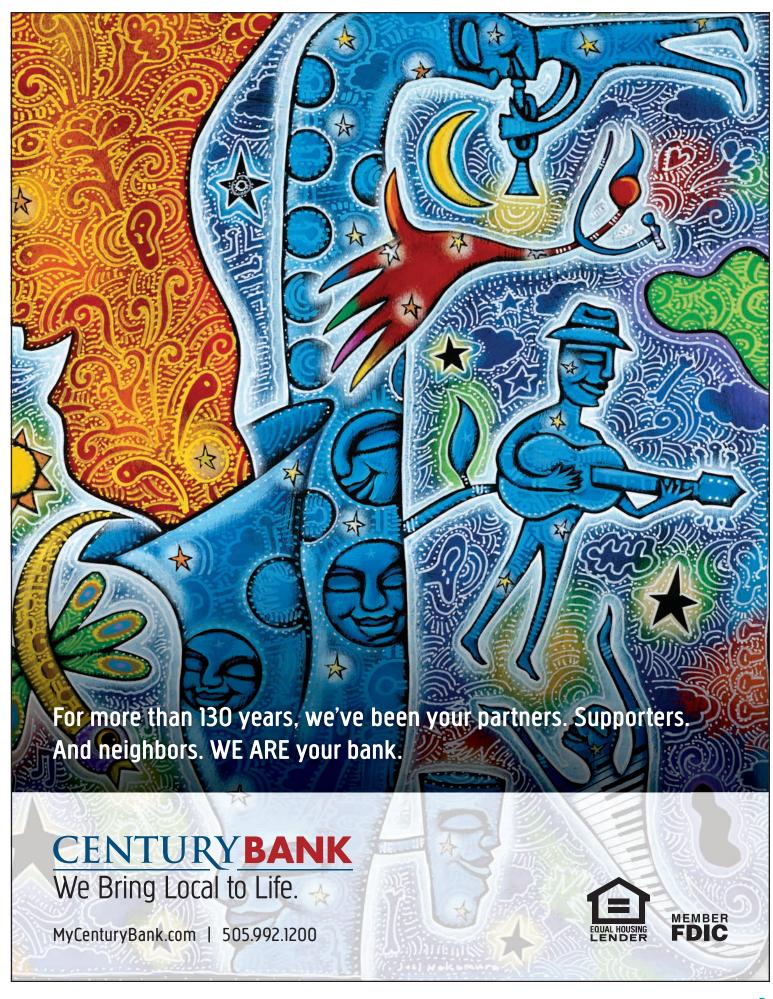


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# MISSION

NDI New Mexico is founded with the knowledge that the arts have a unique power to engage and motivate children.

The purpose of our distinctive programs is to help children develop discipline, a standard of excellence, and a belief in themselves that will carry over into all aspects of their lives.

#### **ON THE COVER**

Many friendships start at NDI New Mexico! Two friends, Chase and Jamai wait to dance for the Legislature at the Roundhouse, 2019.

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#### Dear Friends.

More than ever, we want to acknowledge the hard work, creativity, teamwork, and perseverance that went into bringing NDI New Mexico's mission to life this year. It has not been easy, and we have done it together. We thank everyone who has participated in NDI New Mexico including our innovative instructors and staff, the hardworking public school teachers and principals, our dedicated donors and government allies, and especially the children and families we serve.

NDI New Mexico teaches children to Work Hard, Do Your Best, Never Give Up, and Be Healthy. Applied with energy, these skills help young people experience excellence on stage, in the classroom, and throughout life. For the past 26 years, these outcomes have been important and in 2021 they are more essential than ever.

We will bring many lessons and innovations from this past year forward into our future such as the use of technology to reach students across the state, to enhance our artistic opportunities, and to connect to our audiences. In addition, we will emphasize critical aspects of our programs that support the social-emotional development in children as we all recover from the effects of the pandemic. And of course, it goes without saying that our path forward will be guided by maintaining health safety practices as we begin returning to in-person classes and performances.

As always, springtime is when we joyfully celebrate our students' achievements by coming together as a community. This year, we applaud the 8,900 children who have participated and the many caring adults who have helped make that possible. Thank you for joining us virtually and for being an important part of our children's well-being, success, and future.

Yours in teaching children excellence,

Diare R. Dorige Junell Gale

Diane Doniger Board Chair Russell Baker Executive Director

# NDI NEW MEXICO BOARD MEMBERS

Diane Doniger, Chair Paul Cassidy, Vice-Chair Gerald Landgraf, Treasurer Julia B. Bowdich, Secretary Marc Geller, Immediate Past Chair Catherine Oppenheimer, Founding Artistic Director Jacques d'Amboise, Co-Founder Valerie T. Diker, Founding Chair John Berndt Jamai Blivin Linda DiPaolo Love Kelcy Flanagan **David Foster** Peggy Hubbard Leean Kravitz **Mayo Miller King Kate Moss** Ocean Munds-Dry Leslie Nathanson Juris Thomas Nickoloff Sandy Seligman

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"NDI does beautiful things for our state's children and I think it's truly amazing to see these kids blossom the way they do." - Curtis Clough, Associate Superintendent of Silver Consolidated Schools

# Staying CONNECTED, Succeeding TOGETHER

That the world abruptly changed in March 2020 is a vivid collective memory that won't soon fade. For NDI New Mexico, which has a mission premised on close connections and personal interactions with thousands of children, their families, and community members throughout the state, the need to immediately and successfully adjust to a new reality was critical.

And now, in Spring of 2021, with the promise of sunshine-filled days and the re-awakening of our communities, there is also some time for reflection on how the entire NDI New Mexico community rose to the many challenges presented by the pandemic, the important lessons learned, and what were some of the surprising bright spots in a dark year that has prepared NDI New Mexico to serve the state's children even more effectively in the future.

We spoke to NDI New Mexico Executive Director Russell Baker, NDI New Mexico Artistic Director Liz Salganek, and NDI New Mexico Board Chair Diane Doniger to get their recollections of this unprecedented year.

#### WHEN YOU THINK BACK TO THE MANY SUDDEN CHANGES THAT HAD TO BE MADE LAST YEAR, WHAT COMES TO MIND FIRST?

RUSSELL: Where my mind goes first is that all of us within NDI New Mexico began discussing the importance of focusing on our core mission, regardless of the upheaval we might be facing in the months ahead. NDI New Mexico is, at its core, a teaching institution. Our job is to support children, remove obstacles that may be preventing their ability to learn and thrive, and to provide positive, consistent mentorship.

The second priority we established was communication. We reached out to everyone in our community, from teachers, to families to our public partners, to listen to them. We also reminded them that our job is to teach regardless of circumstances, and we were not going to give up on that job. Communication turned out to be an anchor for all of us.

LIZ: I immediately think of how creative, innovative, and adaptive the NDI New Mexico staff was. Everyone focused on putting themselves in the shoes of students and families to understand what they needed. We committed ourselves to figuring out solutions to keeping kids moving, helping them feel connected to NDI New Mexico and each other, to bring fun and joy into their lives, and give them a sense of accomplishment and hope.

DIANE: From a board of directors' perspective, the first instinct was to consider everyone's safety: the staff, our facilities, and of course the kids. We absolutely looked to the New Mexico Department of Health for guidance and then adhered to its directives. Also, first and foremost for the board was reviewing NDI New Mexico's programming for children. We had to look at our entire teaching format and decide what could be done and, frankly, what wouldn't be possible in the near-term.

RUSSELL: What also struck me was how immediately donors responded, and their desire to help children during the pandemic. Donors were very concerned about the potential impact on kids, from the isolation to the potential impacts of kids not physically being in the classroom. New Mexico's children get so much more from being in school than just education: They get nutritious meals, mentorship, and important social and emotional connections. Importantly, many of our families don't have the reliable connectivity necessary for online learning. Our donors were very aware of all of these issues and wanted to help.

DIANE: Our interactions with our donors are usually personal and face-to-face. Donors also love interacting with the children, whether it's live performances or other special events. It's very important to both the donors and the students. This was another area in which the staff was incredibly adaptive and creative, and our donors were very responsive. We came up with some very creative ideas that helped maintain that close connection while keeping everyone safe.

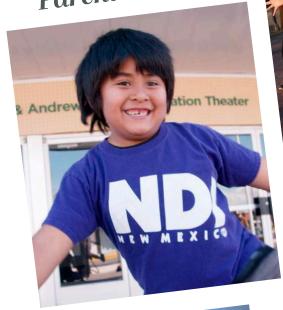
# WHAT WERE SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT LEARNINGS DURING THE PAST YEAR FOR NDI NEW MEXICO'S STAFF AND BROADER COMMUNITY?

LIZ: We recognized that the artistic staff had to get proficient immediately in a broad range of technologies, from film and video editing, to sound mixing to web development to online teaching. Dance instructors became film editors, while staff with a knack for software tools learned how to connect our Zoom classes to the website. The staff figured out how to work with our musicians online so we could maintain some form of "live" music. One good example is our creation of pre-recorded video dance lessons that we provided to school districts. This enabled them to have NDI New Mexico content easily available as they were setting up their remote learning. As Russell mentioned, internet connectivity is not a given for all New Mexico children. Another example of us learning how to address these problems through a combination of creativity and technology is our partnership with New Mexico PBS, which aired our programming for children who had access to a television but perhaps not a device such as a tablet or laptop.

We're definitely much more tech savvy now, which I think will enable us to serve families more effectively in the future. Everyone wants to get back to in-person teaching, but what we learned during the past year has put the whole team into an entirely new creative space where we think more expansively about how we can teach, and how kids can be part of the creative process.

RUSSELL: We also became more creative and more effective regarding how we worked with some of our school partners, and I want to bring that forward into how we operate in the future. The pandemic

## 66 This program has been amazing." - NDI New Mexico Parent





66 It's a place to be when I feel sad because people I meet along the way make me feel happy".- Illias



66 Dance is like a safe space for me ... to just dance, be happy and forget about all my problems." - Joylissa

66 I learned that a shared passion is the strongest base for any friendship." - Ally



forced us to find new ways to connect with teachers, especially those in rural communities, and that too will help us be more effective.

DIANE: Absolutely. For example, we have a fabulous residency program, where instructors spend a week in many different areas of the state. Because it is only a week it can be very labor intensive: The instructor, the musicians, the costumes, the instruments, and everything else is sent out on the road for a very compressed period of time. Now we know we have the opportunity and the capability to potentially offer an online program that augments the inperson residency, thus providing continuity to the lessons kids have learned.

RUSSELL: We built this technology skill set out of a need to connect and communicate in a different way during the past year, and there are so many ways we can use it to improve upon our in-person methods once we're able to be together again. As another example, if students miss a rehearsal because they're sick, we now have a process for creating a video of the rehearsal and making it available on the website so they can rehearse at home. If someone is having a hard time learning a dance step, we now can create self-study videos and post them to our website so they can learn independently.

#### WHEN YOU LOOK FORWARD TO THE REST OF 2021 AND BEYOND, WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS AND THOUGHTS REGARDING THE NDI NEW MEXICO COMMUNITY?

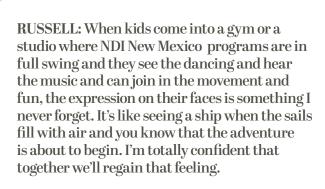
RUSSELL: Our team is already discussing how we rebuild and improve. We aren't assuming everything is going to be the same as it was before the pandemic. I don't think we can even predict what all the challenges

are going to be, though we know that kids are going to be in different stages physically and emotionally after a year of isolation.

LIZ: I agree. Every single one of us, including children, have been profoundly impacted by this historical event. We've experienced it together and alone. But having said that, children are such amazing models of resilience. If they are given what they need, they will bounce back. I think this is a time when our teaching model really comes into play: Our students learn not only through listening and learning, but by also connecting that to physical activity. It's a very holistic way of learning that is very effective. We also encourage kids to set high expectations for themselves. They learn to set goals and to work hard and put forth their best effort until they achieve those goals. And of course, our emphasis on teamwork, and teaching kids to encourage and support one another, is another important and meaningful skill as kids return to school and their regular routines after this past year.

My hope also is that our students and the rest of our NDI New Mexico community return with a renewed sense of appreciation for enjoying the present moment, since that really is at the heart of dance and NDI New Mexico programs: When you're dancing, you're engaged with your peers, teachers and the musicians to create something special together and to appreciate each other. That experience has always been at the heart of what we do, and I can see that being even more important when we're able to be together again.

DIANE: We've learned a great deal about being flexible, being creative, and being more willing to try new ways of doing things. From a board perspective, I don't think we've lost traction, but in fact even strengthened our understanding of how important it is to keep our kids and our donors connected.

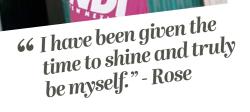




66 You believe you can succeed." - Eli



Go I really hope that we can continue these daily classes until it's time to meet in person. Honestly, they are keeping me sane and offering my life some structure after everything has shifted." - Sonora



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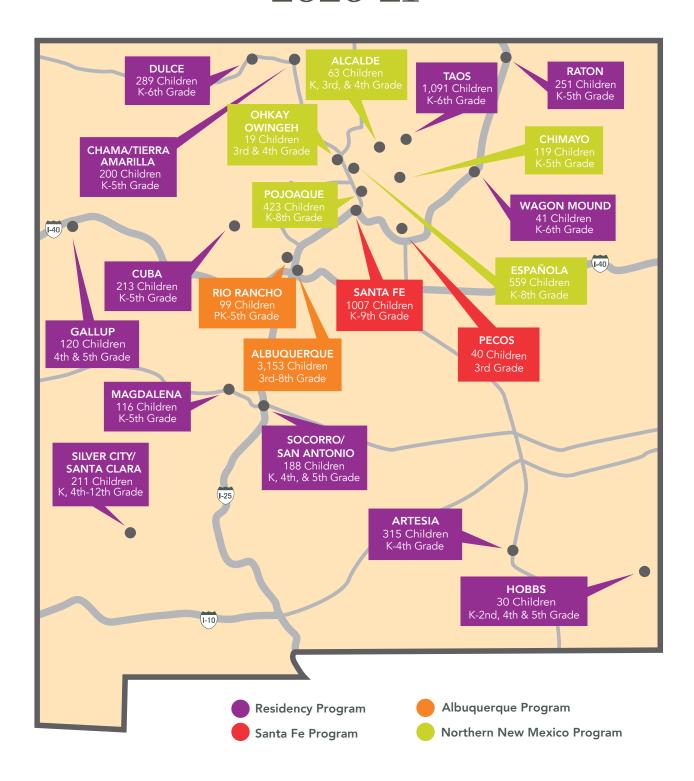
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# STATE MAP

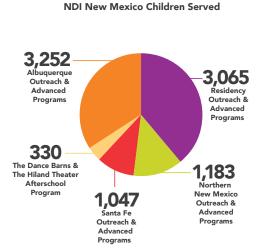


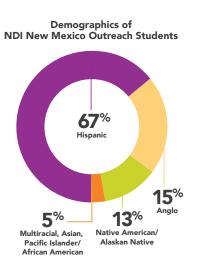
# WHO WE SERVE

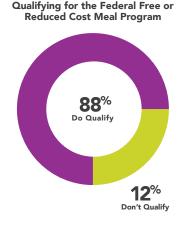
This year we will serve more than 8,900 children, reach 250 public school teachers in 80 schools in 25 communities. In addition, we will deliver 102,000 hours of instruction through live online classes and video packets.

NDI New Mexico believes that every child has the capacity to learn how to be excellent by working hard, doing their best, never giving up, and being healthy. Our work is guided by our belief in children, as well as our commitment to social responsibility, excellence, sustainability and financial integrity.

Our Outreach Programs focus directly on schools and children in the greatest need: 88% qualify for Federal Free or Reduced Cost Meal Program; 67% are Hispanic, 15% Anglo, 13% Native American/ Alaskan Native, 5% Multiracial, Asian/ Pacific Islander, African American. We are committed to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.







**NDI New Mexico Students** 



#### **GABRIELLA OTTERSBERG ENRIQUEZ**

Gabriella Ottersberg Enriquez remembers the precise moment she realized she wanted to be an artist. Her older brother Stewart was dancing onstage for hundreds of people in NDI New Mexico's annual extravaganza. Gabriella ("Gaby" to her friends and family) took in the lights, the music, and the unique energy that comes from a creative spectacle performed for a rapt audience.

in my heart that I had never felt before. I wanted to be on that stage and be part of that community, she said.

"I wanted to learn everything."

Gaby had already been participating NDI New Mexico's In-School Outreach program, which included weekly dance and exercise sessions at the elementary school where she, Stewart, and their younger brother Nicholas attended. However, the magic of that particular evening prompted her to double down on her effort in the hopes of being asked to join NDI New Mexico's Super Wonderful Advanced Team (SWAT), which is designed for children who excel in the outreach program and who show a particular motivation and enthusiasm for dance.

Her efforts worked. NDI New Mexico Executive Director Russell Baker, who at that time was a SWAT instructor, invited Gaby to join. "I agreed immediately. It was the biggest honor of my life," she says.

Gaby was a precocious 10-year-old: smart, independent, ambitious, and maybe

a little stubborn. She's 24 now, with a college degree and a professional resume that includes roles in theatrical performances such as Jerome Robbins' *Broadway* and *A Chorus Line*. She sings and is a TV actress, having landed an appearance on the

network series *Law and Order*. She has an agent, is pursuing TV and film auditions and, what else?

"Oh yes, I'm taking Flamenco lessons. I want to be a lifelong learner," she says.

The path from enthusiastic fourth grader to successful working artist is one of innate talent, hard work, and a lot of lessons. However, Gaby is the first to note that the most important lessons she learned as an NDI New Mexico performer are perhaps not the most obvious ones. And she credits a significant amount of her success, confidence, and sense of self to the fact that at NDI New Mexico she was surrounded by adults who cared about her and were



" Zing Goes My Heart" is Gaby's first year on the Celebration Team.



NDI New Mexico instructors remember Gaby as having a natural stage presence and exuberance!

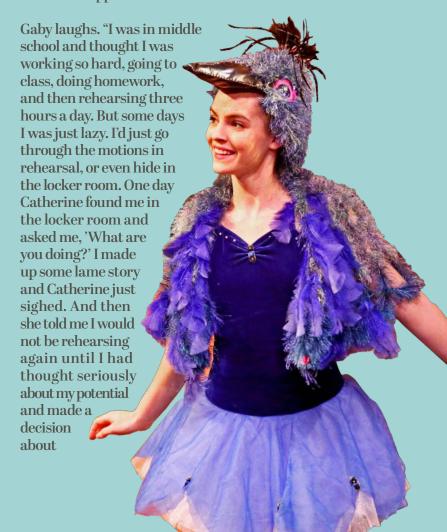


Gaby performs on the Celebration Team (pink shirt) in "Come Together: A Celebration of the Beatles." (Right) 2014: Gaby plays the bird in "Peter and the Wolf" as a member of the Company XCel.

willing to impart those lessons whenever they were necessary.

"The fact that I was presented with certain choices and was taught certain life lessons when I was younger, as opposed to facing them for the first time as an adult, has made a huge difference for me," she says.

Gaby tells the story of when her motivation shifted from wanting people to see her perform, to the more private – and in many ways more difficult – motivation of performance as an avenue for personal growth. That lesson was taught by none other than NDI New Mexico founder Catherine Oppenheimer.



whether or not I was willing to really do the hard work."

Gaby stewed about it for more than a week. "I was definitely prideful," she says. "But I went home and thought hard about what Catherine had said. I thought about the kind of person I wanted to be, if I even wanted to be an artist or performer at all, and whether I was cut out for it. I decided that yes, I wanted to be the kind of person who worked as hard as she could, and who also worked with as much honesty and integrity as possible."

She called Catherine and told her she was ready to dance.

"Catherine didn't need an explanation. She just said, 'See you at rehearsal at 4 p.m."

Artists rehearse so they can embody the character they play, achieving a transparency that allows the audience to be fully absorbed by the story unfolding onstage. But between the rehearsals and the performances are the infamous auditions. "If you're on the path to becoming a professional performer, a big part of the challenge is getting into the room," Gaby says. NDI New Mexico helped her forge relationships with influential performers who could and did help her get into auditions.

and again she has been encouraged, and when necessary, pushed to look beyond dancing, singing, and performing, and instead look inward to answer some hard questions: How can I be a better person? What's important to me? What makes me happy? What are my responsibilities to the people I care about?

That, she says, has been perhaps

the most important lesson she has taken from NDI New Mexico. Time

"I really took those lessons to heart, and I've kept working hard and waiting for the right opportunities with people I really connected with," Gaby says.

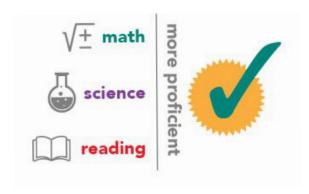
And it's worked. It is, she said, a key reason she landed the theatrical roles, is busy with her TV and film auditions, and despite a major role in the national tour of *Tootsie* falling through because of the pandemic, she intends to eventually go to Los Angeles for TV work, then back to New York City to pick up where she left off in theater. She's intent on mastering Flamenco and then who knows what else is next?

"Throughout my time at NDI New Mexico, the one thing I heard over and over again was, 'you can do it.'"



Gaby and her brohter, Nick share the stage and a moment of joy.

# MEASURABLE RESULTS



In late 2020, NDI New Mexico announced the findings of an academic evaluation report conducted with The University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center and designed to understand the relationship between children's participation in NDI New Mexico's Advanced Training programs and school-related outcomes, including school attendance, academic performance, and disciplinary behavior. The results, which reflected the 2015-2019 academic years, were impressive:

 Students who participated in NDI New Mexico's Advanced Training programs were more likely to be proficient in math, reading and science standardized testing compared to children who did not participate. Even after accounting for demographic factors such as grade level, gender, and participation in the free and reduced lunch program, NDI New Mexico's Advanced Training participants had 1.5-2.5 times higher odds of being proficient on standardized tests in those subjects.

- Students involved in the Advanced Training program were also less likely to be chronically absent from school compared to students who did not participate. After adjusting for demographic factors, students participating in Advanced Training programs had about 1.5-2 times the odds of having ten or fewer absences during an academic year.
- The odds of having disciplinary infractions at school were also lower among children in NDI New Mexico's Advanced Training programs compared with non-participants. After adjusting for demographic factors, students who

participated in the Advanced Training programs had 2.7 times statistically lower odds of having disciplinary infractions on record compared with students who did not participate.

The study represents NDI New Mexico's culture of rigorous assessment and commitment to continuous improvement of its programs on behalf of the state's children. Indeed, NDI New Mexico has sponsored many independent studies over nearly two decades to better understand and confirm the link between participation in its programs - including its schoolcentered Outreach programs and its more advanced Afterschool programs -- and children's academic, physical and social performance, as well as their personal sense of well-being. NDI New Mexico has supplemented this research with its own surveys of students, alumni, parents, teachers, and principals.

And while the methodologies, data sets and focus areas have varied, the overarching results continue to show that students who participate in NDI New Mexico programs have higher test scores in writing, math, science and reading, and also have higher grade point averages than peers.

Past analyses also have shown that children participating in the organization's programs have demonstrated improvements in overall physical health, as well as gains in skills such as self-control, focus, planning, and prioritization.

NDI New Mexico's arts-centered youth development programs, which are made available to children either free of charge or pay-as-you can, and their demonstrably positive impact on children's academic performance and personal well-being, are crucial in a state that continues to grapple with issues such as poverty and sub-par academic performance. Indeed, more than one-third of New Mexico children under the age of five live in poverty and overall high school graduation rates lag national averages by a significant margin.

However, what also remains true year after year, and study after study, is that NDI New Mexico's unique approach of using the creative arts as the catalyst for helping children develop critical life skills such as confidence, discipline, and healthy habits is a powerful weapon in New Mexico's fight against societal issues that negatively impact its youth.

"NDI New Mexico's mission is to give children the tools they need to thrive and succeed through every phase of life," said NDI New Mexico Executive Director Russell Baker.

"The conduit is dance, performance and artistic expression, but what we really provide children is an environment where they can gain confidence, learn discipline and teamwork, set high standards of excellence and express themselves as individuals. We're absolutely committed to continuing to conduct rigorous research to understand the impact our programs have on children, and equally importantly, to learn how we can continue to improve so we

Proven teaching techniques + supportive schools + dedicated instructors + powerful performances = healthier students who are successful in school and feel prepared for life.



themselves, feel comfortable and gain confidence. It's a glimmer of hope in a time of challenges. Thank you!" New Mexico Public School Teacher

can have an even greater positive impact on students' performance in school, sense of well-being and ability to achieve their goals as they progress into adulthood."

In 2015, The University of New Mexico Center for Education Policy Research conducted a study over two academic years (2012-2014) of more than 41,000 students grades three through nine, comparing grade point averages and standardized test scores of those who participated in NDI New Mexico programs and those who did not.

In some groups, NDI New Mexico students had, on average, GPAs a full point higher than their peers in their school district. And overall, NDI New Mexico students' GPAs were 30%-42% higher than their peers. In standardized assessments in math, reading, writing and science, NDI New Mexico students outperformed their peers by 2%-17%.

Importantly, all NDI New Mexico students had significantly higher increases in all outcomes related to health and behaviors compared to their peers, with the greatest gains related to working hard, selfconfidence, achieving excellence, tenacity, and goal-setting. NDI New Mexico students also showed impressive gains in teamwork, academic engagement, attempting new things and focusing in class. Students who participated in NDI New Mexico programs demonstrated superior locomotor skills compared to peers, and also showed statistically significant improvements in endurance and strength.

"We're proud of the fact that our programs continue to achieve their primary goals of helping children to build skills that enable them to thrive into adulthood." Baker said. "We're also committed to continuously improving and subjecting our work to rigorous analysis, all of which will benefit New Mexico families now and in the future."

# HOW WE MADE IT HAPPEN!



The  $2021\,\mathrm{Virtual}\,\mathrm{Gala}$  features hundreds of NDI New Mexico students and was filmed in multiple locations around the state.







# Our Partner

#### **ALBUQUERQUE**

21st Century Public Academy Adobe Acres Elementary Alameda Elementary Alamosa Elementary Cielo Azul Elementary Comanche Elementary East San Jose Elementary **Edward Gonzales Elementary Edward Stapleton Elementary EG Ross Elementary Enchanted Hills Elementary Eugene Field Elementary Hodgin Elementary** Inez Science and Technology Magnet Janet Kahn School of Integrated Arts Magnet La Mesa Elementary Longfellow Dual Language Merit Los Ranchos Elementary Maggie Cordova Elementary Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary MAS (Mission Achievement and Success Charter School) Mission Avenue Elementary Montezuma Elementary Osuna Elementary Puesta del Sol Elementary Reginald Chavez Elementary Rio Rancho Elementary Rudolfo Anava Elementary Sandia Base Elementary Vista Grande Elementary Zia Elementary Whittier Elementary

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Alcalde Elementary Chimayo Elementary Eutimio Tim Salazar III Elementary Hernandez Elementary James H. Rodriguez Elementary Ohkay Owingeh Community School Pablo Roybal Elementary School Tony E. Quintana Elementary

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Carlos Gilbert Elementary
El Camino Real Academy
Gonzales Community
Nina Otero Community School
Pecos Elementary
Pinon Elementary
Salazar Elementary
Sweeney Elementary
Turquoise Trail Community School

RESIDENCY **ARTESIA** Central Elementary Grand Heights Early Childhood Hermosa Elementary Roselawn Elementary Yeso Elementary Yucca Elementary **CUBA Cuba Elementary DULCE Dulce Elementary GALLUP Del Norte Elementary HOBBS Stone Elementary Broadmoor Elementary Murray Elementary** MAGDALENA Magdalena Elementary RATON Raton Intermediate School SILVER CITY Central Elementary **G.W. Stout Elementary** Harrison Schmitt Elementary Jose Barrios Elementary Sixth Street Elementary **SOCORRO** Cottonwood Valley Charter Midway Elementary **Parkview Elementary** San Antonio Elementary **TAOS** Enos Garcia Elementary Ranchos Elementary School Taos Integrated School of the Arts WAGON MOUND Wagon Mound Elementary





# **OUR PROGRAMS**

# MORE THAN 8,900 STUDENTS IN 25 COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE STATE ARE PARTICIPATING IN OUR AWARD-WINNING PROGRAMS

NDI New Mexico's fundamental belief is that all children have the capacity to learn to work hard, never give up, do their best, and ultimately experience success. Whether children dance with us for one year, or come back year after year, we know their experience has a positive and lasting impact on the way he they themselves and move through the world.

In-School Program

NDI New Mexico Outreach classes are taught at public elementary schools during the school day as part of the schools' curriculum. These joyful and energetic classes are taught by highly trained NDI New Mexico instructors and professional pianists. In-School classes serve an entire grade level (3rd, 4th, or 5th) and are fully inclusive of all children in a class, including those with special needs. Children in Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Santa Fe, Pecos, Pojoaque, and the Española Valley receive 15-30 weekly classes throughout the school year and finish their program with exciting culminating performances. All NDI New Mexico Outreach classes are free of charge for children and their families.

Advanced Teams

Many students who are exposed to NDI New Mexico in their public schools demonstrate extraordinary motivation and enthusiasm for the effort and energy this instruction requires. These students are invited to audition to join our Advanced Teams, offered in 10 communities throughout the state. Advanced Teams Training happens after school or on Saturdays and starts in the 4th-grade with SWAT (Super Wonderful Advanced Team) and continues into middle school with the Celebration Team.



## Residency Program

Our traveling Residency team brings music and dance to underserved children in 25 rural and urban communities in all corners of New Mexico. The Residency team lives in each community for one to three weeks, conducting daily Outreach classes that culminate in exciting, interactive performances in gyms and theaters for their friends and families. Schools, dancers, and communities look forward to NDI New Mexico's visits each year.

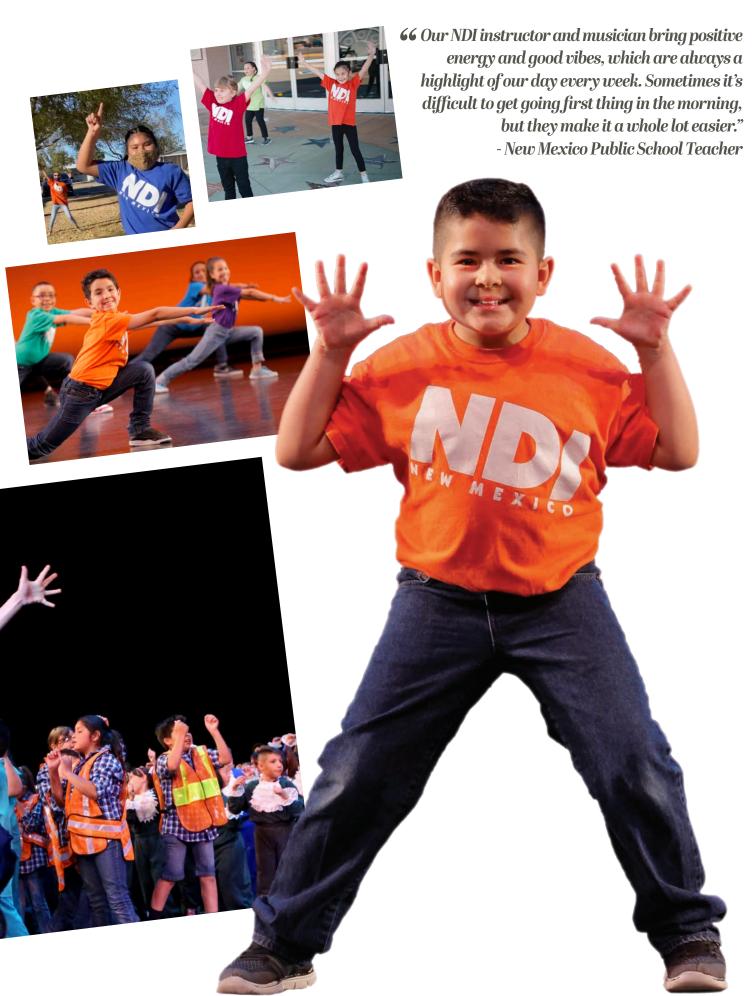
## **Afterschool**

THE DANCE BARNS & THE HILAND

Children ages 3-18 come to The Dance Barns in Santa Fe and The Hiland in Albuquerque each week to participate in high-quality dance and performance training in creative movement, ballet, modern dance, jazz, tap, voice, hip-hop, and theater. Classes range from beginner to pre-professional levels and are taught by inspiring instructors using their technical dance expertise along with the NDI New Mexico instruction. These classes are open to all children in the community. Tuition for these programs is offered on a sliding scale, ensuring that every child has the opportunity for an enriching after school experience. Whether children are exploring their first experience in dance, taking classes for creative expression and exercise, or have their sights set on a career in the performing arts, our Afterschool programs build a sense of achievement in a nurturing and noncompetitive atmosphere.







# Teaching Excellence \*

NDI New Mexico is committed to developing highly trained instructors to deliver our award-winning instruction to children across the state. Instructors are the backbone of our programs, and their expertise is vital to a child's engagement and success. Our Teaching Excellence® workshop is a critical building block for training our instructors to develop the skills needed to conduct fast-paced, dynamic, and engaging classes. During the two-week intensive, participants work with children alongside our own master teachers and are immersed in hands-on training in NDI New Mexico's highly engaging, fun and athletic teaching methodology.

Hip to Be Fit

BE HEALTHY is one of our Core Four messages for how to be excellent in everything you do. We are committed to helping our students develop health and wellness. NDI New Mexico's HIP to Be Fit® curriculum is embedded in all our programs and teaches the importance of exercising, making healthy lifestyle choices, and eating well to improve stamina, performance, and endurance. Our goal is to make a positive impact on New Mexico's children and their families by helping them take care of their bodies, minds, and spirits.

66 What would our state be without you? Just seeing NDI in the subject line of an email makes me smile."

- New Mexico Elementary School Principal



# OUR GRADUATES 2021

Congratulations to our Celebration Team graduates from Albuquerque, Northern New Mexico, and Santa Fe! From your first In-School program at your elementary school through your participation on the Super Wonderful Advanced Team (SWAT) and Celebration Team, you have shown commitment, tenacity, and teamwork as you endeavored to exemplify excellence.

> Valeria Araiza Loya, Ortiz Middle School Elissa Bruneni, Turquoise Trail Middle School Ana Isabel Garcia, Our Lady of Fatima Catholic School Lyric Herrera, Albuquerque High School Lila Loweree, Turquoise Trail Middle School Jada Martinez, Monte Del Sol Charter School Elizabeth "Lizzie" Moellenbrock, Socorro High School Christina Montoya, The Academy for Technology and the Classics Isabella Nava, Monte Del Sol Charter School Ada Ovitt, Albuquerque Academy Kevin Perez, Jefferson Middle School Hannah Ponce, Jefferson Middle School Jasmine Ramos, Carlos F. Vigil Middle School Jorge Ramos, Carlos F. Vigil Middle School Fernanda Rangel, Carlos F. Vigil Middle School Kaira Snell, Homeschooling Briza Soto, El Camino Real Academy Zuleyka Tapia, El Camino Real Academy Maeve Trager-Tarrant, Jefferson Middle School Amanda Urbina, Cottonwood Classical Preparatory Abagail Watkins, Socorro High School Teagan Wetzel, Santa Fe School for the Arts and Sciences

Your years of dedication to our Core Four values – WORK HARD, DO YOUR BEST, NEVER GIVE UP, and BE HEALTHY – have given you the tools you need to succeed in life. We are very proud of each of you, and know that you will carry the memories and friendships you have made through NDI New Mexico into your futures.



#### **JESSE MARTINEZ & ELI BARNES**

Jesse Martinez is a High Performance Computing technical lead at New Mexico's Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). He manages a team of people responsible for critical operational aspects of the lab's supercomputers. Eli Barnes is a company artist with Alberta Ballet in Canada, where he has performed in productions ranging from George Balanchine's Allegro Brillante to Christopher Anderson's Cinderella.

They are two men excelling in radically different professions, living and working in entirely different countries. What could they possibly have in common? The answer is that they have known each other since middle school and forged a lifelong friendship during their years of participation in NDI New Mexico.

Eli caught the dancing bug
when he was a second grader
at Carlos Gilbert Elementary
School in Santa Fe and saw his
first NDI New Mexico performance:
"I had this strong visceral reaction
of wanting to be onstage," he says.
"I thought to myself, 'get me in this
program." He began taking classes at
NDI New Mexico as a third grader and
joined its Super Wonderful Advanced Team
(SWAT) in the sixth grade.

At the same time, Jesse was a student at Turquoise Trail Charter School. He and his fourth-grade classmates saw an NDI New Mexico video demonstrating its classic "Runs and Jumps" exercises. Jesse says he wasn't particularly interested in what he saw, until the live musicians that are part of NDI New Mexico's In-School Outreach programs began to play along. "That totally sparked my interest," Jesse says.

"It was the music that led me to dancing with NDI New Mexico." Not long after, Jesse and a friend were asked to join SWAT. The year after that he joined the even more advanced Celebration Team.

Jesse Fliand Logo

Eli and Jesse met at Capshaw
Elementary and quickly
became friends. They were
both good students and
also good athletes – Eli a
talented football player and
Jesse playing soccer. And
of course, they were both

New Mexico.

"We went to school together and of course danced together. Our families became close, as well. Jesse's family became like my second family," Eli says. "I still have dreams about Jesse's mom's cooking." The two men crack up laughing.

dancers with NDI



When asked what role, if any, NDI New Mexico played in their own personal development, as well as their friendship, both Eli and Jesse have quick answers. "The emphasis on the Core Four – Work Hard, Do Your Best, Never Give Up, and Be Healthy – gives you self-confidence," Eli says.

66 You believe you can succeed because you have people around you at NDI New Mexico who are telling you that they believe in you."

Jesse concurs. "NDI New Mexico changed my mindset about what it meant to do my best. As a dancer with NDI New Mexico, you're always getting encouragement for achieving a goal, but you're also getting that push to try to do just a little bit better."

Both men note the specific work ethic instilled by NDI New Mexico – doing one's best as part of a team – has had a meaningful impact on their lives as they've progressed from students to adults with



Eli and Jesse perform in the Treasure Island dance, "Imagine the Possibilities: A Celebration of Reading", in 2004. You build on that with each other."

And to be sure, putting together a dance performance is incredibly hard work. Eli cites the general rule of thumb: Every minute of choreography translates into three hours of rehearsal. "Think of what goes into a two-hour ballet," he says.

They also credit the Core Four mantra for spurring them to achieve even more academically than they might not have otherwise.

"Once you start having that conversation about doing your best, it stays in your head regardless of what you're doing," Eli says. Jesse nods in agreement, adding, "I realized that if I wanted to do better in school, I couldn't accept mediocrity and I had it within me to get better grades. NDI New Mexico had such a big part in that."

There also are very specific, if not very obvious, connections between dance and academics. "Dance really helps with longand short-term memory," Eli says. "In dance, if you don't get a move immediately, you keep pushing and practicing because you know at some point it will just click and you'll get it. I found that it was the same process for math. Dance translated remarkably well to education."

And of course, they both say, wanting to do one's best, whether it's on the football field, or in science class, or in dance rehearsal, also translates into wanting to help your friends do their best.

"As NDI New Mexico dancers, you become this incredibly close team," Eli says. "When you perform next to someone, you get to know what makes that person tick: what scares them, what makes them happy, what they love. And when you see their passion in their performance, and they see it in yours, it builds a strong bond." Jesse adds, "With NDI New Mexico you're also sharing this experience with kids who all have different approaches to life. But rehearsing together and performing together creates trust, which obviously is how friendships are formed. We learned that we had to work hard for each other and trust each other, even if we disagreed about something."

Jesse and Eli agree that these lessons have continued to inform their lives as individuals and friends as they've transitioned from teenagers to adults with thriving careers.

"The main reason I wanted to continue dancing and pursue it professionally was because of the friendships I formed at NDI New Mexico," Eli says. He took a summer course at the School of American Ballet during high school, spent a year at North Carolina School for the Arts, then performed professionally in Seattle and Cincinnati before joining Alberta Ballet eight years ago. He lives in Calgary full-time, but visits Santa Fe when he can.

Jesse, who has always been fascinated by technology, earned a Bachelor of Science degree in computer science at New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology. "I always knew computers were my thing." He now manages a team of people responsible for ensuring the operational stability and performance of LANL's network of supercomputers. He also taught tap dancing at NDI New Mexico for several years. "I still take out my tap board and practice occasionally," he says.

And, of course, the two men remain close friends. "NDI is an important shared experience we have with each other and so many other people," Eli says. "We're still close friends for so many reasons, but NDI is where it all started."



Jesse first fell in love with NDI New Mexico at Turquoise Trail Elementary



Eli translated his NDI New Mexico experience into a professional dance career with the Alberta Ballet Company. (photo by Paul McGrath)



Today Jesse works as a High Performance Computing Network Technical Lead at the Los Alamos National Lab. He continues to support NDI New Mexico and is actively involved with alumni.



## GIVING THE GIFT OF

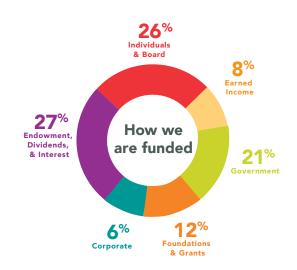
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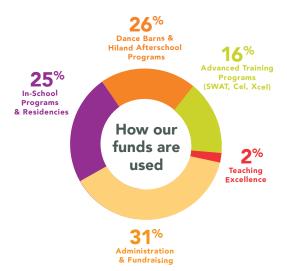
Your generous investment in NDI New Mexico provides access to excellence for thousands of undeserved children and creates opportunities for youth in our state to build better futures.

To ensure program sustainability, we depend on and are grateful to our diverse funders.

**66** When I thought about where the greatest needs would be during the pandemic and which organizations had the best records for impact and effectiveness -NDI immediately came to mind. I will never forget how astounded and uplifted I was at the energy, the discipline and the camaraderie on display when someone invited me to the Gala performance in 2019. I had no idea that such an organization even existed, much less impacted so many children in Santa Fe and Albuquerque every year. I expect that NDI, even virtual, will continue to be a major force in mitigating the effects that the pandemic has had on the children in our community."

- Markeeta Brown, Donor







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### YOUR LEGACY. THEIR FUTURE. YOUR DANCING FOOTSTEPS LAST FOREVER.

Thanks to the commitment and planning of our generous Silver Sneakers Legacy Society members today, children in New Mexico will continue to be inspired to work hard, do their best, never give up, and be healthy for many generations to come.

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Thank you for your belief in us and for joining us in celebrating our children's success!

Your gift is a statement of support of children's futures.



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A gift to NDI New Mexico can be made in a number of different ways — as a bequest, as a memorial or tribute to another person, as an online donation, or as a contribution to the NDI New Mexico endowment. All charitable donations help children achieve success and are tax-deductible.

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www.ndi-nm.org/donate

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Sustain NDI New Mexico programs with year-round impact

For more information or to make a donation, please contact Mary Gulledge, Director of Advancement, mgulledge@ndi-nm.org, 505.557.6044.

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NDI New Mexico is grateful for every gift we receive! Contributions to our various funds - annual program and event support, and capital and endowment gifts — are recognized from the time period March 15, 2020 to March 14, 2021. Please know that every effort has been made to present a complete and accurate list of our supporters. We apologize for any errors or omissions and appreciate your corrections.

### **ENDOWMENT SUPPORTERS**

Endowment funds are important to the sustainability of NDI New Mexico programming. These foundational gifts support the financial health of the organization and keep many programs going in perpetuity. We thank the following friends for their foresight and care:

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Nancy Blaugrund, Louise Campbell-Tolber, Ken DeBettignies and Miles Wolf for serving on the ALBUQUERQUE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE.

Lucy Higgins for serving on the SANTA FE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE.

**Brian McGrath** for serving on the FINANCE COMMITTEE.

John Burnham, Susan Dubin, Lon Erickson, Joelle Mevi, and Charlie Wilson for your expertise on the INVESTMENT COMMITTEE. And thanks to Charles Thompson for your special project support this year.

Peter Frank for Chairing and Carol Cochran and Jim Goodwin for serving on the AUDIT COMMITTEE.

Ed Thorne and Ocean Munds-Dry for your insights on the STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE.

A special thank you to the Thomas R. Nickoloff Family Foundation and New Mexico PBS, COLORES!, New Mexico Magazine, TOURISM Santa Fe, Visit Las Cruces, and New Mexico Department of Tourism. Their premiere partnership of VASTNESS, A Socially Distanced Dance Film for a Global Pandemic presented by NDI New Mexico, enabled us to reach a much larger audience with a message of creativity and impact.

For helping with our Virtual Gala filming: Sarah Bradley, Principal, Nicole Mora-Atencio, Assistant Principal, and Trish Curran, PE Teacher at Enos Garcia Elementary School in Taos. Christy Sigmon, Principal at Janet Kahn School of Integrated Arts in Albuquerque. Jack Lain, Principal and Lara Becker, 4th Grade Teacher at El Camino Real Academy in Santa Fe. Tina Morris, Principal at Aspen Community Magnet School in Santa Fe. Laurie Ocompo, Principal at Parkview Elementary School in Socorro. Sherri Rodriguez at Tony E. Quintana Elementary School in Espanola. Barbara V. Lopez and City of Santa Fe Parks and Recreation. Brittany Snyder and the Santa Fe Fire Department. Robbin McClain and the Anderson Abruzzo Albuquerque International Balloon Museum. JJ Mancini, Danny McBride, and Mr. Sprinkles the Hot Air Balloon! Jen Tapia and the Santa Fe film office. Rebecca Cavalier and the ABQ film office.

Garcia Automotive for donating the Glorieta Station venue space for our Albuquerque VIP Gala Donor car party.

For participating in our virtual Fall Founders' Circle events, NDI New Mexico alumni Eli Barnes, Gabriella Ottersberg-Enriquez, Charlotte Martinez, Jesse Martinez, Terrance Matthews, Tess Montoya, and Hugo Pizano.

For helping us learn about Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility, many local friends and experts Including Dr. Estevan Rael-Galvez, Vanessa Roanhorse, Michele Reeves, Trey Hammond, Tony Watkins, Angela Herrera, Dianna Dorn-Jones, Michelle Melendez, Joey Torres, Robin Hindsman Stacia, Dolores Roybal, Dianna Langenburg, Alana Tomasita Moriarty, Marcia Warren Edelman, Everette Hill, and Ian Esquivel.

Event Week Celebration co-presenting partners Thornburg Investment Management, New Mexico School for the Arts, Performance Santa Fe, and National Hispanic Cultural Center. Ballet master class teacher Daniel Ulbricht. And for participating in our Dance On Film discussion about the Merrill Brockway Library, Catherine Oppenheimer, Nancy Zeckendorf, and Tom Maguire.

Thank you to New Mexico Dancewear for providing support to NDI's Run for the Thrills Virtual Run.

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All of our Public Elementary Classroom Teachers, In-school Coordinators, and Administrations for their commitment and helping our virtual programs run smoothly throughout the year.

Thank you to our special master class teachers who provided excellent virtual learning opportunities from around the world this year: Monica Lima, Mark Yonally, Natalia Bashkatova, Arleane Lopez, Omar de Jesus Roman, Daniel Fetecua, Dylis Croman, Jorge Villarini, Shelly Fofana, Matt Lopez, Olaya Muentes, Jessica Starr, Sebastian Villarini, Yanelis Rodriguez, Simona de Tullio, Jose Losada, Jenny Sosa, and Laura Valentin.

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A City that Cares about Kids!



### **CHARLOTTE MARTINEZ**

Santa Fe-area arts and film lovers certainly know about the Center for Contemporary Arts (CCA). Located near the city's Historic Eastside, CCA has long been a showcase for exceptional contemporary art and independent film. A few miles away, CCA also operates The Screen, a small gem of a movie theater hidden behind the dormitories of the former Santa Fe University of Art and Design. Anyone who has comfortably settled into a middle row seat at The Screen, bag of popcorn in hand, and been transported by a little-known but fantastic independent film can thank NDI New Mexico alum Charlotte Martinez, The Screen's general manager.

The fact that Charlotte heads the operations of one of Santa Fe's independent film houses and also serves as the manager for CCA's Youth Partners Program makes perfect sense when one considers that she's been immersed in the creative and performing arts ever since she was a third grader who was, as she says, "Super jealous that my older brother Jesse was performing with NDI New Mexico and I wasn't old enough yet."

For Charlotte, fourth grade meant -- finally!
-- being able to participate in NDI New
Mexico's In-School Outreach program,
which engages elementary school children
in an array of dance and exercise routines
led by a highly trained, dynamic instructor

and accompanied by a professional pianist. "I literally wanted to move from third grade to fourth grade solely to join NDI-NM," Charlotte says with a laugh.

Like her older brother, Charlotte transitioned to NDI New Mexico's more advanced after-school groups:

She continued through the sixth grade with the Super Wonderful Advanced Team (SWAT), then moved on to the Celebration Team in middle school, and finally the Xcel Company in high school. While she focused on

her dancing, she says her goal was to participate in an even broader range of creative expression. This led her to join NDI New Mexico's musical theater track, which included several forms of dance, as well as acting and vocal training. The highlight of each year was performing in one of the classic stage musicals such as Bye Bye Birdie and Joseph and the

Charlotte says she did consider pursuing dance professionally. "However, dance wasn't the only thing I wanted to do. I also knew that it was a form of self-expression that would always be with me." Instead, she enrolled in the Santa Fe University of Art and Design, with a double major in filmmaking and literature, graduating with dual Bachelor of Arts degrees in 2015.

Technicolor Dreamcoat.

From ambitious third grader to committed high-school dancer to college student and now creative professional, Charlotte says NDI New Mexico's philosophies and teaching methods have provided a clear through line.

commitment and discipline, but at the same time made it fun," she says. "It's amazing to me now what a difference it made to learn at a young age how to really work hard and push yourself as part of a performing group. You don't necessarily think about it when you're young, but once you learn it, you can't unlearn it. It translates into every part of your life

as an adult, from problem-solving to

teamwork to self-expression."

Being part of NDI New Mexico's close-knit community, surrounded and supported by friends and mentors while being immersed as a team in creative endeavors also made a big imprint on Charlotte. "Once I went on to college, I realized I needed to continue to have my life filled with that same excitement, trying new things and being with creative people."

I am tremendously grateful to NDI New Mexico for enriching my childhood and informing my adulthood," she says. "I hope every child who has the privilege to experience the program will know the joys of its influences later in life.



Charlotte (purple, center) in Peter and the Wolf.



Charlotte (center) became a star tap dancer and performed with the Celebration Team in "I Got Rhythm".



Charlotte performs (right) with NDI New Mexico's Summer Institute.

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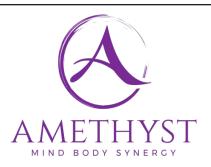
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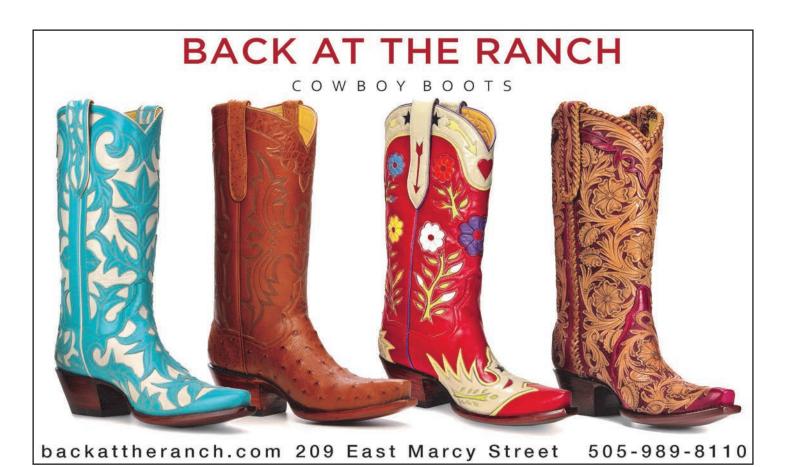


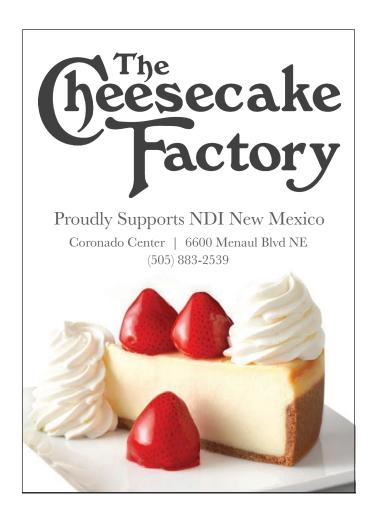
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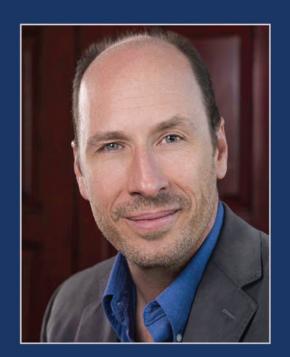
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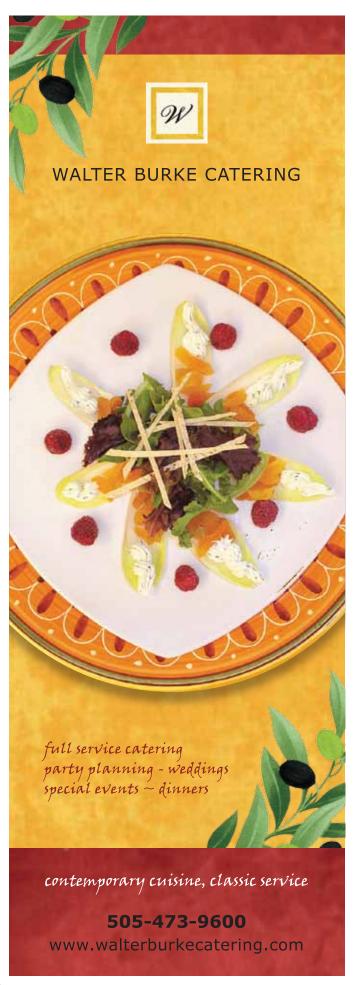
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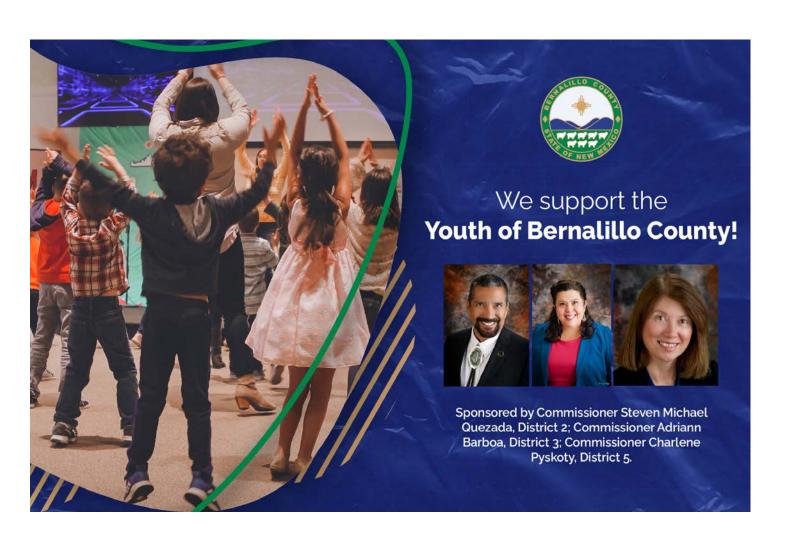
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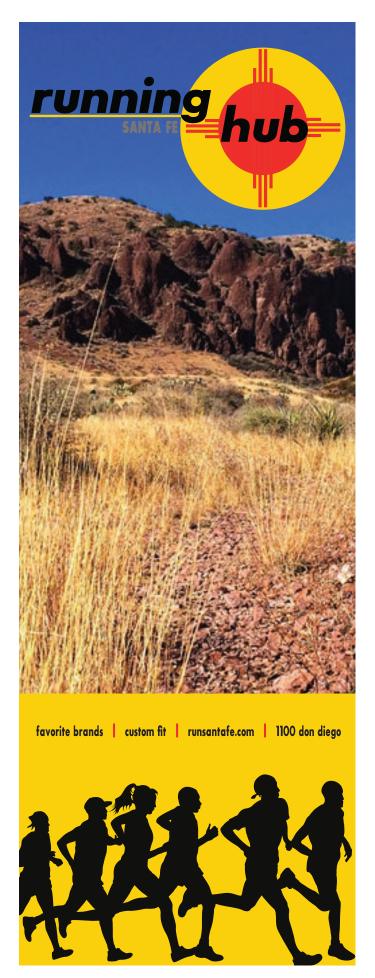


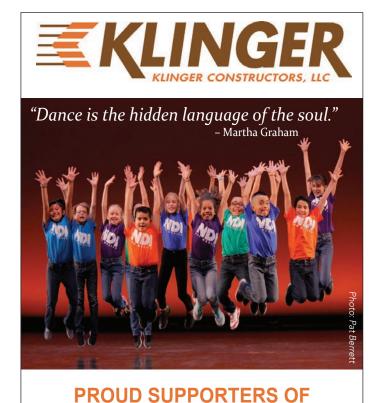
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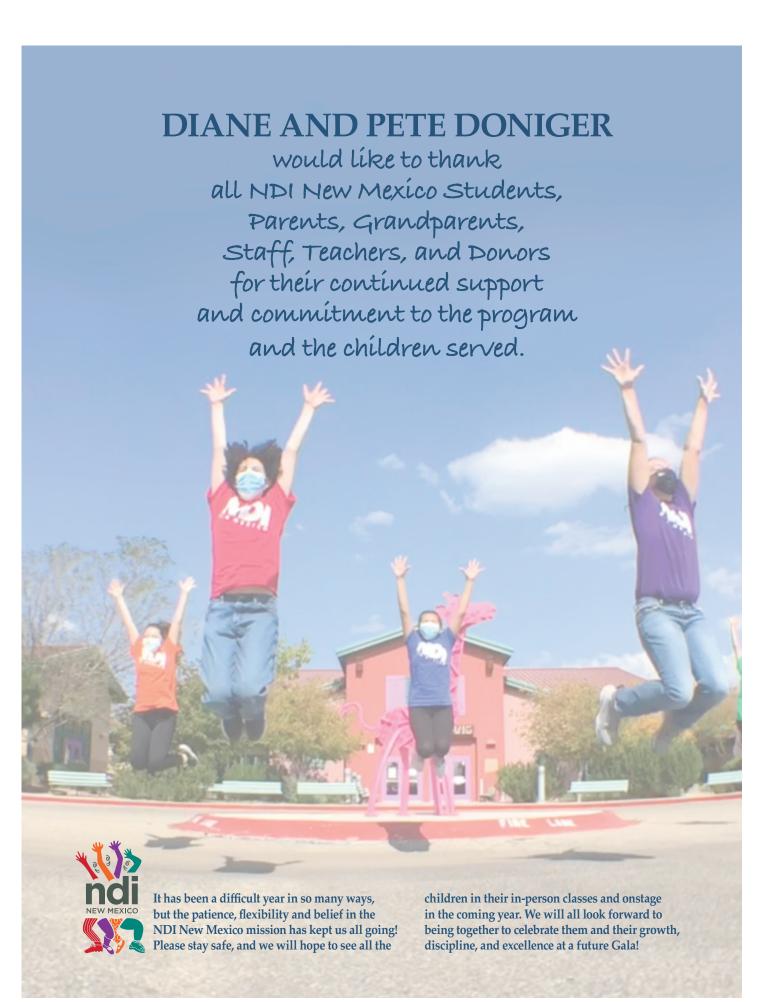


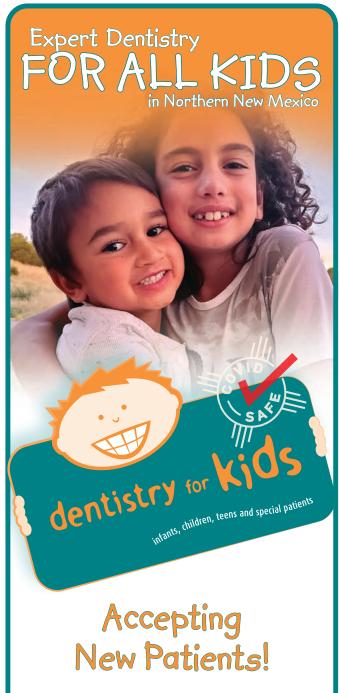


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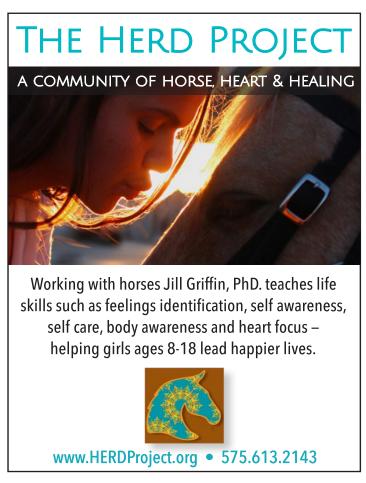
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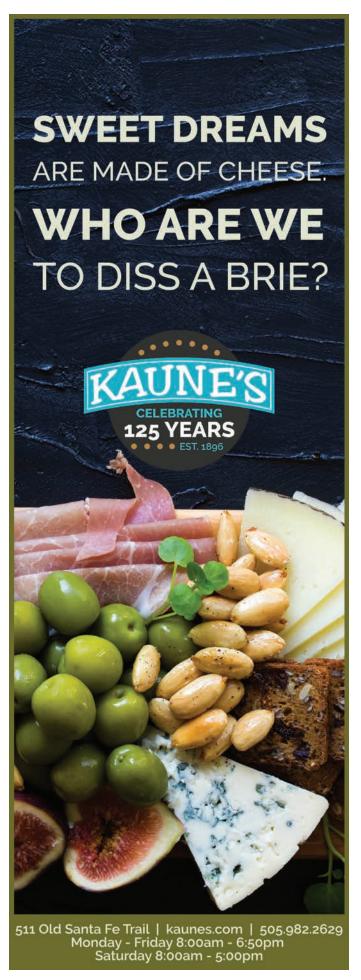
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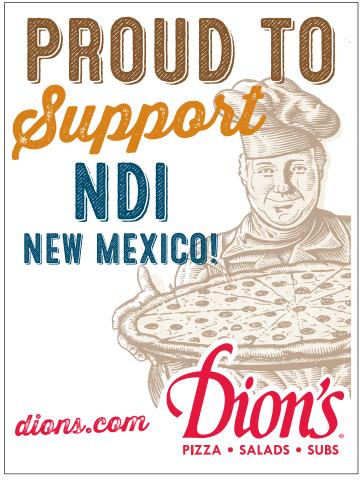






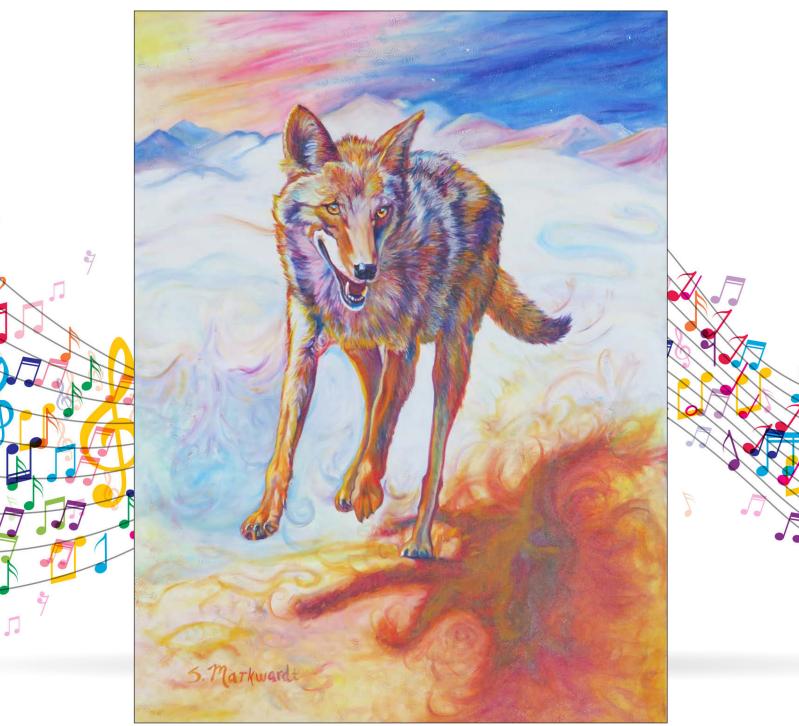








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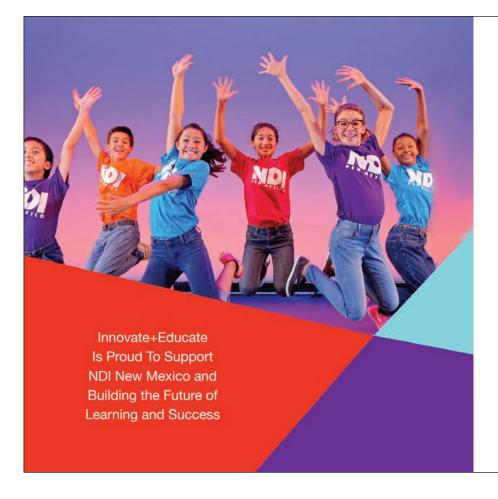


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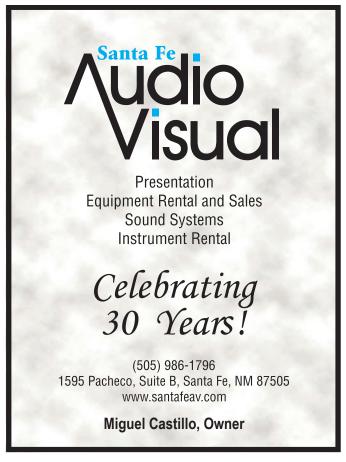
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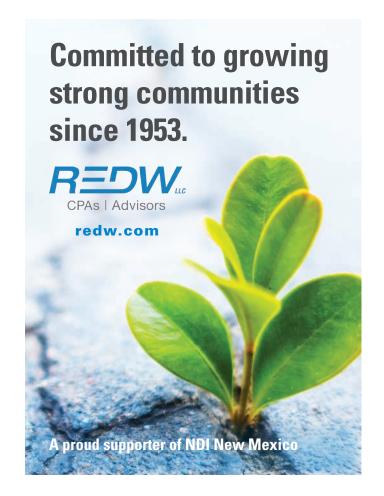
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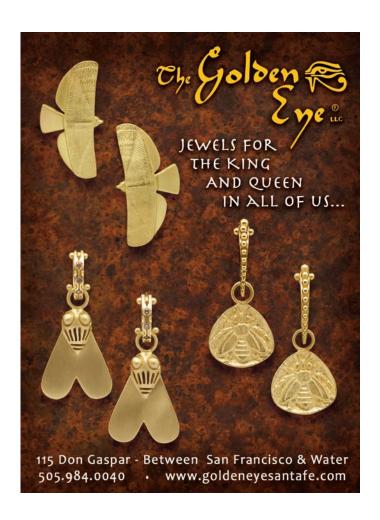
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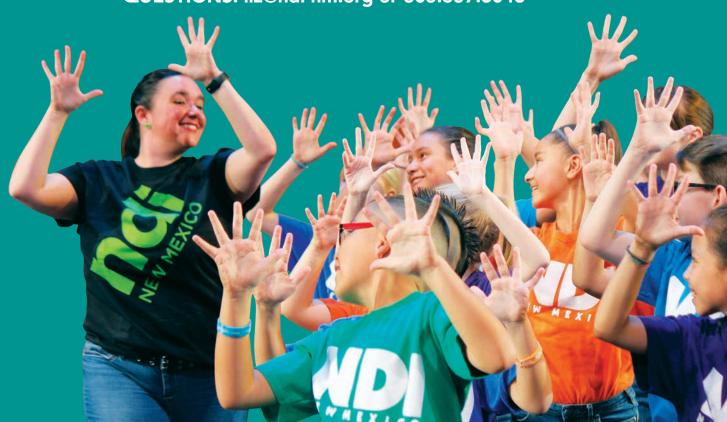
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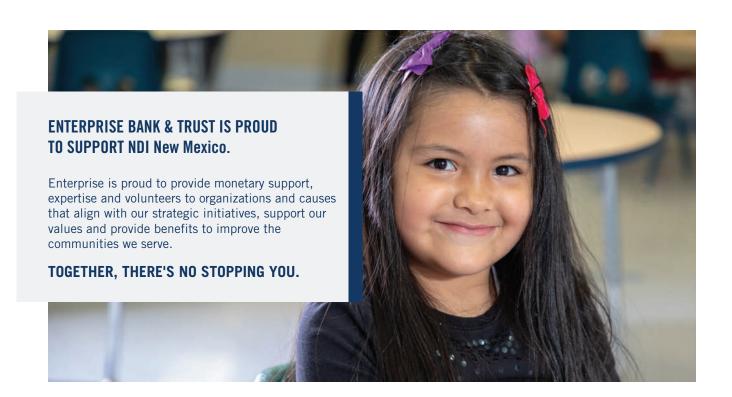
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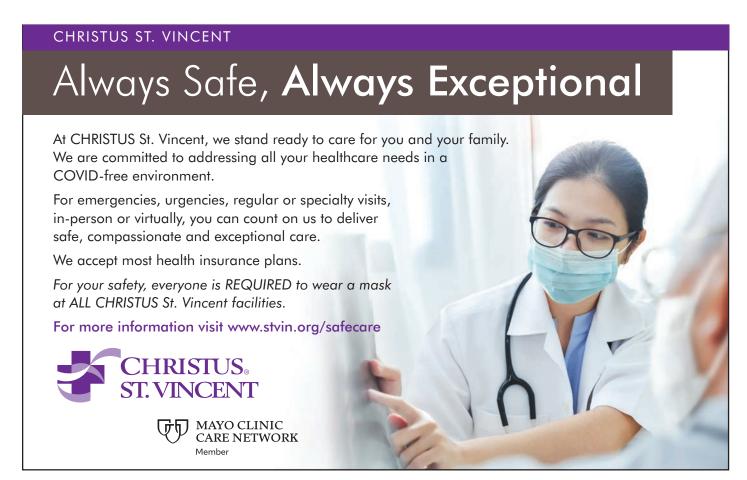
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