

NDI New Mexico

2023





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NDI NEW MEXICO

THE DANCE BARN

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THE HILAND THEATER

4800 Central Avenue SE
Albuquerque, NM 87108
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Dear Friends,

Welcome to today's performance! We are delighted that you are here to share in the joy of our dancers and their accomplishments! These young performers have prepared all year to be ready for their moment in the spotlight. NDI New Mexico's talented artistic staff, unique teaching techniques, and Core Four philosophy - *Work Hard, Do Your Best, Never Give Up, and Be Healthy* - have helped them be ready.

NDI New Mexico is a special community because of the people who are involved. We are proud to partner with public school teachers and administrators, local governments, donors, families, and the broader community to bring NDI New Mexico programs to 7,800 children statewide. As we continue to build our programs to pre-pandemic levels, we thank everyone who supports our work. We could not and cannot do it without you!

As we prepare for our 30th anniversary next year, NDI New Mexico is undertaking a strategic planning process that includes input from our constituents. We hope to understand community need and pair it with our commitment to diversity and inclusion to create a long range strategy that builds on the foundation of work we have done for nearly three decades. Simultaneously, we will complete a multi-year endowment campaign to help support the organization's ongoing ability to serve the next generation of New Mexico youth. We are very excited about it and invite you to join us on the journey!

Thank you, again, for being in-person with us today! We hope that you see the impact of NDI New Mexico's programs on the faces of the children on stage! And now, on with the show!

Yours in teaching children excellence,



Paul Cassidy
Board Chair



Russell Baker
Executive Director



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† In Memoriam



our 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.

NDI NEW MEXICO STATEWIDE MAP 2022-23





DANCING Is Only the Beginning

Students share how they've grown through NDI New Mexico

Thousands of New Mexico's youth participate in NDI New Mexico's fun and enriching programs each year. Their experience with the organization ranges from high-energy, weekly classes conducted in public elementary schools, to pre-professional advanced training programs held after school and on weekends at The Dance Barns in Santa Fe and The Hiland Theater in Albuquerque.



Today we are in 32 communities across the state and partner with 90 individual schools, representing an ever evolving and expanding community of children, supported by families, educators, the staff, and donors. And while the big-picture view of the NDI New Mexico experience is impressive, what's equally interesting and meaningful is students' individual experience – how they progress, the personal discoveries they make, how they find motivation, and the lessons they carry forward as they grow and mature. We asked a few students to tell us what their involvement in NDI New Mexico means to them. Here are their stories ...

resili-ent

RONAN JUDGE

Age 14, 8th grader at Jefferson Middle School in Albuquerque

“Right now, I am rehearsing almost every day and it is absolutely the high point of my day.”

I had just started at a new school in 4th grade and had never heard of NDI New Mexico or the in-school program. I just knew it was required. I'll admit I was a little skeptical at first, but once I tried it, I thought it was fun. I was invited to try out for SWAT and initially I didn't want to do that either. Finally, on the day of the tryouts, I thought to myself, “Just give it a try and see what it's like.” So, I did, and I was accepted!

One of the first big lessons for me was the intensity of dancing. Most of the activities I had been doing, such as classes in school, were in one-hour increments. Dancing with SWAT and Celebration Team was much higher



intensity -- two or three hours at a time. Dance classes are also high intensity. There were times I was somewhat neutral about dancing, but then there was a point where I turned the corner, and now I just love it. I'm so glad I stuck with it.

Right now, I'm rehearsing almost every day and it is absolutely the high point of my day. I just feel like I'm in the zone and can succeed at whatever I'm trying to accomplish. I also love seeing an entire performance piece fall into place. I love to see everyone working together and being able to perform our parts onstage.

NDI New Mexico has given me so much. It's like the clear part of the lake instead of the muddy waters.



MONSERRAT RANGEL

Age 13, 7th grader at El Camino Real Academy in Santa Fe

I started with NDI New Mexico as a fourth grader in the in-school program. I really enjoyed it, especially the performance we gave at the end of the year. Now I truly love dancing with NDI New Mexico. I took lessons for two years, and now I'm on the Celebration Team.

My favorite forms of dance are jazz and contemporary, although I also like tap dancing as well. It's really fun to tap dance in heels. Jazz and contemporary dance are very different from each other, but I love them both. Jazz dance gives you a real sense of freedom when you're moving across the floor. Contemporary dance is much more precise, which makes it a very pretty form of dance. You need to be very specific about where you're placing your arms and feet, and how you're moving, but if you can do that it looks so organized and beautiful.

In addition to dancing with NDI New Mexico, I play basketball on my school team. Dancing has absolutely helped me with basketball – I have a lot more endurance. I also participate in Natural Helpers through my school. Twice each week we work with special needs students and help teach them new skills, read with them, and just play with them. It's taught me a lot about helping other people and to contribute to the community.

I've also learned through NDI New Mexico that we're all smart, even if we're smart in different ways. If someone asked me what NDI New Mexico was like, I would say it's like a big family. You can just be who you are. You make lots of friends. You can also work on improving yourself while having a lot of fun at the same time.

acceptance

"I've also learned through
NDI New Mexico
that we're all smart,
even if we're smart in
different ways."



I've been dancing with NDI New Mexico for almost three years. My first experience was the in-school program in 4th grade. At first, I wasn't sure what to expect. Dancing in the Montezuma Middle School gym was different than anything I had experienced, but it grew on me. I realized I loved dancing, and particularly dancing with everyone else. I was invited to join SWAT, then advanced to the Celebration Team, as well as The Hiland Company dancers.

I spend a lot of time with NDI New Mexico – two afternoons each week and all day on Saturday. My favorite classes are hip-hop and jazz. I also love ballet. It was difficult at first, but once I spent

more time learning ballet, I really began to enjoy it. It requires a lot of concentration, just like other dance forms. Ballet has also turned out to be my secret weapon for playing sports like soccer, since it has really helped with my core and leg strength, as well as my balance.

“Ballet has also turned out to be my secret weapon for playing sports ...”



NDI New Mexico has been a huge part of my life since I was a little kid. It's like a second home for me and my family. I certainly intend to continue with The Hiland Company dancers and the Celebration Team in high school.

second

A young boy with dark, curly hair is captured in a dynamic, mid-air dance pose. He is wearing a white, short-sleeved, button-down shirt tucked into orange, wide-leg trousers, cinched with a dark red sash. His right arm is raised high, and his left arm is extended horizontally. His legs are spread wide in a V-shape, and he is barefoot. The background is a solid dark blue.

MATEO MADRID LARRANAGA

Age 12, 6th grader at
Jefferson Middle School in Albuquerque

family



MIKAYLA ROYBAL

Age 15, 9th grader at Los Lunas High School in Albuquerque

“Reading a book for a school assignment
is not that different from learning
new dance movements: You need to
concentrate and stay on task.”

focus



I began dancing with NDI New Mexico in fourth grade. I wouldn't say I was a great dancer, but the instructors made it so fun and helped me understand that you need to work toward those higher levels. I take classes twice each week, and then have rehearsals for Celebration Team and The Hiland Company every Saturday. I'm learning hip-hop, musical theater, jazz and ballet. Every dance form is different and challenges you in different ways, though I love them all. Hip-hop is probably my favorite, and ballet is definitely the most challenging. Hip-hop allows you more freedom, though it also requires a lot of physical strength. Ballet also allows you to express yourself, but requires a great deal of precision.

I've learned that all forms of dance require commitment and patience – that's how you improve. NDI New Mexico has definitely helped me improve my work ethic and taught me to be more consistent and focused. All of this has helped me in school. Reading a book for a school assignment is not that different from learning new dance movements: You need to concentrate and stay on task.

Dancing has also made me a much less shy person. I've made so many great friends through NDI New Mexico – it's really gotten me out of my shell! I love being onstage and seeing all of us come together to perform. It really gets your adrenaline pumping.

I would encourage anyone to try NDI New Mexico. I would tell them how incredibly fun it is: You make friends, get great exercise, and learn important life lessons. It improves your life in so many ways. I know that if I'm ever having a bad day, it all changes for the better the minute I step into the dance studio.



creator

JADA HAYE-PORTER

Age 16, 10th grader at Manual School in Albuquerque

“I think **everyone can be a creator** and add something to the world.”

I started dancing with NDI New Mexico through the in-school program when I was nine years old. Though I had opportunities to dance elsewhere, I've been with NDI New Mexico for seven years now.



I began by taking ballet and jazz classes, and then was given the opportunity to audition for The Hiland Company team. My favorite dance style is jazz. I also like hip-hop since it feels so freeing. I love ballet as well because it requires such discipline.

I'm dancing with NDI New Mexico at least 12 hours each week. So, I'm either dancing, going to school or doing homework. I've found that there's a strong connection between NDI New Mexico and school. Dancing has helped me with time management and helped me develop a stronger work ethic. It's also helped me develop skills I can take with me wherever I go and whatever I decide to do with my life in the future.

I know what it means to be disciplined, and the importance of routine and constant hard work.

It's the sense of community that keeps me with NDI New Mexico. Everyone here is like family. It's a loving community where everyone is rooting for one another. If I met someone who was considering dancing with NDI New Mexico, I would tell them to try it, because no matter what you do with your life, dance can teach you important lessons. It's great for your health, teaches you to work as a team with others, and is a great way to express yourself. I think everyone can be a creator and add something to the world. One important way to do that is through dance.

“The NDI New Mexico community has given me a lot of confidence, and then **the confidence spreads elsewhere in my life.**”



My first experience with NDI New Mexico was in the third grade during the in-school program.

After the year-end performance, I was invited to join the SWAT team. I wasn't quite sure what it was at first, but when I was told how big it was, I got really excited. I then moved to the Advanced SWAT team and now I'm on the Celebration Team as well as the Dance Barns Junior Company.

Dance takes up most of my time. This year I'm at The Dance Barns three days each week, when rehearsing for Spring into Motion, I was there every day. I take tap, ballet, and jazz. I've progressed in ballet,

but there's a lot of room for improvement. In my opinion, ballet is the one of the many foundations of dance. It's super hard and it can be physically painful but I've stuck with ballet. Ballet has brought me a lot of opportunities. I am very grateful for all it has done for me over the years, both physically and mentally.

Dance and school take up most of my time, but I also create a lot of art whenever I can. I've been drawing ever since I can remember. I've always had a really strong connection to art. I really love it, and it's stuck with me, just like dance. I usually bring a sketch book to The Dance Barns, and I'll draw whenever there's down time. I always have a marker and a pen in my pocket. My goal is to keep doing my art and to have more people see it. I won the contest to have my drawing on this year's official NDI New Mexico t-shirt. I entered the previous contest but wasn't chosen. This year, I made sure I won!

Dancing with NDI New Mexico has helped me understand more about myself. For example, I had no idea I liked to dance, and now I'm doing it every day and I just love it. The NDI New Mexico community has also given me a lot of confidence, and then the confidence spreads elsewhere in my life. It's the combination of dance and the people that makes the whole experience worthwhile.

creative



ndi new mexico

AIDEN GARCIA

Age 13, 7th grader at Pojoaque Valley Middle School



Live Music!



The BEAT behind NDI New Mexico

Among the many important foundational elements to NDI New Mexico – ideals, beliefs and aspirations that remain the hallmarks of the organization since it was established nearly 30 years ago – among the most unique is the commitment to live musical accompaniment.

Even at the first dance class he taught at Acequia Madre Elementary School in Santa Fe back in the early 1990s, NDI New Mexico founder Jacques d'Amboise insisted that the musical accompaniment be performed by professional musicians. This belief that live music brings critical structure, emotion and artistry to rehearsals as well as performances

endures today, and is the reason that whether a student is participating in a residency program in Hobbs, or dancing in the gym in Pojoaque as part of the in-school program, or performing onstage at The Dance Barns in front of hundreds of friends and family members, they will be guided by a team of professional musicians.

Creating the beat behind NDI New Mexico is a demanding yet fulfilling job performed by more than a dozen staff musicians and composers, as well as another dozen contract musicians who accompany live performances. All have exceptional credentials and a commitment to helping New Mexico youth express themselves artistically and learn important life skills through the arts. Among them is Michael Maricle, NDI New Mexico's Outreach Music Director who currently oversees much of the organization's music operations. Maricle has been with NDI New Mexico for nearly five years. Classically trained, he studied music composition at University of California, Santa Barbara. He then toured professionally for a decade on the west coast before becoming a dance musician in Seattle at the University of Washington Department of Dance, Pacific Northwest Ballet, and Cornish College of the Arts.

"The thing that struck me about NDI New Mexico was how happy everyone was, and how the staff had such a positive attitude," he said. "I performed for a few classes and then was offered a position. My initial thought was, "This is so cool!"

For Maricle as well as the rest of the NDI New Mexico music staff, the job is as eclectic as the music they compose and perform. Part of the job is administrative to be sure: "Every class and every rehearsal is staffed by a musician, and their music needs to be coordinated with what the instructor is teaching that day," he said. "And as big shows, such as the annual Gala, Winter Dances and Spring into Motion are developed, we hire and rehearse entire bands to accompany the performances. It's a lot of music, people, and instruments to manage!"

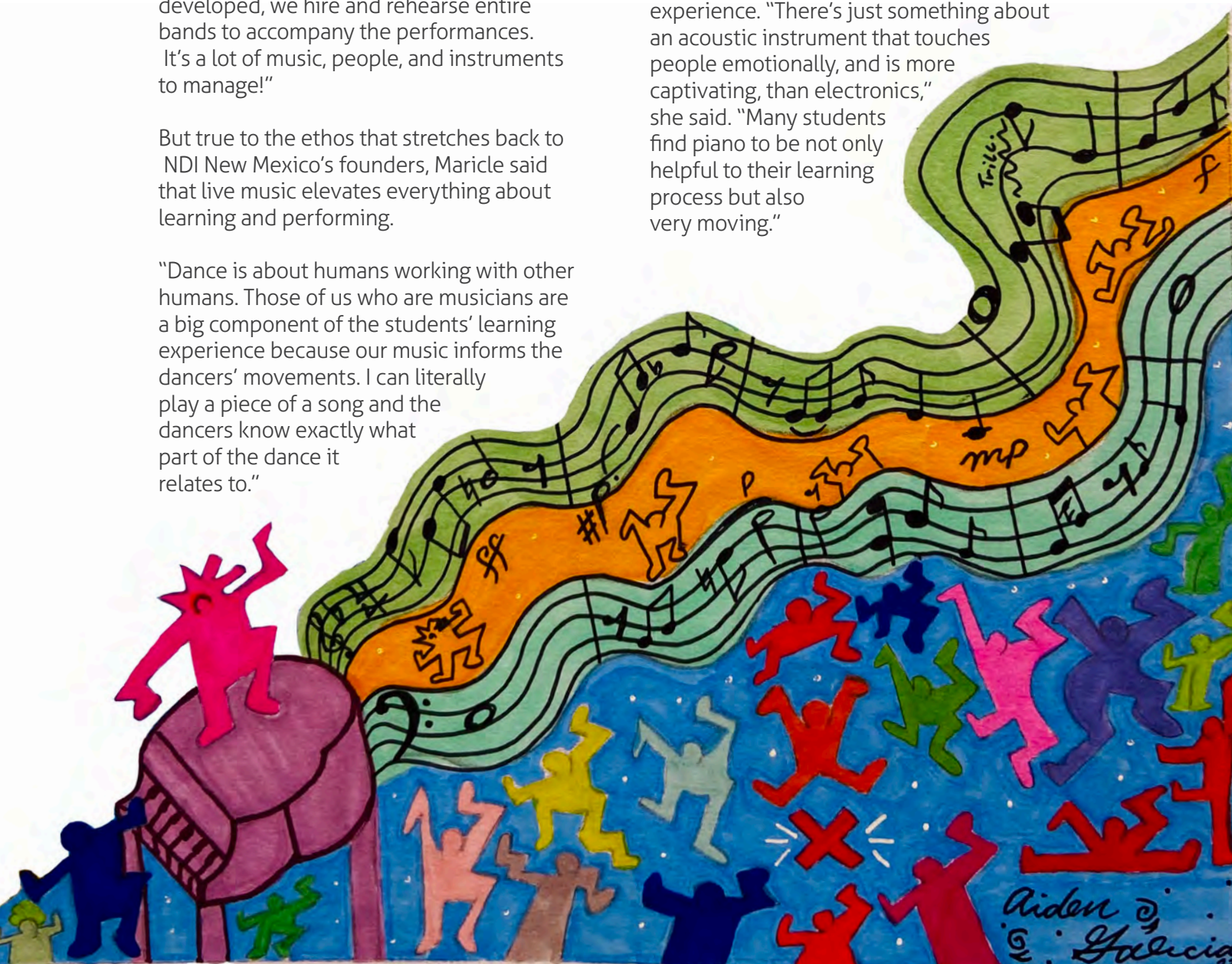
But true to the ethos that stretches back to NDI New Mexico's founders, Maricle said that live music elevates everything about learning and performing.

"Dance is about humans working with other humans. Those of us who are musicians are a big component of the students' learning experience because our music informs the dancers' movements. I can literally play a piece of a song and the dancers know exactly what part of the dance it relates to."

Melanie Monsour, a pianist for NDI New Mexico nearly since its inception, agreed.

"It's about teamwork between the instructor and musician and the students," she said. "You're the other adult in the room, providing exactly what the instructor needs to help the students learn and improve."

Monsour, who has a degree in music composition and has performed all over the world as a pianist and singer-songwriter, also believes that acoustic instruments – as opposed to pre-recorded music or electronic instruments – brings something uniquely beneficial to the students' dance experience. "There's just something about an acoustic instrument that touches people emotionally, and is more captivating, than electronics," she said. "Many students find piano to be not only helpful to their learning process but also very moving."



Maricle likens the musicians' role to "creating a score for each class" that supports the instructors' goals for the class and enables students to stop, start or repeat movements in a seamless fashion.

Live music is also a secret weapon for keeping students engaged. "If the kids get restless or tired, we can get them back on track by playing songs they really love," he said. "In the beginning of every school year we ask them what they're listening to and that becomes part of our repertoire." Earworms such as Baby Shark Dance and the theme song from the cult horror movie Halloween are current favorites among NDI New Mexico students, Maricle said.

Accompanying classes and rehearsals is also a great workout, Monsour added. "We pound the heck out of that piano," she said. "There are 30 kids dancing to that beat and they need to hear you!"

Monsour added that her hope is that interacting with musicians and dancing to live piano music gives students another route to achieving excellence. "It's mathematical," she said. "You need to stay on the beat and stay with the structure, and then practice. And if you can do that, you'll have fun and continue to improve at the same time."

Maricle said he also hopes that exposure to live music provides NDI New Mexico students with the same happiness and contentment that music brings to his own life. "Playing piano has always been my meditation," he said. "It gives me joy, peace of mind and helps me get out of my own way. My hope is that by exposing NDI New Mexico students to musicians and live music, some of them might pick up an instrument and find a similar kind of joy by doing something they love."

Among the most meaningful aspects of his job is knowing he and his fellow musicians are having a positive, lasting impact on children.

Maricle said. "We're kind of the rock stars of the class. They always know our names and they always talk to us. When you push a piano down the hallway of a school, or have a drummer do a solo in a dance class, the kids' eyes get huge. They absolutely love it," he said. "My hope is that when we go into a school, or accompany a dance class, it might inspire a student to find a keyboard or a piano and learn to play."



**"The music was my favorite part in NDI. I loved the sound of the piano and trumpet together."
NDI New Mexico Students**



MEASURABLE RESULTS: NDI NEW MEXICO GETS AN A+

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

Since 2005, NDI New Mexico has undertaken formal, rigorous independent evaluation of our programs. Not surprisingly, students show increases in dance and performance skills as well as arts appreciation. More importantly, data analysis demonstrates significant improvements in our students' self-discipline, confidence, tenacity, excellence, focus, setting and achieving goals, as well as teamwork, creative expression, and school leadership. Best of all, students also indicated that NDI New

NDI New Mexico's mission is to give children the tools they need to be successful in life and we are committed to conducting rigorous research to understand the impact our programs have on children.

Mexico programs increased their fitness and nutrition knowledge, willingness to try new things, and their commitment to hard work and excellence.

Evaluation partners over the years have included RMC Research Corporation, UNM's Center for Education Policy Research, and UNM's Prevention Research Center. Moreover, in partnership with the independent research teams above and New Mexico's Public Education Department, we found that students participating in NDI New Mexico's in-school program and advanced teams such as the Super Wonderful

Advanced Team (SWAT) and the Celebration Team, had higher grade point averages and higher standardized test score results in math, reading, writing and science than their non-participating peers.

Public school teachers indicate they find students are more willing to collaborate with each other in the classroom, persevere to attain desired goals, and engage in school because of NDI New Mexico. Public school principals believe that NDI New Mexico helps students develop social skills, supports the school's culture, and improves the community's perception of the school. NDI New Mexico's most recent evaluation showed that our advanced students were less likely to be chronically absent from school and had lower odds of having disciplinary infractions at school. Once again, students were more likely to be proficient in standardized tests.

And through anecdotal testimonial, parents share that students bring the messages of the Core Four – work hard, do your best, never give up, and be healthy – home with them. They also appreciate that the NDI New Mexico programs set high expectations and "raise the bar" for what their children believe that can achieve.

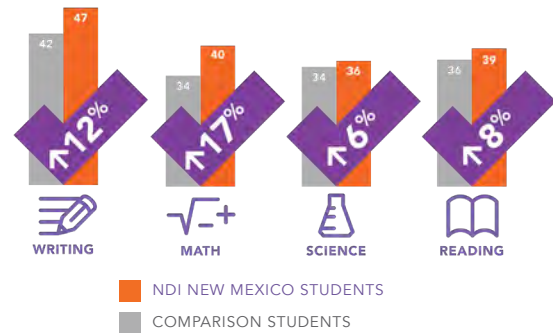
NDI New Mexico's mission is to give children the tools they need to be successful in

life and we are committed to conducting rigorous research to understand the impact our programs have on children. Equally importantly, we want to learn how to improve our programs so we can have an even greater positive impact on their performance in school, sense of well-being, and ability to achieve their goals in today's world.

Whether students choose to pursue dance and the performing arts, advance to academic study, start a family, or go into a career, they leave NDI New Mexico's program inspired and well prepared for their futures. NDI New Mexico's alumni are working as nurses and doctors, teachers, business owners, professional dancers, state and city employees, and many, many other things. We are proud of each and every one of them and believe they can overcome life's obstacles to achieve their dreams.



NDI New Mexico Advanced Training students had 10 or fewer absences during an academic year compared to 15-20 absences by peers.



In standardized assessments in writing, math, science, and reading, NDI New Mexico Advanced Training students outperformed their peers by 6%-17%.



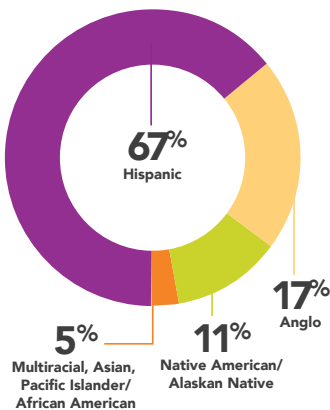
WHO WE SERVE

This year we will serve more than 7,800 children, partnering with 292 public school teachers in 90 schools, in 32 communities around the state. In addition we will deliver 200,000 hours of instruction time.

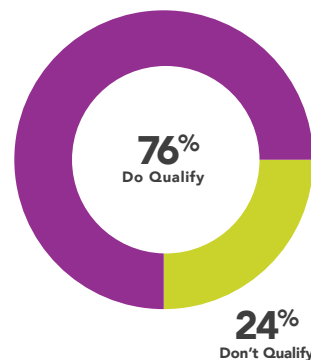
NDI New Mexico believes that every child has the capacity to learn how to be excellent by working hard, doing their best, never giving up, and being healthy. Our work is guided by our belief in children, as well as our commitment to social responsibility, excellence, sustainability and financial integrity.

Our In-School programs focus directly on schools and children in the greatest need: 76% qualify for Federal Free or Reduced Cost Meal Program; 67% are Hispanic, 17% Anglo, 11% Native American/Alaskan Native, 5% Multiracial, Asian/Pacific Islander, African American. We are committed to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

**Demographics of
NDI New Mexico
Outreach Students**



**NDI New Mexico
Students Qualifying for the Federal
Free or Reduced Cost Meal Program**



**"I love that many of our students are able to have a positive opportunity that they wouldn't have otherwise."
- Public School Principal**

OUR PARTNER SCHOOLS

Albuquerque

21st Century Public Academy
Adobe Acres Elementary
Alameda Elementary
Alamosa Elementary
Bandelier Elementary
Chamiza Elementary
Cochiti Elementary
Comanche Elementary
East San Jose Elementary
EG Ross Elementary
Edward Gonzales Elementary
Emerson Elementary
Eugene Field Elementary
Highland High School
Hodgin Elementary
Holy Ghost Catholic School
Inez Science and Technology Magnet
Janet Kahn School of Integrated Arts Magnet
Kirtland Elementary
La Mesa Elementary
Longfellow Dual Language Magnet
Los Ranchos Elementary
Mary Ann Binford Elementary
Montezuma Elementary
Mountain View Elementary
Osuna Elementary
Puesta del Sol Elementary
Reginald Chavez Elementary
Rio Grande Academy of Fine Arts Charter
Sandia Base Elementary
Sandia Vista Elementary
Whittier Elementary
Zia Elementary
Zia Family Focus Center

Northern NM

Alcalde Elementary
Chimayo Elementary
E.T. Salazar Elementary
James H. Rodriguez Elementary
Ohkay Owingeh Community School
Pablo Roybal Elementary
Tony E. Quintana Elementary

Santa Fe

Acequia Madre Elementary
Aspen Community School
Atalaya Elementary
Carlos Gilbert Elementary
El Camino Real Academy
Gonzales Community Elementary
Nina Otero Elementary
Salazar Elementary
Sweeney Elementary

Residency

ARTESIA
Central Elementary
Hermosa Elementary
Roselawn Elementary
Yeso Elementary
Yucca Elementary
Grand Heights Early Childhood
CUBA
Cuba Elementary
DULCE
Dulce Elementary
GALLUP
Red Rock Elementary
HATCH
Rio Grande Elementary
HOBBS
College Lane Elementary
Booker T. Washington Elementary
Broadmoor Elementary
Coronado Elementary
Edison Elementary
Jefferson Elementary
Mills Elementary
Sanger Elementary
Southern Heights Elementary
Stone Elementary
Taylor Elementary
Will Rogers Elementary
LAS VEGAS
Sierra Vista Elementary
LOS LUNAS
Katherine Gallegos Elementary
LOVINGTON
Yarbro Elementary
MAGDALENA
Magdalena Elementary
RATON
Raton Intermediate School
ROSWELL
Pecos Elementary
SILVER CITY/BAYARD/SANTA CLARA
Central Elementary
G.W. Stout Elementary
Guadalupe Montessori
Harrison Schmitt Elementary
Jose Barrios Elementary
SOCORRO
Cottonwood Valley Charter
Midway Elementary
Parkview Elementary
San Antonio Elementary
TAOS/RANCHOS DE TAOS
Enos Garcia Elementary
Ranchos de Taos Elementary
WAGON MOUND
Wagon Mound Elementary



Meet Alumna MAYA GORMAN

There's hardly been a time when Maya Gorman hasn't been dancing. The 22-year-old became a member of the NDI New Mexico family at age four, when she joined the Tiny Tots program. Asked how she was introduced to the program, Gorman credited her father, Edmund Gorman, who has danced onstage with NDI New Mexico for years as part of parent-teacher performances.



"NDI New Mexico taught me how to keep working hard and trying to do better ..."

Gorman moved from Tiny Tots to SWAT as a fourth grader, then advanced to Team Celebration as she entered high school. She excelled at all forms of dance, particularly tap. "There's something about tap dancing that I really loved," she said. "It's just very freeing."

Dancing with NDI New Mexico helped her grow and mature in many ways, Gorman said, particularly when it came to managing peer pressure, establishing friendships, and being comfortable in her own skin – not an easy thing for any young person. "NDI New Mexico was about happiness and people treating each other well," she said. "There

was no drama, people were kind, and there wasn't the same kind of competition between people like you see in school. It taught me to not be afraid of just being myself." Gorman said she attributes this welcoming atmosphere to the fact that everyone dancing for NDI New Mexico "chose to be there."

"Nothing felt forced," she said. "We were there to dance, meet new people and

make friends." They were also there to work hard, she added. "NDI New Mexico taught me how to keep working hard and trying to do better," she said. "Dancing can be hard on your body and hard on your schedule, but you learn how to push through that."

This perseverance and discipline have served her well since she joined the U.S. Navy in 2021. Currently stationed in Norfolk, VA, Gorman is managing a demanding workload, preparing for a possible deployment, and evaluating the next steps in her Naval career.

"I'm very thankful I joined the military," she said. "It's helped me grow as a person." She said the lessons she learned as an NDI New Mexico dancer have already helped her thrive in the military.

"It's a challenging job but I learned through NDI New Mexico to push through and keep going. I know how to brush it off and try again when I make mistakes." And when work gets stressful, she practices a routine taught by all of NDI New Mexico's instructors: She stops what she's doing and takes a deep breath. "It sounds like a small thing but it's so helpful," she said.

Gorman said she thinks all children in New Mexico can find the same joy and sense of self that she experienced at NDI New Mexico. "I would tell them it's an amazing place where you'll be welcomed and made to feel like you matter and that you're appreciated."



In 2013, Maya performed in "Eureka!" as a part of the SWAT Team (above and below). Maya also danced with the Celebration Team in the 2015 Event, "Imagine the Possibilities, A Celebration of Reading" (bottom left).



NDI NEW



FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF

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 they see themselves and move through the world.

MEXICO PROGRAMS

More than 7,800 students

IN 32 COMMUNITIES PARTICIPATE

in our award-winning programs





NDI NEW MEXICO PROGRAMS

In-School Program

NDI New Mexico In-School 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 In-School classes are free of charge for children and their families.

Residency Program

Our traveling Residency team brings music and dance to underserved children in rural and urban communities in all corners of New Mexico. The Residency team lives in each community for one to three weeks, conducting daily In-School 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.





After-School

THE DANCE BARNs & THE HILAND THEATER

Children ages 3-18 come to The Dance Barns in Santa Fe and The Hiland Theater in Albuquerque each week to participate in high-quality dance and performance training in creative movement, ballet, modern dance, jazz, tap, hip-hop, and more. 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 philosophy and teaching methods. 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 After School programs build a sense of achievement in a nurturing and noncompetitive atmosphere.

"This program helped
me raise my child
in beautiful ways."

- NDI New Mexico Parent





“I learned to be proud
of what I accomplished.”
- NDI New Mexico Student



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.





"The best feeling is when you witness
 a group of students lock into being a
 team ... understanding that working
 together to achieve their best depends
 on each one of them. They begin to
 shine in a different way and you can
 see they feel good about themselves
 and are proud of their teammates!
 - Emily Garcia, Instructor & Associate
 Director of In-School Programs



WORK HARD, DO YOUR BEST, NEVER GIVE UP, BE HEALTHY!

OUR GRADUATES 2023

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.



**Eva
Abrego**
Wilson Middle
School



**Sydney
Allen**
Santa Fe School
for the Arts and
Sciences



**Braden
Apodaca**
South Valley
Academy



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**Marisa
Madrid
Larranaga**
Jefferson Middle
School

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR CELEBRATION TEAM GRADUATES

from Albuquerque, 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.



**Ronan
Judge**

ACES Technical
Charter School



**Lily
Lopez**

Lincoln Middle
School



**Nia
Lopez**

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Middle
School



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Moya**

South Valley
Prep



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Ramirez**

Capital High
School



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School



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School



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Sandoval**

Media Arts
Collaborative




**Jade
Alvarenga
Velasquez**

Santa Fe High
School



**Isael
Valencia**

Washington
Middle School

A group of young people are in a dance studio with bright pink walls. They are all smiling and have their arms raised in the air, performing a dance move. The person in the foreground is wearing a dark green long-sleeved shirt and dark pants. Other people in the background are wearing blue and orange tops. The floor is dark and reflective.

We would like to congratulate
all the students, teachers, and staff
on their hard work!
Everyone is proud of your efforts.

DIANE AND PETE DONIGER





Meet Alumni

ISAIAH BENAVIDEZ

Isaiah Benavidez has packed more adventure, achievement, and introspection into his 34 years than many people do in a lifetime. He's a U.S. Air Force veteran, world traveler, proud father of a 14-year-old daughter, expert cook, established homeowner and exceptional break-dancer. He also is, as he puts it, an "old-school" NDI New Mexico alumnus. He was a member of Team Celebration when the squad rehearsed and performed at the fondly remembered "old pink church" on Pacheco Street in Santa Fe.

"And I graduated from NDI New Mexico the year The Dance Barns opened," Benavidez added. "My handprints and footprints are in the cement outside the front door."

Benavidez became a member of the NDI New Mexico family like so many other children across the state: by dancing in his elementary school as part of the In-School program. Instructors noticed the naturally talented boy nailing his moves in the Pojoaque Valley Elementary School



"... dancing with NDI New Mexico offered friendship, structure, dedicated instructors, and an opportunity to improve his skills and focus his energy."

gymnasium and suggested he try out for the more advanced Super Wonderful Advanced Team (SWAT). After just a year with SWAT, Benavidez joined Team Celebration, and then Company Xcel.

"I was incredibly lucky that Catherine Oppenheimer, NDI New Mexico's co-founder, was the one who asked me to audition," he said, adding, "I owe so much to her."

Benavidez, who grew up in Nambe Pueblo, said he always loved to dance, and particularly excelled at tap.

"Dancing just came natural to me. It really was a passion," he said. He added that dancing with NDI New Mexico offered friendship, structure, dedicated instructors, and an opportunity to improve his skills and focus his energy.

Benavidez joined the U.S. Air Force after graduating from high school, serving two tours of duty, as well as serving his country in Germany, India, Thailand, Japan, and other far-flung locations. He pursued his other passion, cooking, both in the military

and after his discharge, moved to Colorado, became a father, and eventually moved back to the Santa Fe area, where he now works as manager of security at Tesuque Casino.

Throughout his exciting, challenging, and eclectic life, Benavidez said his experience with NDI New Mexico always provided guidance.

"My father always says, growing old is inevitable but growing up is optional. NDI New Mexico enabled me to be the kid I wanted to be."

"It can be hard to be a boy who loves to dance because people can create a stigma around that," he added. "But NDI New Mexico helped me push through that and not care what people thought. I danced and my parents and grandparents always supported me. I fell into it, then realized I loved it, and then put in the time and effort to be good at it."

Benavidez, along with other alumni, recently participated in NDI New Mexico's live performance of "Route 66: Legends of the Road" in Española. The performance featured 230 elementary school students from Española, Chimayo, Alcalde, and Ohkay Owingeh pueblo. Benavidez said rehearsing and then performing with current students as well as old friends was an emotional event. "Seeing everyone again brings back so many memories that I remember instantly."

He said he made a point to tell current students that nearly 20 years after leaving NDI New Mexico he is still dancing, and that they can too. And for young people who might be curious about dancing and unsure they should try?

"I would tell those children to follow their hearts. And if your heart tells you to dance, then you should dance."





These North Alumni dancers are a product of Española, Pojoaque and Santa Fe schools. From left to right: Jaden Romero, Ashley Lopez, Sean Martinez, Erin Wolf, Fernanda Rangel, Isaiah Benavidez, Camille Baca, Francesca Romero, and Jesse Martinez



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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Make a tribute gift in honor
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memory of a loved one

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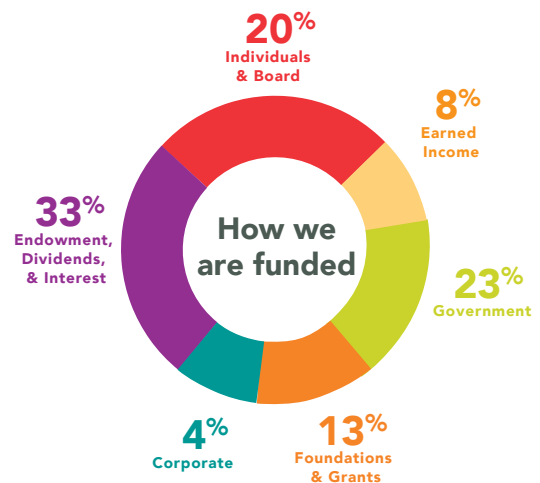
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*Every donation makes a difference
that can last a lifetime for a child.*

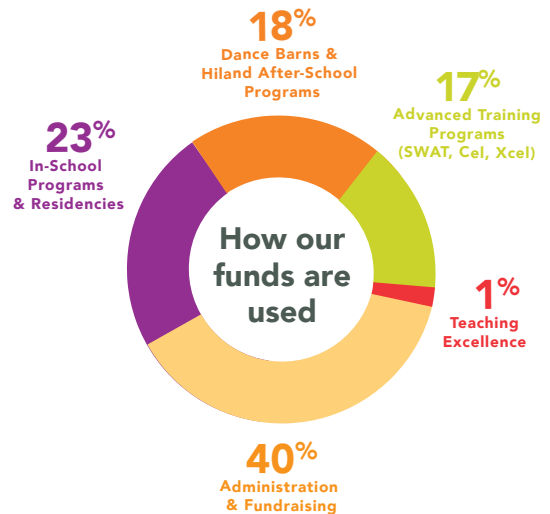
Your generous investment in NDI New Mexico provides access to excellence for thousands of undeserved children and creates opportunities for youth in our state to build better futures.

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



"We decided to buy a star for the kids – the real Stars in all this; and, we decided to leave a lasting legacy in our wills by becoming Silver Sneakers Legacy Society members. We hope others reading this feel the same and consider supporting NDI New Mexico in this truly special way."

**Louise Campbell Tolbert &
Dr. Steven Tolbert, Donors**



donor spotlight

HELEN WERTHEIM



Helen Wertheim is a retired Albuquerque business owner who, after selling her business, now spends her time in service to her community. Helen has been attending NDI New Mexico's annual galas for more than 20 years. Upon seeing the energy and enthusiasm in each child's face during those performances, she decided to look deeper into the organization itself.

"I became excited to understand how the mission and work of NDI New Mexico created such pride and enthusiasm. The personal stories and testimonials from those who were graduating but were so reluctant to leave moved me. I don't know who could attend one of NDI New Mexico's performances and not be moved," she said.

Helen learned about the "Core Four" (Work Hard, Do Your Best, Never Give Up and Be Healthy). "As a business owner, I saw those values being instilled in our children as the values I would look for in potential employees. Also important to

me as a donor is seeing how those values put to work in the classroom increased test scores by as much as 17% in math, reading, science, and writing."

"The model that NDI New Mexico created can fundamentally change a child's life and help make our state the best it can be," Helen said.

Five years ago, Helen decided to include NDI in her estate plan in addition to her annual gift. "I watched and learned how NDI New Mexico's mission has and continues to make substantial, meaningful positive changes for the children in New Mexico, many of whom are in greatest need.



Including NDI New Mexico as part of my estate plan was a way that I could ensure the organization's great work and impact will be sustainable long into the future," she said. "I've had the privilege of volunteering on many boards in central New Mexico and Arizona over the years. I've seen first-hand what successful organizations have to have in order to succeed. NDI New Mexico has it. Passion for its work, discipline in strategy, oversight, and mission. The result is happy, healthy motivated children that are doing better in school and life. NDI gives New Mexico kids a real chance at success. It's easy for me to support an organization that is making this possible and has a commitment to New Mexico's future"

SILVER SNEAKERS LEGACY SOCIETY

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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Guest Choreographer Ron De Jesus for his work with Hiland Company Dancers.

French Funerals & Cremations for treating our staff to tickets to the NM Runners and Western Sky Community Care for treating our staff to tickets to NM United.

Ehren Kee Natay for your inspiring musical composition; Michelle and Kaycee Tsosie for the Butterfly Dance; and Carolyn Salazar and the dancers of Baile Espanol for your contributions to *Route 66: Legends of the Road*. And to special dancing guests Brittany Snyder and Miguel Rivas of the Santa Fe Fire Department and Erica Montoya, Juan De la Rosa, and Steven Lopez of the Santa Fe Police Department.

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And to Bernalillo County and Albuquerque Fire Departments for dancing in *Got Jazz!*

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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.

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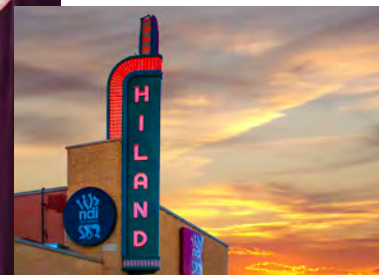
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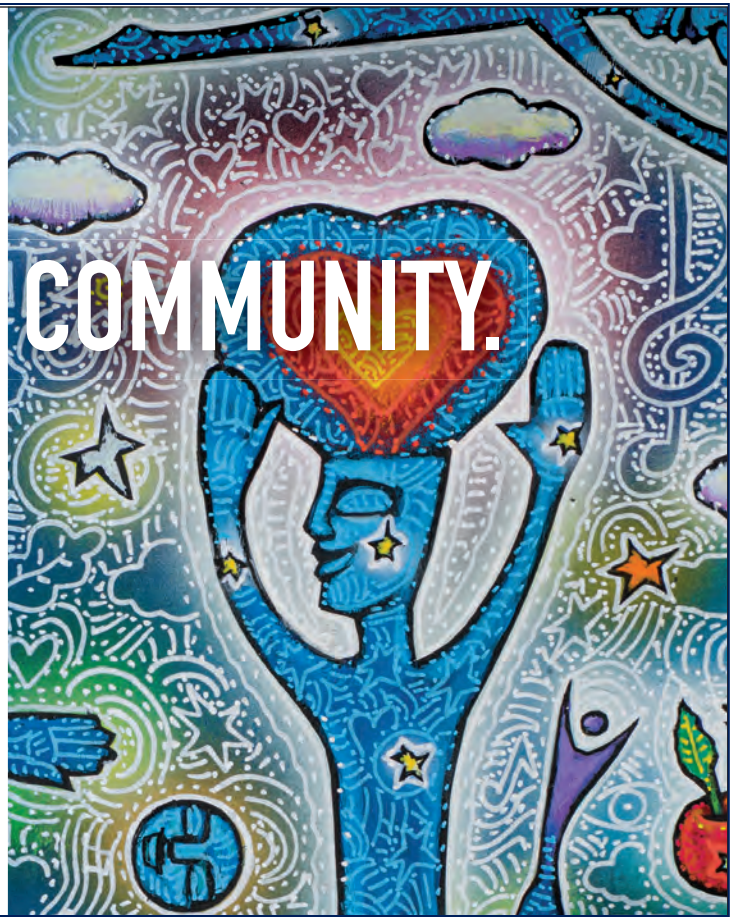
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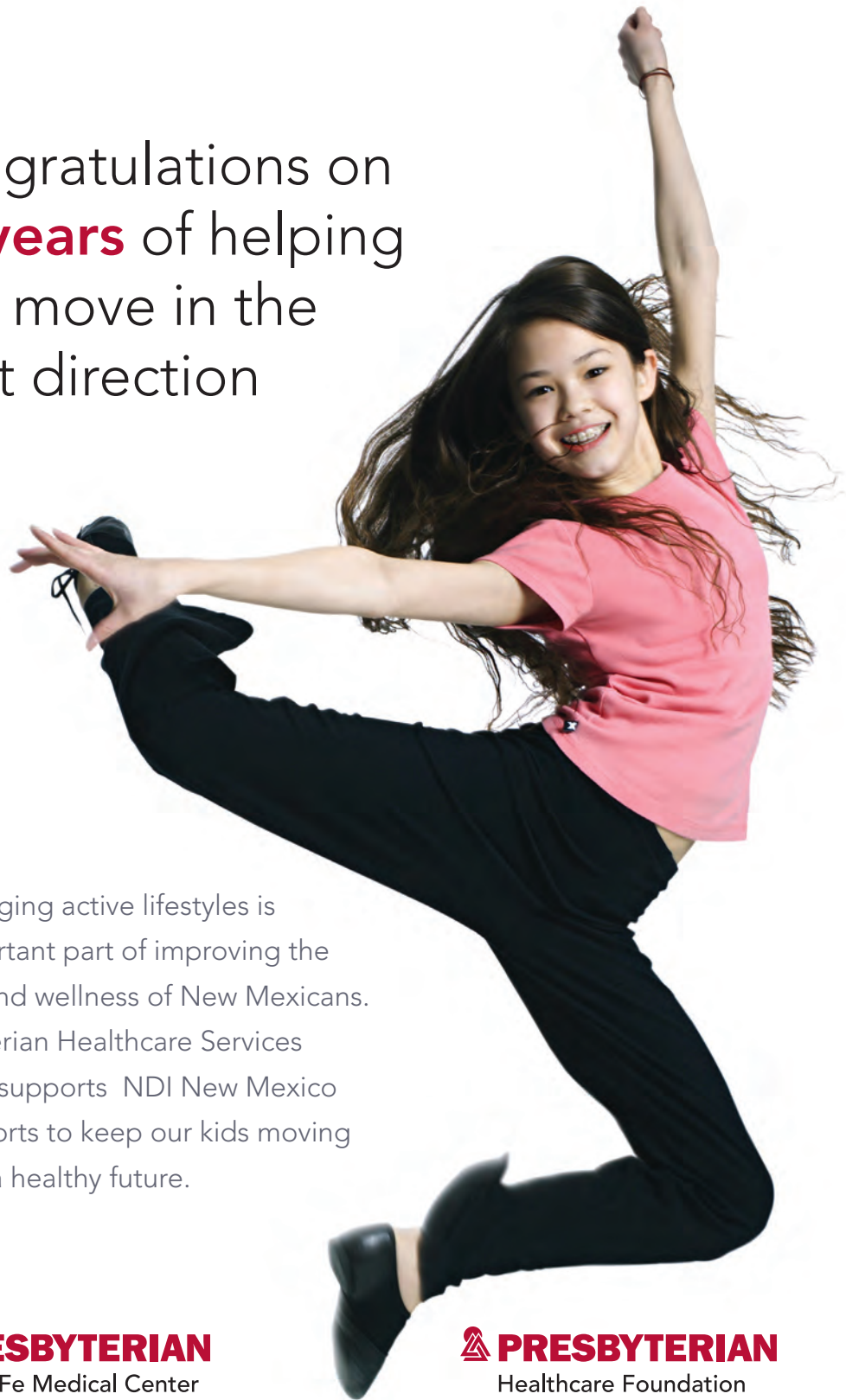
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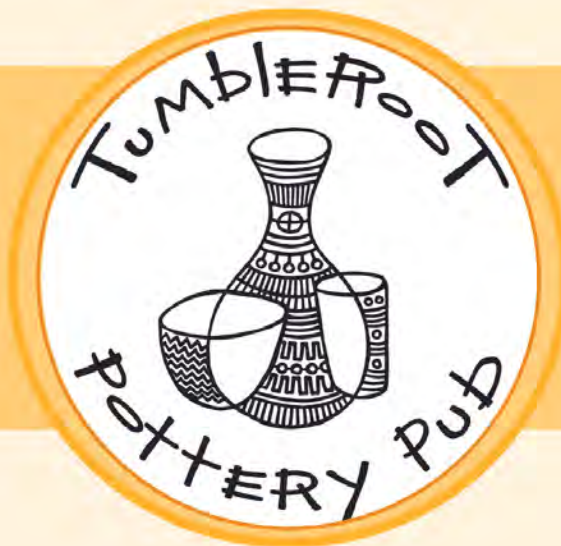
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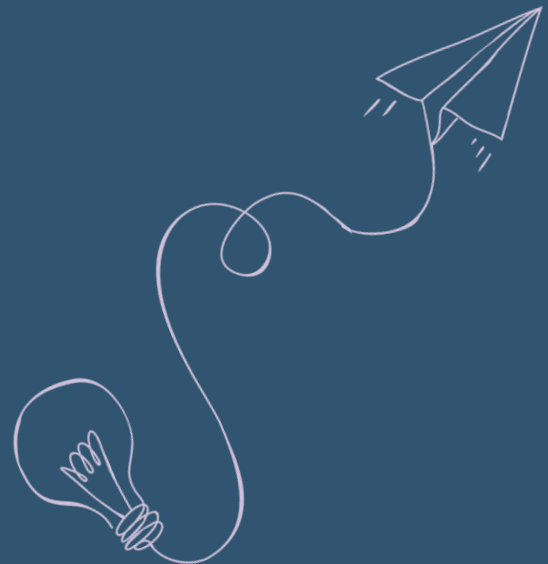


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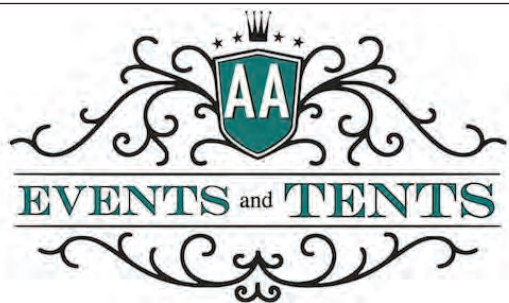


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**We applaud NDI New Mexico and are grateful
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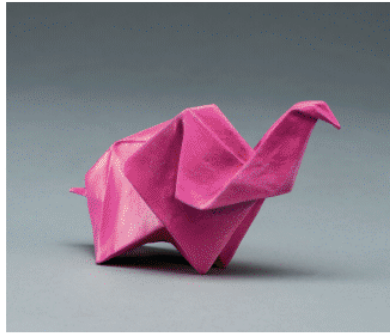
Enterprise proudly serves as the Director Sponsor for the 2023 NDI New Mexico Gala. We are honored to support NDI New Mexico's commitment to aid young people in forming habits of mind, the pursuit of excellence, and confidence in their abilities that will serve them well throughout life.

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Dear NDI,
my name is Grace and I'm 12 years old. I'm in the 6th grade at Carlos Gilbert School. I would like to thank you for supporting the NDI New Mexico Celebration program in Santa Fe, NM. I've danced with NDI since I was 3 years old and still love it with all of my heart to this day. NDI has taught me so many important skills, like to work hard and to be resilient in everything that happens in my life time, in general NDI gives a person confidence to be on self and embrace who you are as a person, and as a result of this I can embrace myself in everyday life. So once again, thank you for Supporting NDI's Celebration team!

Sincerely, Grace ♡



★ Thank you!



NDI New Mexico is committed to honoring people and cultures through dance

Thank you to the Native American communities for sharing the joy of your traditional dances.

Valerie T. and Charles Diker





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