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**March 30, 2015**



## **"ARTS IN MOTION" BLENDS SOCIAL SKILLS, ART & MOVEMENT**

### **Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre and Art Expression Team Up for Innovative After-School Program**

**Pittsburgh, PA**—Art Expression, Inc. and the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre (PBT) have partnered to create ARTS in Motion, a unique afterschool program that combines visual arts, rhythm and movement. The six-week program will pilot at Dormont Elementary School in the Keystone Oaks School District beginning March 18.

“We’re incredibly excited to be partnering with Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre,” says Angela Lowden, founder and executive director of Art Expression, Inc. “We’ve blended Art Expression’s programming, which helps children with their social skills through art, with the Ballet’s focus on dance and movement in arts education to create something entirely new. ARTS in Motion will serve the students in a really unique way. Through a close collaboration between our two organizations, we’ve jointly created something that neither of us could have achieved on our own.”

“Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre has been interested in expanding its educational outreach into after-school programming for some time, and teaming up with Art Expression is the perfect way for us to do it,” says Lisa Auel, Manager of Community Programs for Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre. “Together, we’ll explore and learn teaching styles from each other that we can carry over to our classes in schools, at our studios and throughout the community.”



Photo by James F. Lowden

ARTS in Motion will be fully inclusive, serving students in regular education programs as well as those who require special education support. PBT’s participation in ARTS in Motion is funded by a generous grant from the Jack Buncher Foundation. Art Expression’s participation is funded by the Keystone Oaks School District.

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Students will be encouraged to work together to explore dance and visual art around a variety of themes. Music will also be incorporated into ARTS in Motion programming, with a special workshop on percussion. Each session of the class will alternate between dance- and movement-focused activities and visual arts activities that share a common theme. Approximately 20 students at Dormont Elementary have signed up for the program.

Lowden says that Art Expression hopes to replicate the ARTS in Motion curriculum with Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre at future sites.

Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre's education programs have long served local schools and educators with quality programming in arts education. PBT believes that the arts are essential to a well-rounded education and help prepare the next generation of students to enter the ever-changing world with creative thinking and problem solving skills. PBT offers Creative Movement classes in select Pittsburgh Public Schools Pre-K and elementary classrooms, student matinee performances, short-term residencies and professional development support for educators and schools that wish to use dance and movement in their classrooms to provide meaningful, enriching arts experiences for their students.

Art Expression Inc. is a non-profit foundation established in 2001 by James and Angela Lowden as an expression of their passion for alleviating the social inequalities that exist among children of different abilities and backgrounds. The organization's mission is to facilitate positive socialization with children and adolescents through expressive art activities in an inclusive educational environment. Art Expression Inc. has been designated as a "Model Art Therapy Program" by the American Association of School Administrators & American Art Therapy Association in 2011. Art Expression Inc. was also chosen as one of the 50 finalists distinguishing the program as one of the top arts and humanities based programs in the country, receiving a 2013 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program (NAHYP) Award Certificate of Excellence. In addition to its flagship Creative pARTners program, Art Expression Inc. has developed five specialty programs that combine science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) concepts with art to create STEAM programming. Art Expression conducts programming with masters-degreed arts therapists, faculty facilitators and staff members in 11 school districts, 12 homeless shelters and numerous community organizations throughout southwestern PA. Since its founding, Art Expression has served over 6,000 children in Allegheny, Fayette, Greene, Washington, and Westmoreland counties.

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