

## CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Date: 12/2/2021

**Contact Information**

Organization Name: **West Chester Dance Works**  
Address: **315 Westtown Road, Suite 9**  
**West Chester, PA 19382**  
Phone: **(610) 692-3398**  
Website: **www.westchesterdanceworks.org**  
Year Incorporated: **1983**  
FEIN: **30-0080438**

ED/CEO Name: **Diane Matthews**  
ED/CEO E-mail: **director@wcdw.org**  
Board Chair Name: **Donna Hymes**  
Board Chair Approval (check here):  x  
Primary Contact Name: **Diane Matthews**  
Primary Contact E-mail: **director@wcdw.org**

**Organization Information:**

**Field/s of Interest:**

Arts, Culture & Humanities       Environment/Animal Welfare       Education  
 Health       Human Services       Religion

**Mission:** West Chester Dance Works (WCDW) provides opportunities for the discovery and development of intergenerational dancers and the pursuit of excellence while giving back to reach, teach, and enrich the artistic experience of our community.

**Geographic Area Served:** WCDW serves Chester County and the greater Delaware Valley.

**Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:** WCDW serves community members via live performance at regional festivals, events hosted by businesses looking for our artistic contributions, and in-house performance events. The company also reaches students in various school districts, the elderly in nursing homes/senior centers, and patients in hospitals via traveling performances and educational outreach. Dancers serious about their craft and with the desire to serve the community are attracted to the mission of the company. Membership is open to anyone nine years of age and older, amateur or professional, interested in participating after acceptance through the completion of an audition process meeting all commitment criteria set forth by the artistic director. WCDW has 34 members this season, and it is estimated that approximately 1,200 individuals are reached annually from the variety of engagements the company partakes in.

**Annual Budget** \$         60,400                      6         # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

        50         % of budget for program expenses              5         # of Board Volunteers  
        30         % of budget for administrative expenses              35         # of Active Non-Board Volunteers  
        20         % of budget for fundraising expenses              280         # of Volunteer Hours  
*100 % total*

**Top 3-5 funding sources:** Program fees, Donations, Performing fees, Sales, Fundraisers

**Is this grant proposal for:** Capacity Building \_\_\_ or General Operating X?

**Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation:** \_\_\_\_\_\$7,500\_\_\_\_\_

**Proposal Summary:** Please consider West Chester Dance Works as a candidate to receive funding through a general operating grant as we enter our 39<sup>th</sup> year with a refreshed approach to bringing live dance to our audiences, and a commitment to grow during these trying times. The company's most recent accomplishments include pivoting during the Covid-19 crisis to optimize dance instruction and continue bringing live dance to the community. The resulting unexpected expenses have taken a toll on us, and it is daunting now as we try to tackle the replacement of our dance studio floors. Our dance floors have served us well for the last 20 years, but they are in dire need of replacement. The facility requires new subflooring and new Marley for each of its three dance studios. The safety of our dancers is paramount. Being able to refresh and renew our floors would mean dancers could focus on developing their craft in freedom without the fear of stumbling on the taped imperfections, soft spots, and inconsistencies on the current worn and damaged floor.

## II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Chester County Community Foundation,

West Chester Dance Works (WCDW) is reaching out to you with hope and continued gratitude for your ongoing contributions to Chester County. Please consider us as a candidate to receive funding through a general operating grant as we enter our 39<sup>th</sup> year with a refreshed approach to bringing live dance to our audiences, and a commitment to grow during these trying times.

WCDW is a 501(c)3 nonprofit entity entrusted to provide opportunities for the discovery and development of intergenerational dancers and the pursuit of excellence while giving back to reach, teach, and enrich the artistic experience of our community. Since the company's inception in 1983, we have provided opportunities for all to receive exposure to the many benefits of dance by training dancers and providing them and the community with access to the fullness of dance with its diversity of ideas, feelings, and styles.

West Chester Dance Works (WCDW) is a minority-run business operating with a diverse leadership team, serving people of all ages and national origins. WCDW encourages a heart for service through its mission, training, and activities. Company members realize and explore their talents as they share in the enrichment of our world — one community at a time. Society is starving for wholesome and elevating experiences, particularly during these trying and uncertain times.

WCDW works to: increase healthy lifestyles through physical activity and education, create a link between artistic expression and advocacy (particularly for participating youth), help improve self-esteem and peer-to-peer support, and hone leadership skills with a focus on team-building. Each of the following performing companies focuses on bringing artistic enrichment to those who otherwise may not have the opportunity to experience it.

**RELEVATE YOUTH:** How can we work together to overcome the obtrusive barriers to healthy and productive lifestyles that are threatening today's youth? In partnership with local schools and community organizations, our "Relevate Youth" project seeks to address barriers in youth development while affirming and building feelings of self-worth through interactive dance programs.

**SIGNATURE & TRAINING COMPANY:** Signature & Training Company is a semi-professional modern dance company offering creative growth, performance experiences, lecture demonstrations, and residencies for artistic, cultural and educational outreach. The current focus for this group is helping our youth and communities overcome the obtrusive barriers to healthy and productive lifestyles through our "Relevate Youth" project.

**DM DANCE MACHINE:** *Teamwork. Technique. Total performance.*

Targeted for intermediate to advanced dancers aged 13 through 18, DM Dance Machine makes room on its team for every hard-working dancer looking to share their gifts in dance with audiences in a variety of theater and community-based settings. Our dance team combines technical strengthening in contemporary jazz and hip hop with team building, personal goals and performance enhancement.

**JUNIOR PERFORMERS:** Junior Performers is a performance group that gives children ages 9 through 12 an opportunity to dance in a professional atmosphere while expanding their performance experience. Annually, we continue to build this group of young dancers with those that have the desire to improve their performing skills and train in a more professional environment.

**ANNOINTED DANCE MINISTRY:** Adults who have a desire to praise the Lord through movement in a fellowship of Christian believers are welcome to join our spiritual performance group, Anointed. Members experience the joy of interpreting uplifting songs and sharing their talents and faith through community outreach in the name of Jesus Christ.

**ANNOINTED TOO DANCE MINISTRY:** Praising God through movement and music interpretation describes our youth dance ministry, Anointed Too. This ministry is open to anyone between the ages of 8 and 18 with the desire to praise the Lord through dance.

**ARTIST IN RESIDENCE:** Artist(s) teach and work with participants using dance techniques and relevant styles pertaining to the given theme. Culminating presentations include the coming together of company dancers and participants, usually in a unified dance that serves to tell a story, educate an audience, process and/or elicit emotion, etc. The company has been in residence at elementary, middle and high schools, colleges/universities, medical centers, and nursing homes. A recent residency centers around African American dance history in the United States including West African, Modern and Contemporary Dance with the purpose of exposing students to the culture, aesthetics and physicality of African American-inspired dance movement.

**ANNUAL HOLIDAY SHOW:** Continuing a more than 30-year tradition, the company prepares an annual Christmas production in conjunction with the Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce sponsored holiday presentations. It continues to provide a festive December outing for all the young and young at heart. Dancers perform for their community at a local church every season, and then take the show on the road to nursing homes/senior centers, adult facilities, and schools.

WCDW's most recent accomplishments include pivoting during the Covid-19 crisis to optimize dance instruction and continue bringing live dance to the community. Since the start of the pandemic, the company has offered virtual dance classes via Zoom to those unable to attend in person. To support this virtual instruction, cameras, computers, monitors, and amplifiers were installed. The dance studios were re-designed to accommodate small groups of dancers kept six feet apart with designated spots to move in. When the weather was warmer, some instructional classes were taken outdoors. Most performances have taken place outside, and through careful planning, have accommodated all dance routines and audience members safely. Routine cleaning procedures of studios have been implemented, including the regular mopping of floors and sanitizing of ballet barres. We continue to incur the cost of these cleaning supplies. All of these unexpected expenses have taken a toll on us, and it is daunting now as we try to tackle the replacement of our dance studio floors.

This Chester County Community Foundation Grant would help us breathe a sigh of relief. Our dance floors have served us well for the last 20 years, but they are in dire need of replacement. They have been patched up and mended time and time again, but they have reached the end of their life. Estimates for new floors have been consistent, and quite honestly, overwhelming. WCDW is in need of new subflooring and new Marley for each of its three dance studios. The safety of our dancers is paramount. WCDW will find a way to replace the existing floors and make it so that all three studios will function to safely serve its dancers. We may have to plan strategically and move one studio at a time, but this is our priority. Much of our budget went towards implementing new safety protocols and

procedures to pivot during Covid-19 and covering daily operating expenses in a time when we were not able to have students in the building and many in mandated isolation stopped attending classes.

Being able to refresh and renew our floors would mean dancers could focus on developing their craft in freedom without the fear of stumbling on the taped imperfections, soft spots, and inconsistencies on the current worn and damaged floor. The atmosphere and spirit of the studio would be energized knowing that we cared enough to make the sacrifices needed to prioritize the comfort and safety of our students. New flooring would bring new life to this familiar standard and second home to many in this community.

We have attached photos of our current floors to illustrate the damages, and plan to provide follow up documentation including pictures and video once the floors have been replaced. We have also attached estimates from two different companies.

We appreciate your continued support of West Chester Dance Works, especially during these difficult and unprecedented times. If you require any further information, please call us at (610) 692-3398.

Thank you,

Diane Matthews  
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West Chester, PA 19382