

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Date 8/30/2023

Contact Information

Organization Name: Glorify Performing Arts, Inc.
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Website: glorifyperformingarts.org
Year Incorporated: 2018
FEIN: 82-4101587

ED/CEO Name: Melody (Stanert) Mendoza
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Board Chair Name: Michael McGowan
Board Chair Approval (check here): X
Primary Contact Name: Angela Commiskey
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Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission:

We exist to present compelling, professional productions to encourage and empower Christians in their walk of faith, inspiring them to step forward boldly to impact the world.

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served):

Southeastern PA, DE, Southern NJ

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:

Predominately women and families, although all are welcome to attend. ~2500 served in 2022-2023

Annual Budget \$141,907

<input type="checkbox"/> 77 % of budget for program expenses	<input type="checkbox"/> 8 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<input type="checkbox"/> 15 % of budget for administrative expenses	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 # of Board Volunteers
<input type="checkbox"/> 8 % of budget for fundraising expenses	<input type="checkbox"/> 23 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<input type="checkbox"/> 100 % total	<input type="checkbox"/> 622 # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources:

In 2022-2023, individual donations provided nearly 80% of our funding, grants 9% and sponsors 6%

Is this grant proposal for: Capacity Building or General Operating

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:

Mission, Vision & Strategy Governance & Leadership Partnerships & Collaborations
 Fundraising, Development & Marketing Technology Other: _____

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$6,500

Proposal Summary: Dance is an incredibly powerful way to connect directly with a viewer's heart and mind. At Glorify Performing Arts, we're proud to use contemporary ballet to impart hope, inspiration, and truth to audiences. Our school and community educational programs, which teach how to engage with this art and its unique value, are provided for free or low-cost, allowing all members of our community to be inspired and moved to positively impact our world. Glorify Performing Arts requests funding to support the work and growth of our professional dance company's programming in the Southeastern PA region.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

1. Nonprofit's history, goals, key achievements & distinctiveness

HISTORY: Glorify Performing Arts (GPA) was founded as a nonprofit in 2018 with a vision to be a leading faith-based arts entertainment company of the highest quality. Phase one, our professional ballet company, Glorify Dance Theatre (GDT), launched in the fall of 2018. Over the past five years we have grown from a small dance company of 2 professional dancers to a diverse company with both professional dancers and apprentices. Each performance season (September-May), the company has offered audiences from the tri-state area (PA/NJ/DE) original mainstage shows and outreach programs. Our staff team grew in the fall of 2021 when we hired a *Biblical Research and Ministry Specialist* and a *Director of Engagement (Development)* to support the growth of the organization. This allowed us to expand our services and begin outreach programs at local preschool/K-12 schools as well as launch interactive events for the community.

GOALS:

- Goal 1: Provide consistent, high-quality productions that are edifying to the audience.
 - Current Objectives:
 - Dance Theatre annually perform up to three full-length mainstage shows
 - Dance Theatre annually perform five to ten abridged outreach shows

As a faith-based organization, we believe that excellent, original art offers a unique and compelling way to share beauty and truth with the world. The medium of dance is a powerful, visual way of reaching into the hearts of both believers and seekers by telling stories that recall all that God has done for us.

- Goal 2: Create jobs in the arts field that are able to consistently provide employment for Christian artists.
 - Current Objectives:
 - Annually form a professional dance company with up to 10 dancers on an eight-month contract
 - Hire production staff on a show-by-show basis
 - Expand the staff team with office/artistic staff

Glorify Performing Arts values the artistic gifts God has given individuals and prioritizes the goal of providing employment for artists who are often asked to volunteer their time in their church or community. We have annually increased the stipends for our dance company members and are working towards operating the company on a full-time basis.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS & DISTINCTIVENESS: This past season (Sept 2022-May 2023) we offered audiences 3 original MainStage Productions and expanded our outreach programming to provide 8 preschool and grade school programs, and 3 in-studio Dance & Dialogue events, impacting over 2500 students and community members.

School outreach programs are a combination of performance and interaction with students. For many children, GPA's program is their first exposure to the art form of ballet. After performing a story through ballet, we invite the students to get up and move based on prompts. We also ask them to share thoughts about what they saw, both their visual observations and their interpretation of the story and truths conveyed. Each outreach opportunity received excellent feedback, with requests to return next year.

Teachers say their classes couldn't stop talking about what they'd seen, and that our abbreviated program with student participation is right on target for their classes.

Dance & Dialogue nights are intimate events that give attendees a chance to hear the story of each dance, ask questions after each piece is performed, and learn how art can uniquely speak to the heart and soul. Audience members have shared, *"I enjoyed being able to sit back and observe/listen. It was a great 'intro' event for the world of dance"* and *"I really enjoyed the opportunity to understand some of the meaning behind the pieces being performed."* This feedback was echoed by other attendees, demonstrating that our event structure and intentional dialogue truly equips audiences to observe the messages of each performance.

Our professional ballet company is known for our original MainStage ballets, which invite audiences to explore timeless truths through the experience of dance. We're excited to continue sharing MainStage productions in the 2023-2024 season and plan to expand our outreach programs at schools and community events due to their popularity and engagement. Ballet can be a powerful tool for teaching about beauty, emotion, and life, but it's often considered an elite art form - and some audiences don't have the tools to understand and engage with it. Our outreach programs bridge that gap, helping audiences of all ages to engage with ballet and experience Biblical concepts in a new way through our performances.

2. Funding request

DESCRIPTION OF KEY INITIATIVES: Each season Glorify Dance Theatre, the resident ballet company of Glorify Performing Arts, shares (1) original MainStage Performances, (2) School Programs, and (3) Community Faith+Art Education programs.

- 1) Whether the performance is uplifting or serious, whether it tells a story or explores a theme, the MainStage performances by Glorify Dance Theatre are designed to transport audiences out of their current reality and into a world of beauty and timeless truth. Engaging with dance is a unique experience, unlike seeing a performance with words, and our productions give audiences the chance to experience a range of emotions through beautiful movements that allow them to relate viscerally to the concept portrayed on stage.
- 2) Our school programs are original, interactive performances carefully designed for each age group. Preschool and elementary school performances are story-based ballets specifically created to share truth with the hearts and minds of our youngest audience members — and to get them moving and dancing, too! For middle and high schools, our events include an abridged performance of a MainStage show along with interactive elements designed to help students appreciate art as a tool to understand and connect with God.
- 3) GDT hosts and participates in community events designed to engage local audiences with dance. We contribute to events like art festivals and women's retreats and host unique Dance & Dialogue and interactive arts events that pair performances with dance education and theological conversations. Understanding that many audiences lack a background or context for dance, these events allow us to equip them with tools for how to engage with performances, interpreting the emotions and messages a dance may convey. Through these events, we're also able to provide a theological framework for the Biblical role and value of excellent art — a message that is missing in America today. In keeping with this focus, GDT also hosts summer intensive programming for pre-professional dancers, offering rigorous technical training as well as theological study to deepen dancers' faith and prompt them to consider what it means to use their art to glorify God.

SPECIFIC NEEDS & ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED: Glorify Performing Arts is one of very few professional Christian ballet companies in the country and still a young organization. As such, we are navigating challenges unique to our role as a professional, faith-based arts organization.

We are working to grow an appreciation for the God-honoring value of art. It's a language that can speak uniquely to the heart and create lasting impact, yet the power of art — especially dance — is undervalued and underutilized in today's churches and communities.

Christian audiences can be particularly reluctant to embrace art. Their own experiences have demonstrated that faith-based art is often low-quality, and they often don't have the context to see art as a tool to help them experience truth and beauty in a new way.

Within the broader American culture, entertainment such as sports and music have typically been valued more highly than dance.

Therefore, our audience engagement must begin with awareness and education, offering personal or digital communications that emphasize the purpose of artistic beauty and the meaning-making intrinsic to the art form of dance. We're honored to do this work in addition to our performances, and believe that helping our audiences members value, engage with, and utilize art is a powerful service.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO FUND THIS NOW: Ballet is an incredibly powerful way to connect directly with a viewer's heart and mind. At GPA, we're proud to use this artform to impart hope, inspiration and truth to our audiences while providing unique education on how to engage with art and its unique value. These personal and educational connections — post-show dialogues, emails, social media campaigns and one-on-one audience conversations — are important to our mission and can leave a lasting impact, but do not generate sufficient revenue on their own to run a professional company.

HOW IMPACT & RESULTS WILL BE DEMONSTRATED: We constantly evaluate our work through both formal and informal means. Formal methods include:

- Audience and Performance Growth
 - Tracking number of invitations to community events and school performances
 - Identifying MainStage ticket sales resulting from outreach and marketing efforts using specific discount codes
- Audience and Artist Impact
 - Gathering audience feedback post-show via an online survey to gain insight on their experience, especially their receptiveness to the show with questions focused on relatability of content and spiritual impact
 - End-of-Season feedback via an online survey from all dancers in the professional company
- Diversity and Growth of Funding
 - Classifying individual donations and growing monthly donations
 - Building relationships in the community corporate/business partners

Informal methods include:

- Listening to the stories of dance company members or audience members after performances and/or at one-on-one meetings
 - Art is a powerful way for minds and hearts to be opened in new ways, and we find people connect deeply with the stories and themes through what they share with the dancers and staff after shows/programs
 - One-on-one meetings with dancers will provide feedback on how their experience with GPA is impacting their career, lifestyle and faith