

DANCING GROUNDS - THEORY OF CHANGE

VALUES:

- EQUITY:** We pursue a just distribution of opportunities and resources.
- RACIAL JUSTICE:** We work to dismantle racial inequities and oppression at the interpersonal, organizational, and systemic levels.
- MULTICULTURALISM:** We value and engage the perspectives and experiences of diverse communities.
- INTEGRITY:** We hold ourselves accountable, claiming and learning from both successes and failures.
- LEARNING & INNOVATION:** We learn by doing, experimenting with new strategies, reconsidering our assumptions, and adapting.
- COLLABORATION:** We stand shoulder to shoulder with our students, parents, staff, partners, and funders.
- ARTISTS MATTER:** We treat artists as professionals and create space for staff to pursue their own artmaking.
- RELATIONSHIPS:** We take the time to build meaningful relationships and create a sense of family with those we work with and serve.
- PLACE:** We invest deeply in the neighborhood we live in.
- ABUNDANCE:** We share our resources and know that sharing increases what's available for everyone.
- JOY:** We value joy as a goal in and of itself and take time to celebrate!

PROBLEM STATEMENT

People in New Orleans don't have enough access to, inclusive, culturally diverse, and high-quality dance programs.

FOCUS

New Orleans school children in the Upper 9th ward.

New Orleans youth artists citywide.

Adult recreational and professional dancers citywide.

Dance Educators

STANCES

People of all ages, backgrounds, sizes, and abilities can dance.

Dance can be a uniquely powerful vehicle for individual and collective transformation.

We reject the elevation of Western European dance techniques over other forms.

Dance can improve physical and emotional health.

The voices of youth and their families should be authentically represented in educational programming.

The development and support of dance educators is essential to creating a high-quality classroom experience.

The growth of the New Orleans dance field is connected to our own success.

STRATEGIES

We create a warm, safe, and welcoming environment in our dance classes.

We actively and intentionally recruit teachers, students, and artists through a lens of equity, inclusion, and social justice.

We offer programs that are culturally relevant for people in New Orleans and cut across a variety of cultural dance techniques.

We promote dance as a tool for healthy living.

We lift up voices of youth and their families in program planning and execution.

We set high expectations, using a mix of rigor and nurture to push and support our students.

We vigorously invest in our dance teachers with resources, care, feedback, and advocacy.

We partner with local presenters and advocacy organizations to support the dance field.

IMPACT

More New Orleanians experience the benefits of dance.

Youth participants view themselves as artists, leaders, and change agents.

People of all ages are communicating and building stronger relationships across barriers of race and culture.

Students and their families are healthier, both physically and emotionally.

SOCIAL JUSTICE: The dismantling of systems, structures, and practices that perpetuate oppression. The deep and true valuing of marginalized communities.