

Impact Report



A Promise to Keep Dancing Together...



2024 - 2025

California Dance Institute



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Letter from the Board Chair



The 2024–2025 season was one of growth, creativity, and renewed energy for the California Dance Institute. CDI students, teachers, and artists came together to create moments of connection and joy that lifted both hearts and imaginations!

At CDI, we believe that every child deserves the chance to experience joy, confidence, and belonging. In a time when children face growing pressures and distractions, our mission feels more essential than ever.

This year, CDI broadened its leadership capacity and sharpened its organizational focus to support the excellence of our programs. With enhanced administrative guidance and a renewed strategic vision, we advanced initiatives in planning, board development, and community engagement.

As we prepare for our 2025–2026 anniversary season, we celebrate the growth that has brought us here. CDI is expanding to more schools and communities including an exciting collaboration with Westside Ballet, as well as new short-term residencies designed to bring the gift of dance to even more children. In a climate of reduced arts funding, these efforts are vital.

While challenges in arts funding persist, our determination to reach more children only grows stronger. Thank you for your belief in CDI and for making this work possible. With the continued generosity of our community we will ensure that CDI remains a vibrant, transformative presence across Los Angeles.

With Gratitude,
Jane Galbraith

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Galbraith". The signature is stylized, with a large, sweeping "J" and a cursive "Galbraith".





About CDI

California Dance Institute transforms the lives of Los Angeles public school students through the joy and rigor of dance. CDI's profound, life-affirming instruction goes beyond teaching dance as a skill. CDI ignites a passion for movement and self-expression, cultivates confidence and resilience, and builds essential life skills that empower children to thrive far beyond the stage.





About This Report

This Impact Report celebrates the joy, discipline, and transformation that dance brings to the lives of young people through the work of the California Dance Institute (CDI). It reflects our impact and achievements during the FY 2024-25; a year of creativity, renewal, and forward momentum.

As CDI continues to strengthen its programs and operations, we are poised for growth by advancing our mission with greater professionalism, artistic excellence, and financial stability. This report highlights both our impact in classrooms and communities, and the strong foundation supporting our next chapter.

At CDI, we believe every child deserves the chance to experience the joy of dance and the confidence it inspires. We share this report with gratitude for the individuals and supporters who make our work possible. We hope that our past year's story will inspire you to join us in helping young people thrive through the power of movement.



Introduction from Artistic Director



Our 2024-25 season marked my first full year as CDI's Artistic Director, and it was nothing short of incredible. I was deeply grateful for the enthusiastic support of our dedicated board and staff, our wonderful schoolteachers and administrators, and our many generous supporters.

CDI delivered comprehensive dance education with live music to nearly 800 students across five partner schools through in-school and after-school programs designed to foster discipline, teamwork, and self-confidence.

The culminating performance at the historic Wilshire Ebell Theatre was a dazzling celebration of artistry, collaboration, and the boundless potential of young people. This year's theme, Take Flight, served as both an artistic framework and an educational lens, inspiring an imaginative exploration of flight—from pioneers in aviation to the idea of soaring toward one's destiny.

Working in a highly collaborative environment, the CDI team created 14 original dances that reflected a rich diversity of artistic voices. Highlights included: Kashana Sharif's powerful Step-inspired tribute to the Wright Brothers; Susanna Hostetter's dynamic piece set to Prince's Let's Go Crazy; and original song honoring Amelia Earhart composed by Jake and Molly Chapman and choreographed by a trio of CDI artists.

I choreographed a dance using Leonardo da Vinci's designs for flying machines to the iconic Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue, and Colleen Macomber used Journey's classic Don't Stop Believin' as the soundtrack for a dance inspired by the students' own dreams for their futures.

We also remounted Sleep Study by acclaimed choreographer David Parsons, and our CDI Tots delighted audiences with a superhero-themed performance. From Batman to Spider-Man, they were ready to save the world!

Students engaged deeply with these themes through interdisciplinary exploration, learning about the concepts they were celebrating through music

and movement. In total, thirty classrooms from pre-K through 5th grade participated, performing seventeen shows on partner school campuses, as well as at the Bob Baker Day festival at Los Angeles State Historic Park.

The “Event of the Year” at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre featured more than 140 student dancers and was accompanied by CDI’s nine-piece band, led by Music Director Kevin Bowers. While waiting to enter the theater, audience members were entertained by CDI’s musical artist Mike Bolger and his Hollywood Highsteppers 2nd line marching band! With over 400 costumes created for this show and an audience of more than 800, the performance gave students the powerful experience of working together toward something greater than themselves.

Sincerely,
Susan Gladstone



2024-2025 Programs & Featured Schools



Throughout our 2024-2025 “Take Flight” season, CDI students engaged in a holistic learning experience that nurtured their body, mind and spirit.

CDI taught students in and around the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) with sincere and culturally responsive arts education programs. Students took in-school classes, and particularly enthusiastic students received the opportunity to participate in after school classes and groups, such as SWAT (Scholarships for the Willing, Achieving and Talented) and Celebration Teams (CEL). CDI gathers all students, teachers, parents, and art lovers with our annual Event of the Year. A true highlight to commemorate the year’s diligent work and creativity!

Our programs partnered with five featured schools:

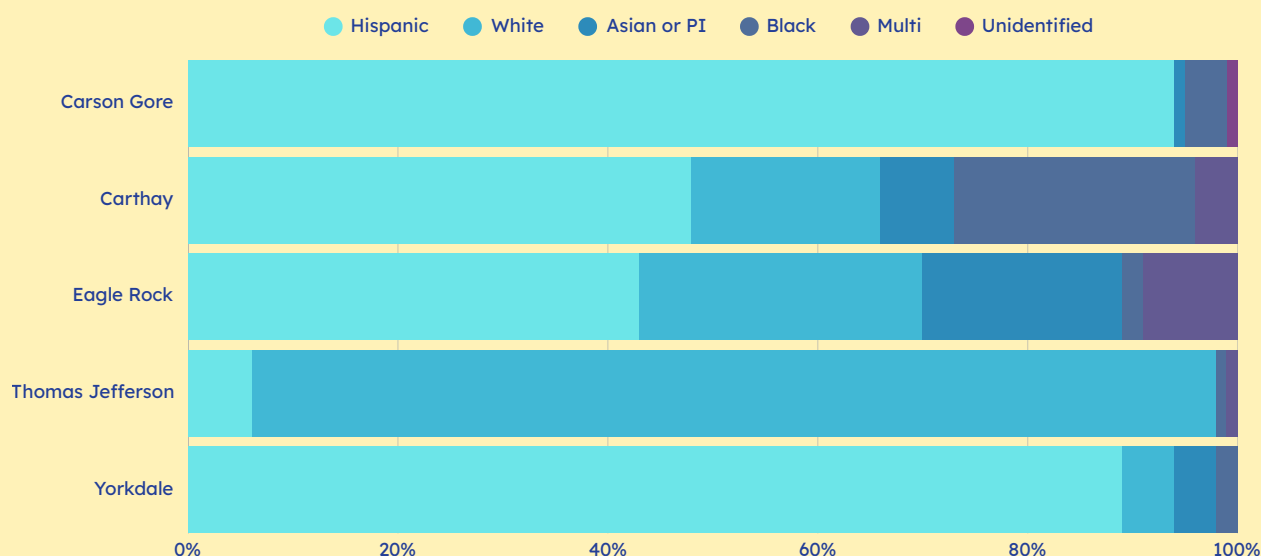
- Carson Gore Academy
- Carthay Elementary
- Eagle Rock Elementary
- Thomas Jefferson Elementary
- Yorkdale Elementary



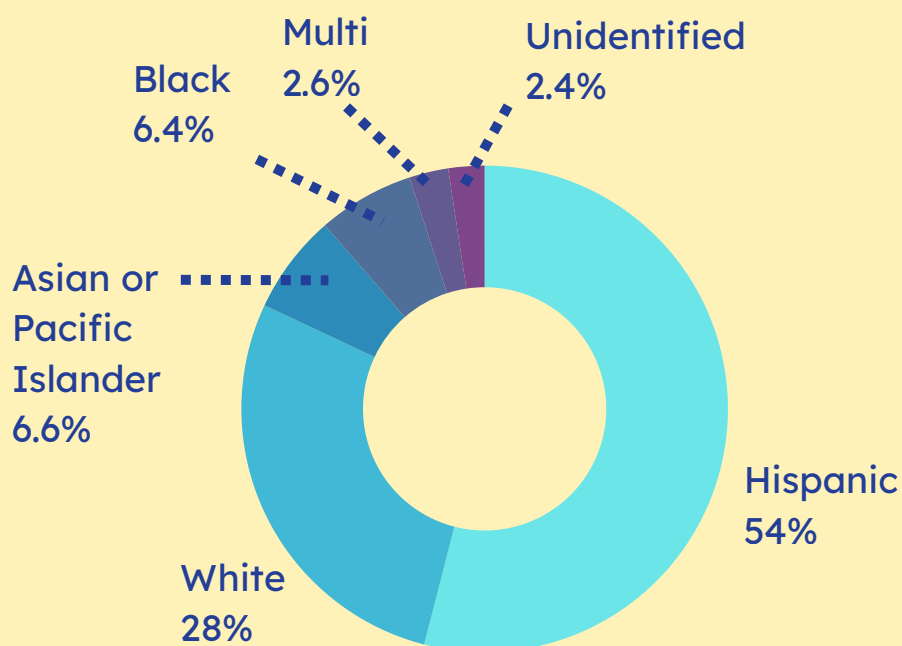


Which Students does CDI reach?

CDI promotes collaboration and togetherness while students learn the joy and rigor of dance and music as a team. Our students strive for excellence in every class and every performance. Along the way, every student learns to appreciate what each classmate contributes to the bigger picture of their performances.



'24-'25 Partner Schools (combined)



Confidence & Grit



Students developed confidence and grit in self-expression, learning that making mistakes is part of learning and that progress comes through perseverance and positivity.

What do our Students say?



89% Have “A LOT” of FUN



85% Learn from mistakes when dancing



77% Feel more Confident after CDI



I feel like I'm on top of the world after dancing!"
- Yorkdale Student





What do our Teachers say?



100%

CDI positively affects
students' Physical &
Emotional Health



I have a student who came to Jefferson directly from Russia in January. She spoke no English, and I knew almost nothing about her.

She was understandably timid and shy the first few days. I was worried about her being overwhelmed by jumping into a dance class with students who had been practicing the steps for months, but my concerns evaporated within minutes.

I watched this student come out of her shell that first CDI class. I could tell right away that she LOVED dancing and had talent. Within minutes she was in step with her peers and beaming with pride. Witnessing her talent and passion for dancing, as well as her determination and fearlessness, gave me valuable insight into her personality, and gave her peers something to connect with her over.

CDI made a huge impact in helping this student feel at home and accepted in our school and class community.”

— Jefferson Teacher





What do our Parents say?



100% My child's overall CDI experience has been "Excellent"



100% My child's overall CDI experience has been "Valuable"



96% Agree that CDI positively affects my child's physical and emotional health



Reporting the CDI experience as "Very Valuable"



100% of Parents rated the Event of Year as "Excellent"



88% of Parents said that their child experienced increased confidence



69% of Parents reported that CDI improved their child's physical activity



76% of Parents said that CDI increased their child's interest in dance or music



When he found out he was accepted into SWAT his whole demeanor and personality changed. He is now back to being the happy kid he always was. He loves school again. Being in SWAT truly helped improve his self esteem in so many ways. We are so thankful for this program. Diego is less shy and willing to try new things. Susanna and Susan are beyond amazing. They brought the confident and happy Diego back. Thank you, both!"

- SWAT Parent



Academics



Through our structured movement, students developed cultural knowledge, focus, and body awareness to apply in academics like history and math. The joy of dance encouraged students' physical fitness and pattern recognition to apply in academics like science and art.

What do our Students say?



80% SWAT/CEL helped me in school



81% SWAT/CEL improved my dance skills



94% Being in CDI feels safe



90% My teachers care about me





“

One of the precious moments that I treasured was The CDI teachers' ability to bring out the best in our students. Some students were shy and nervous about dancing. I noticed a few of my students began to glow throughout the year, and I knew CDI had a lot to do with it. These students have been exuding leadership and confidence and trying new things they wouldn't normally do. CDI brings out the confidence in all students. The CDI program has been an incredible addition to the students at Carthay. The arts present opportunities for students to be their most authentic selves. Thank you for a fantastic experience.”

- Carthay Teacher

“

I love how they use different strategies to manage the class, teach physical health, and incorporate 4th grade curriculum into their dance.”

- Jefferson Teacher



“

This year I have a few high-need students, behaviorally and academically, and they were very reticent to dance every week. Because of the welcoming nature of the class structure, finally, all of them ended up enjoying and dancing during our sessions!”

- ERE Teacher



Empathy & Teamwork



Students learned the value of teamwork, encouragement, and mutual respect by creating together. Working collectively encouraged them to think on their feet, problem solve, and think outside the box, all while discovering that shared creativity leads to shared success.

What do our Students say?



76% Feel excited and happy when dancing together



53% Dance class helps me connect to my classmates

This season reaffirmed CDI's belief in the transformative power of the arts to uplift, connect, and inspire. Through movement and music, our students not only expanded their technical and artistic abilities but also strengthened their sense of self and community.



56% of SWAT/CEL students reported growth in physical fitness



62% of SWAT/CEL students reported growth in personal growth and maturity



75% of SWAT/CEL Students reported growth in teamwork and collaboration



56% of SWAT/CEL students reported feeling a part of something





Having CDI at our school was an incredibly positive experience, especially for students like Sofiah, a fifth grader who often struggled in reading and faced challenges at home. In the classroom, she frequently drifted into sad daydreams, her expression distant and withdrawn.

However, during CDI dance sessions, we saw a remarkable transformation—her frown turned into a bright smile, and she became a confident leader among her peers. Dance provided her with an outlet where she could shine, express herself, and feel a sense of accomplishment. Seeing students like Sofia find joy, confidence, and a sense of belonging through CDI reinforced just how valuable this program was for our school community.”

- Yorkdale Teacher



What do our Parents say?



53%

of Parents reported that CDI increased their child's Emotional Wellness (i.e. being happier, less stressed)

57%

of Parents reports that CDI improved their child's social life (i.e. making friends, teamwork)

“My son went from being completely fearful of being on stage to gaining self confidence, coordination and so much more. He felt accomplished and proud of being a part of swat and it's been such a huge milestone for him.”

- SWAT Parent

“We know that CDI positively made a huge impact on our daughter throughout her three years with the program. She became more self-sufficient and mindful at school and at home. She became more confident. As a parent that has seen the benefits I hope CDI could be part of all the schools in Los Angeles.”

- SWAT Parent

“I am so grateful to you all for bringing this program to kids in our district. It's such an important part of a child's growth, imo, to be connected to movement and to find joy in expressive dance - and who knows if these kids would have had an opportunity to feel so vividly how much they can have an impact on an audience by sharing their hard work and creative spirits. Seeing the life bubbling out of the kids this week was so inspiring and filled my heart.”

- SWAT Parent



What We Learned



Throughout our 2024–2025 “Take Flight” season, CDI students engaged in a holistic learning experience that nurtured their body, mind and spirit. Our work with students became an important reference for research about the need for arts education.

Highlighted in LAUSD Research

At CDI, we do more than teach dance. This year, we are proud to have USC PhD scholar, Cassidy Martin, highlight our work in their studies.

Their research, which is backed by LAUSD, investigates how culturally responsive dance education can support the psychological needs and intrinsic motivation of students from racially minoritized and low-income backgrounds.

Using a mixed-method case study, their thesis examines how culturally responsive teaching practices align with self-determination theory to promote autonomy, competence, and relatedness in youth. By analyzing these intersections within dance education, this research aims to demonstrate that the arts are not peripheral to learning but central to students’ well-being and engagement.

Findings will inform equitable arts education practices and policies that sustain inclusion and empowerment. CDI is thrilled to be a part of this work and look forward to the final publication.



Daring to Believe

Colleen Macomber shares the inspiration behind the dance *Soaring Towards Your Destiny*:

CDI’s Take Flight theme was truly inspirational. I choreographed a piece inspired by the idea of children soaring toward their destiny. Using paper airplanes as props, the dancers learned that—just like a paper airplane carefully folded to catch the wind—we, too, can take flight when we shape our dreams with care and confidence.



The song chosen for this performance was Journey's 'Don't Stop Believin'', an anthem of hope and perseverance that perfectly captures the spirit of never giving up on one's dreams.

We adapted the lyrics to align with our message, reminding both dancers and audience alike that even the smallest beginnings can lead to incredible journeys when we believe in ourselves and dare to fly.

Inclusive Learning Styles

Teacher Patricia Pfau reflects on CDI's natural approach to learning:

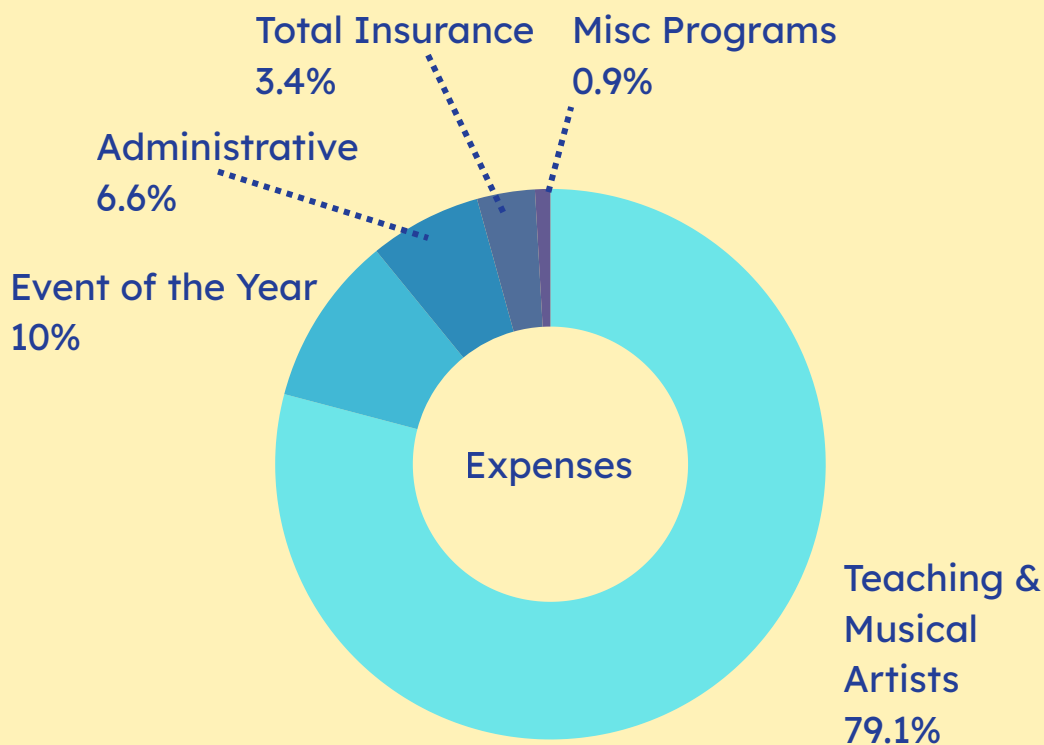
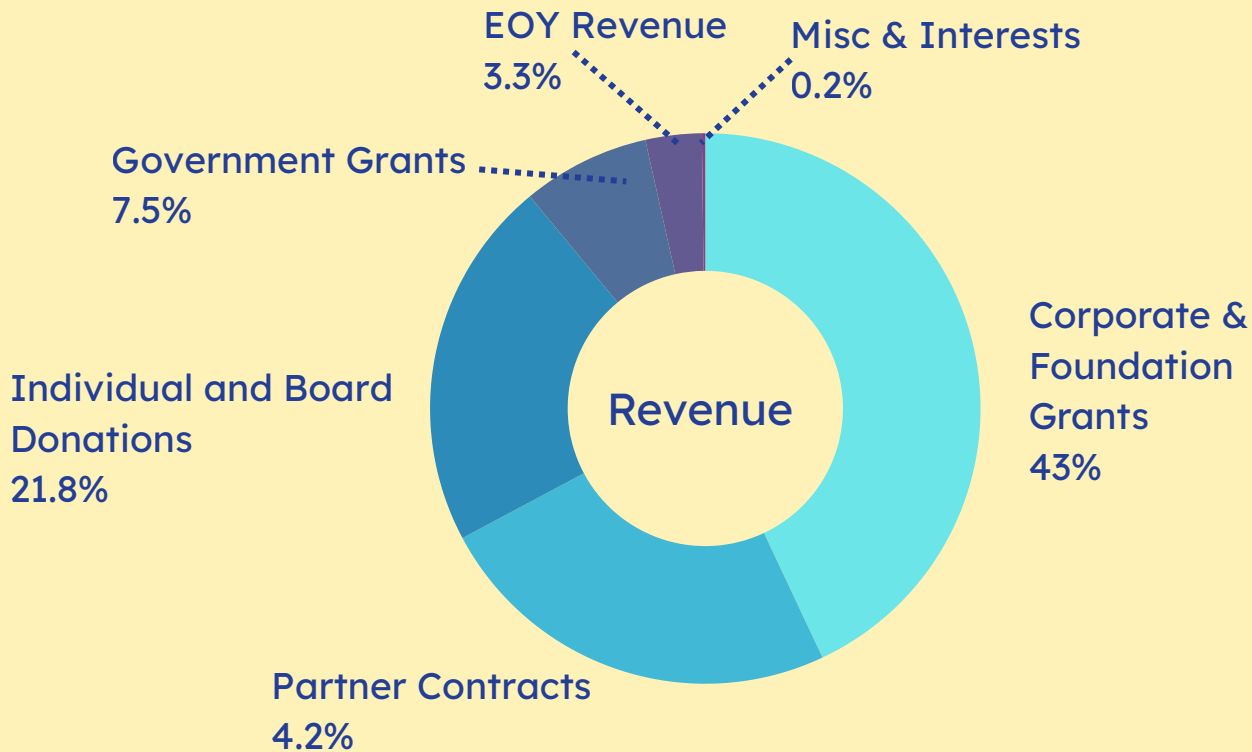
I have students with physical and intellectual disabilities, and the California Dance Institute offers a wonderful opportunity for them to integrate with peers. It also supports our modified core curriculum by incorporating dance standards, socialization, and movement-based learning in an inclusive and engaging way.

The program naturally integrates multiple areas of learning, such as listening and following directions, expressive movement, rhythm, collaboration, and communication. All of this aligns with our academic and social-emotional goals.

Our students truly cherish these opportunities and enjoy themselves completely. Parents love it as well, as it allows their children to experience success, connect with everyone, and let their unique abilities shine through!



Operations & Financials



Donor Appreciation



We extend our heartfelt appreciation to our generous supporters whose belief in our mission sustains our work, fuels our impact, and makes everything we do possible.

Ricardo Acuna
Herb Alpert Foundation
Shannon Bart
Leah Bass-Baylis
Ashley Bennett
Emily Bidegain
Nancy and Thomas Bolger
Jean Bovet
Gary Burdorf
Michaela Caitlin
Jessica Cantiello
Catalina Jazz Club
Harriet Clark
Comis Foundation
Nathan Cummings Foundation
Arlyn Diamond
Rich Dickman
Eagle Rock Neighborhood Council
Marcia A Elliott Charitable Fund
Sarah Fisher
Dena Flekman
Darrell Forgey
Fox Family Foundation
Jane Galbraith
Tracy Gedney
Rosalinde & Arthur Gilbert Foundation
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Martha Groves
Matt Gunn
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Peter Hirschfeld
Gina Heyman
Regina Heyman
Jeff Jones

Robert Krinsky
Clara and Martin Kubeja
Office of Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
Ron Kurstin
Jeff Lemen
Angelia Leung and Harlan Palmer
Elaine Lockhart-Mummery
Los Angeles Breakfast Club
Los Angeles County Arts Commission
Katherine Lyon and Jay Reeve
Fred Manaster
Maricela Martinez
Michael Martinez
Mid-City West Neighborhood Council
John Moore
Lee Munn-Arvinger
Avi and Sandra Nash
Valerie Norris
Ralph M Parsons Foundation
Sarah Quist
Peggie Roast
Jill and Andrew Rosenfeld
Seth Rosenthal and Maia Rosal
Katherine Zimbert Ross
Phyllis Saeger
Nancy Scher
Alex and Wendy Segal
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Jonathan Selig & Sandy Peich-Selig
Bertrand and Joan Shapiro
Karen Shepard
Julie Singer
Audre Slater Foundation
Mary Wooster

Joseph Kleinman & Omega Hsu
Suzanne Smith
Alex Soschin
Dwight Stuart Youth Fund
Carol and Joseph Sullivan
Karen Sulzberger
Debbie Tan
Judith Taylor

United Neighborhoods Neighborhood Council
Miriam Muscarolas and Grant Abramson
Van Otterloo Family Foundation
Julie Tobiason
Barbara Vogel
Pooja Vukosavich
Rebecca Wink

Thank you for all you do!



Get Involved

Your support provides sustainable arts education programs for the wonderful students of LAUSD. Much like our students dancing together, you have a unique contribution to CDI's greater performance!

MAKE A DONATION at our official site to ensure programs and operations are properly funded: www.californiadanceinstitute.org/donationpage

BECOME A VOLUNTEER OR SPONSOR at our official site to further CDI's teamwork and resources: www.californiadanceinstitute.org/get-involved

To learn more and support our programs, please visit www.californiadanceinstitute.org or contact us at info@californiadanceinstitute.org.

Need ideas? Our volunteers usually help by...

Pro Bono Services:

- Photography
- Graphic design
- Advertising
- Non-profit development
- Volunteer Organizing
- Marketing and PR
- Videography

Event of the Year Volunteer Opportunities:

- Chaperone
- Help out back-stage
- Help out in the lobby (ushers, etc)
- Help out with costumes (no sewing skills required)
- Be a docent (answer questions, provide information)
- Greet other special guests
- Donate healthy snacks and bottled water
- Bring your friends and family to performances

General Volunteer Opportunities:

- Help out with a mailing
- Be a docent at a community or school event
- Come observe a class
- Tell your community about CDI
- Data Entry
- Translations (Korean, Armenian, and Spanish)
- Create Signs