



Ballet Austin's Butler Community School

Astonishing 3-Year, 472% Growth with 3,500 Students Currently Taking Classes

WHO: Ballet Austin
WHAT: "Butler Community School" Experiences 472% Growth in 3 Years
WHERE: Ballet Austin's Butler Dance Education Center
501 W. 3rd Street, Austin, Texas 78701

AUSTIN, TX— Ballet Austin today announces that their Butler Community School has undergone a 472% growth since opening three years ago—half of that time considered the worst economic climate in a generation. With over 3,500 students of all ages coming to the organization's downtown Butler Dance Education Center facility in the last 12 months alone, Ballet Austin's open class 'community school' and ballet Academy now comprise one of the largest dance training centers in the United States associated with a professional ballet company. The Ballet Austin Academy has seen growth of approximately 25% over the same period.

Developed by Ballet Austin to cross boundaries and break down barriers to provide quality instruction in dance and fitness to people of all ages, skill levels, and economic and cultural backgrounds—the Butler Community School occupies seven studios under one roof, boasts a broad range of dance classes, and a fitness program that includes the 760 sq-foot fully appointed Pilates Center (Balanced Body® equipped), two styles of yoga, boot camps, and point-specific classes for stretching and toning. The city's residents, workers, families, and visitors have responded.

Classes are offered in 18 different dance and fitness styles including Yoga, Tap, Feldenkrais®, Hula, Hip-Hop, Zumba®, Street Jazz, Theatre Dance and more. The Butler Community School also offers a Musical Theatre performance workshop two sessions a year, directed by Broadway veterans, culminating in on-stage performances. Between 600 and 650 people ages 8 to 95 take classes in the Community School each week (Monday through Saturday).

The Pilates Studio operates 7 days a week bringing in an additional 100 plus weekly visits to the building through client appointments. The Butler Community School is in operation 7 days a week, 48 weeks out of the year.

Lowering the Barriers, Not the Barre

The Butler Community School (BCS) also offers classes specifically targeted to older adults and mobility impaired adults. Utilizing principles set forth by the National

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Institute on Aging, one newly developed class, Ballet Fit Basic, is specifically designed to engage seniors at a wide range of fitness levels. The class improves flexibility, balance, and strength, using fun music from decades past. Additionally, the Butler Community School has partnered with the Area Agency on Aging to promote and provide programming for Falls Prevention Week.

The BCS has also partnered with the University of Texas School of Public Health CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) program to bring dance and movement to economically disadvantaged middle school students. The "BCS Kid's Zone" (recreational dance and fitness for children between the ages of 8-12) has partnered with local organizations such as Active Life Movement and Savvy Kids to promote healthy lifestyle in children and families and to address the growing issue of childhood obesity through cardio-based movement classes.

Ballet Austin Academy

Founded in 1956, the popular and acclaimed Ballet Austin Academy is the official ballet school of Ballet Austin and is committed to providing the highest quality dance instruction to its students. Currently, the Academy has more than 900 students, making it one of the largest ballet schools in the nation. While the benefits of this training are all inclusive, the Academy's focus is to provide the training necessary for a professional career in dance. The Academy has grown 25% since the Butler Dance Education Center opened.

Butler Dance Education Center

In 2007, as the 50th anniversary gift to the organization and the community, Ballet Austin opened the doors to the Butler Dance Education Center in the epicenter of downtown's Arts & Entertainment District. The 34,000 sq-foot facility serves as the home for Ballet Austin's professional Company, administrative staff, Ballet Austin II, Ballet Austin Academy, and The Butler Community School. The Butler Dance Education Center also houses 7 studios including the 300-seat fully appointed AustinVentures StudioTheater, a community meeting space that seats 60, and a costume shop. The facility has been recognized with awards including the Downtown Austin Alliance IMPACT Award, the American Society of Interior Design's Design Excellence Award—Best of Show, and the 2008 Best Real Estate Awards—Architectural Design Winner: from the Austin Business Journal.

About Ballet Austin

As distinctive and dynamic as the city it calls home, Ballet Austin welcomes people near and far to participate in its "classically innovative" vision for the democratization of dance. From their bustling, urban headquarters at the Butler Dance Education Center

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and Community School in downtown Austin, Ballet Austin and artistic director Stephen Mills actively engage the community, dancers, and audiences alike. With a rich history spanning 54 years, a commitment to education as well as lifelong fitness, and acclaimed productions in Austin and across the nation, the organization is equally committed to the international craft of dance as it is to the community it serves. *The New York Times* proclaims Ballet Austin "a company with big ambitions" originating work that is "absorbing."

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