

# transcenDANCE

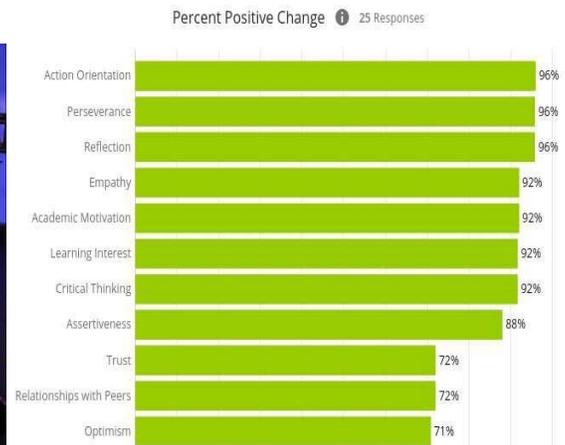
Youth Arts Project

Our mission is to guide young people in underserved San Diego County communities to transcend barriers, expand their ambition, and create positive change for themselves, their families, and communities, through dance and performance.

One year ago, just before the pandemic hit, our CREATE Performing Group joined Grammy award-winner **Jason Mraz in a new musical adventure, SHINE**. Twenty-five students and alumni performed two sold-out shows at the Spreckels Theatre alongside Jason and other youth arts groups. It is hard to believe only twelve months have passed since this incredible experience.



SHINE February 2020 Image by Eric Morgensen



*Pre-Post Comparison from PEAR survey illustrates most students who participated in SHINE show increases in social emotional resiliencies*

The CREATE Performing Group is free. It is designed to provide transformative experiences for youth from underserved communities. Each year a socially relevant theme guides the curriculum and production process. Historically we have produced a culminating annual staged dance and spoken word concert at a professional venue with supporting outreach activities at local schools and community centers. **Youth voice is central to the process and production content.**

When we selected the theme of HOME for our 2020 production, we did not know that a pandemic was on the horizon. That lockdowns and health precautions would have us working and going to school from home. When we selected the theme of HOME, we did not know that we would have the opportunity to build a new home for our organization. That an affordable housing developer would welcome us with open arms and invite us to build out a new facility.

Within days of stay-at-home orders, we ensured our program participants, artists, and arts administrators had access to computers and Wi-Fi. Professional teaching artists, a playwright, spoken word artist, wellness practitioners, and an LFMT counselor worked alongside young people primarily through virtual formats throughout the pandemic. For 5 months, **students met over zoom with professional artists to co-create dance and storytelling scripts about their pandemic experience.** In August and September, the youth were filmed outdoors following safety guidelines. In October we completed interviews to incorporate in the film. A local award-winning film company shot and edited the material into a 45-minute original film that was completed in December 2020. The film, *Home within a Home*, welcomes audiences to witness how young people, determined to remain hopeful during the pandemic, create spaces for respite and creativity within themselves, their homes and the transcenDANCE community.



[Purchase a 3-day pass](#) to *Home within a Home*, a transcenDANCE original film.

As the pandemic continued, educators and school administrators recognized their students needed additional support and tools. They **turned to transcDANCE for support developing and implementing new programs rooted in social emotional wellbeing**. Through partnerships with San Diego Unified School District, the San Diego County Office of Education's Migrant Ed Program, Lemon Grove School District, and Nativity Prep Academy (tuition free private school), thousands of students will participate in FREE virtual field trips, residencies, and social emotional learning videos as part of their distance learning curriculum. Most of the youth who will participate in these experiences live in communities with much higher-than-average poverty rates. Many are first generation Americans.

After operating out of borrowed and shared spaces since 2005, **we have built a new home for our transcDANCE community**. We are moving our home studios to Lemon Grove. A city where no cultural arts center exists; a city where the only youth center was shut down a decade ago. In exchange for finishing the ground floor of an affordable housing complex, we are receiving 10 years free and reduced rent with options to extend at below market rate. This opportunity was presented to us in January 2020. Just a few weeks later we developed fundraising plans, began negotiations with the developer and builder, and set out to raise \$400,000. Thanks to tremendous support from our community, we built the new space and raised \$330,000 during the pandemic. Our goal is to raise an additional \$70,000 by the end of April and begin offering programs in the new space in June.



[Cat shares her experience after dancing in the space for the first time.](#)

**Will you invest in transcDANCE and help us take it HOME!?**

**All donations, up to \$25,000, made through the end of March will be matched by an anonymous donor.**

Visit <https://tdarts.org/> for more information and to [donate](#).

