

transcenDANCE


Youth Arts Project

2024 ANNUAL
REPORT



2024

Holistic Youth Support is at the Heart of our Program Model



Our mission at transcENDANCE is to provide equitable access to dance and performance, and holistic wraparound services, for young people from marginalized communities. We support youth as they transcend barriers, recognize their own potential and power, and create positive change for themselves, their families, and their communities.

A NOTE FROM OUR ARTISTIC/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we look back on 2024, it was another record year for us! We have been on a steady trajectory of incredible growth for the last three years. We continued in 2024 to see increases in our numbers of students served, both onsite and offsite. We deepened our holistic services with an additional therapist staff role and a NEW dedicated space – the Student Services Hub – just one block down from our El Cajon Boulevard dance studio. This new hub allows us to have a dedicated homework room for students, a room for small group therapy sessions, additional therapy offices, and a proper meal/snack communal room that provides a welcoming space as students arrive, check in, and decompress after school and before programs begin.

The Hub, as we affectionately call it, is the third location transcDANCE now operates for programs. The three together make a wonderful combination of vibrant and modern spaces for students to experience dance, creative expression, and holistic wraparound services – all of which are core to our program model.

2024 was our best financial year in our 19-year history. We hit record highs in all of our income streams – grants, individual givings, and earned income. This allowed us to expand and deepen programs, as well as continue to invest in the infrastructure of the organization so we can do our best work with the students, families, and school partners we serve. We invested in more than 30 hours of professional development training for our program staff, and in new software to create internal efficiencies. Our people doing the work make all the difference to our impact. Our staff retention rate of 94% is evidence of our values-based, person-centered culture's effectiveness. Our board leadership is top notch, and their skill sets, guidance, and support gave us the opportunity to reach our goals and complete the first year of a new two-year strategic plan.

2024 was a banner year for special performances as well. At our annual CREATE performance, 63 student cast members presented poetry, dance, and film to more than 1,100 audience members over three days. In March, we showcased student talent alongside Grammy Award winning artists, the Alphabet Rockers, in a concert presented by La Jolla Music Society at The Conrad in La Jolla. In July, we shared three performances of the beautiful work ILLUMINATE at the historic St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral. What a glorious space that was for performance! And Fall 2024 was a time of active outreach performances in many pockets of San Diego, held at venues ranging from social justice conferences to private backyards to schools. It was a joy to see so many friends and community members in attendance at these performances!

Thank you for helping us have a truly phenomenal year! Community support is essential to our thriving. We are incredibly grateful for each and every one of you!

Sincerely,



Co-Founder & Artistic/Executive Director



WORDS FROM OUR STUDENTS

"This season I was able to make connections, have the courage to perform poetry for the first time, and I was more focused this year that made me learn more dances." - Aedyn, Youth Cohort

"This season I bloomed by being more comfortable in my own body, embodying a leadership role and improving as a performer."

- Skyelar, Teen Cohort

"I bloomed as an artist by being more creative and open to my own ideas and opinions. transcenDANCE helped me to accept myself, make new friends, and get better at dancing."

- Zia, Juniors Cohort

"This season I expressed myself through many creative ways like dance, poetry and visual arts. I really like this community, if I am having a bad day or something went wrong, at transcenDANCE I can make it better."

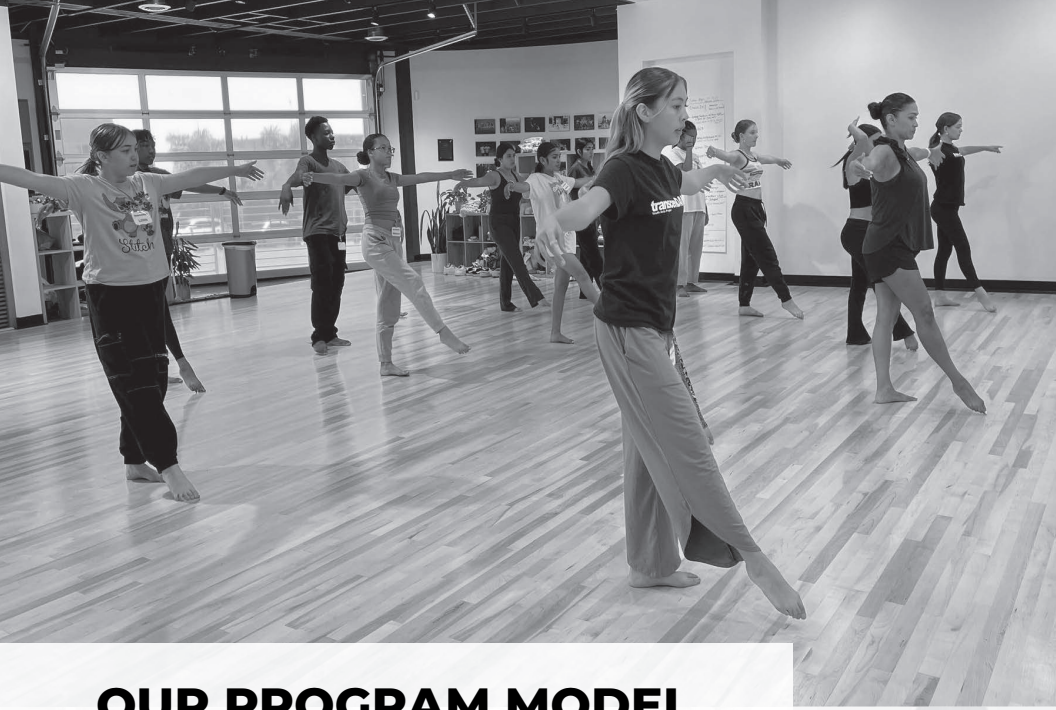
- Jaymie, Youth Cohort



CREATIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (CYD)

transcendDANCE is a nationally-recognized **Creative Youth Development** organization that works with youth from three to 24 years. Our programs change the trajectory of students' lives by **building resilience and confidence, promoting creativity and expression, and instilling life-changing skills** such as leadership, collaboration, and community engagement.

Studies show that young people who participate in CYD activities are **more likely to have a sense of purpose, be physically healthy, be socially conscious, to volunteer, and to have better attendance and higher grades in school.** They are less likely to experience depression or to engage in acts of violence toward others. Learn more at **creativemovement.org**.



OUR PROGRAM MODEL

transcendANCE programs and services are delivered through a three-tiered program model: **CONNECT, CREATE, CONTRIBUTE**



Studio and Master Classes
Residencies
Outreach Performances

Alumni Engagement
Alumni Employment
Creative Youth Development Advocacy

CREATE Performance Group
CREATE Camps
Creative Youth Development Curriculum

CONNECT

Our CONNECT programs introduce youth and the larger community to transcenDANCE through:

- School-year dance classes for ages 4-9 years, held onsite at our studios.
- In-school and afterschool residencies in partnership with Lemon Grove and San Diego Unified school districts.
- Community partnerships and student field trips.
- Site-specific and outreach performances.

CREATE

The CREATE Program is the heart of our mission and runs through the school year. CREATE encompasses:

- The CREATE Performance Groups, through which youth participate in age-based cohorts - Youth, Juniors, and Teens.
- Dance and performing arts instruction guided by professional teaching artists and combined with a social change curriculum.
- Individual and group therapy provided by licensed therapy team members.
- Mentorship and life and leadership skill building opportunities.
- Robust onsite summer camp experiences.

CONTRIBUTE

CONTRIBUTE, our alumni engagement program, supports young artists by offering:

- Paid roles including choreographers, performers, teaching artists, and staff assistants.
- Volunteer roles including mentors and board members.
- Access to ongoing college coaching and scholarship fund support.

2024 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



CONNECT PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Held onsite dance classes weekly throughout the school year for **65 students**.
- **Partnered with 12 school residency sites** in Lemon Grove and San Diego, serving 1,531 students across school year and summer residency programming.
- Reached **160 intergenerational participants** at two City of San Diego parks through the City's Parks After Dark. We offered safe, fun summer dance spaces led by our Teaching Artists at Linda Vista and Skyline Hills Park.
- Performed with **Grammy-award winning** music artists, **Alphabet Rockers**, at The Conrad in La Jolla.
- **Reached 3,891 audience members** through outreach performances held at community partner sites, festivals, events, and conferences.



CREATE HIGHLIGHTS

- **3 CREATE Performance Groups** totaling **63 students**, in 3 age-based cohorts, held **3 performances** at the Hoover High School Performing Arts Center for **1,164 audience members**.
- **350+ program hours** centered on dance and performing arts that also included exploration of a rich curriculum on dignity, human rights, and civic engagement.
- **Holistic wraparound support** including mental health and wellness services, leadership development opportunities, and college readiness support for high school seniors.
- **50 students attended an intensive Summer CREATE session**, with **15 sessions** of dance, visual art, poetry, storytelling sessions, and a final showcase performance for families and friends.
- **26 students attended a Level Up SD summer camp experience**, with 10 full days of dance and visual arts experiences, work with an expressive arts therapist, and two showcase events for families and friends.

CONTRIBUTE HIGHLIGHTS

- **10 paid positions for teens and alumni** over the summer as choreographers, performers, teaching artists, and staff assistants.
- **10 college scholarships totaling over \$25,000** were awarded to CREATE program alumni.



2024 CREATE PRODUCTION: *Let Them: BLOOM*

transcendANCE's flagship program, CREATE, continues to serve more students each year through our unique, thematic curriculum that supports emotional resilience and social change. CREATE now has three performance groups featuring youth, junior, and teen cohorts.

Every year our CREATE program centers a socially relevant theme that allows the students to develop deeper insights about themselves and the world around them. The theme leads us to approach our dance and art making with a holistic lens, as students deepen their critical thinking skills. The culminating performance is a platform to amplify youth voices and contribute to positive social change in our communities.

In 2024, our theme was centered around dignity, human rights, and civic engagement. We collaborated with artist/educator Miesha Rice, who is an integral part of our CREATE artistic team

as a Performance Poetry Teaching Artist, to lead this curriculum. She is also a core member of the Alliance San Diego team.

Let them: BLOOM was performed at the Hoover High School Performing Arts Center for three live audiences of 1,164 total individuals.



“Coming in stronger than ever, knowing it was going to be my last year to bloom, I believe that I left a memorable performance. I feel that I connected very well with the younger cohort, and to them, I believe that I have been a mentor. I have learned so much within this program—how to present myself as the person that I am and inspire the younger cohort.”

In transcenDANCE, I feel I left great memories and a remembrance of my time here. Hearing the younger cohorts mention that they will continue to think of me and look up to me when continuing dance at transcenDANCE—the youth have a special place in my heart.” - Kim, 2024 Teen Cohort

MEASURING IMPACT

2024 Program Data



Student Assessment

The benefits of our work are quantifiable. transcenDANCE utilizes the Holistic Student Assessment (HSA) created by Program in Education, After School, and Resiliency (PEAR). PEAR is a joint initiative of Harvard Medical School and McLean Hospital that provides adolescents with an opportunity to self-report about specific behaviors, beliefs, and relationships. In 2024, we used the PEAR assessment with our CREATE Performance Group students.

Per our 2024 PEAR assessment data, the following percentages of our students reported positive gains in resiliencies, learning and school engagement, and relationships:

Resiliencies:

- **94.8%** of our students reported an increase in action orientation
- **91.4%** increase in assertiveness
- **91.4%** increase in empathy
- **82.8%** increase in optimism

Learning & School Engagement:

- **96.6%** increase in learning interest

- **93.1%** increase in critical thinking
- **81%** increase in academic motivation

Relationships:

- **81%** increase in peer relationships

This data is extremely valuable as it quantitatively validates the work that transcDANCE is doing to serve youth so they ultimately thrive in their lives.

In addition to the PEAR, CREATE students completed an in-house Sense of Belonging survey through which:

- **98%** of CREATE students said dancing at transcDANCE helped build their confidence overall.
- **94%** of CREATE students said participating at transcDANCE gave them a sense of belonging.
- **96%** of CREATE students said dancing at transcDANCE improved their collaboration skills.
- **92%** of CREATE students said participating at transcDANCE improved their emotional/mental health.
- **100%** of CREATE students said participating at transcDANCE helped them feel connected to a support system.

Qualitative student responses reinforced the quantitative data:

“This season, I bloomed by having more confidence in my dancing, becoming more understanding of other people’s feelings, and making more connections with people.”

- Zoeheila, Teen Cohort

“I was able to express my feelings through movement. I collaborated with my friends and got to know them better. I feel proud to have been in a production presented at a professional theater.”

- Jayden, Youth Cohort



2024 ORGANIZATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Growth Continues!

We approach our organization's growth holistically, emphasizing the whole and always re-connecting with our vision and values as we develop. Our increased program offerings have allowed for, and necessitated, a corresponding growth in our organizational infrastructure.

Finance & Fundraising

- Growth to a **\$1.5M organization** for the first time in our history.
- Organizational record highs for all our income streams – grants, individual givings, and earned income.

Operations

- Addition of third transcenDANCE site with the Student Services Hub.
- Implementation of new Human Resources software that includes management of employee information, training compliance, timekeeping, and payroll.
- Increased scope for Program Administrator role – transitioned to Program & Business Administrator, allowing for increased operational support for staff timekeeping, payroll, and other crucial areas.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS AND GROWTH

Revenue: \$1,602,148

Individual Contributions.....	\$271,999
Foundations & Corporate Gifts.....	\$531,011
Government Grants.....	\$522,336
Earned Income.....	\$276,802

Expenses: \$1,471,789

Programs.....	\$1,113,548
Development.....	\$103,413
Operations.....	\$197,932





PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS



Kupanda is a San Diego nonprofit organization that provides African refugee children with mentoring and educational support. In 2024, transcenDANCE partnered with Kupanda to provide summer residency programming for 40 students, held at University of San Diego (USD). Through this residency work Kupanda youth experienced weekly break dance sessions with legendary breaking artists, Dyno and Piggy from **Cypher St8**. This was a great physical and creative outlet as well as an opportunity to strengthen community through this powerful street dance form.



In March 2024, our CREATE students showcased their talents alongside the Grammy Award winning artists, the **Alphabet Rockers**, presented by **La Jolla Music Society** at The Conrad in La Jolla. This was a day of pure consciousness-raising through music and dance, with an intergenerational audience and an intergenerational group of performers. An amazing opportunity for 40 CREATE students that they will always remember!

2024 FUNDER SPOTLIGHTS

In 2024, transcenDANCE received a two-year, **\$300,000 grant** from the **Prebys Foundation**. Through this grant program, the Prebys



**PREBYS
FOUNDATION**

Foundation aims to identify or expand promising efforts to address mental and behavioral health challenges to improve social, emotional wellbeing; and to find or expand effective treatments to prevent or reduce anxiety, depression, or substance abuse. transcenDANCE was a perfect fit for Prebys as a Creative Youth Development (CYD) organization that offers not only dance-based artistic opportunities for youth, but also holistic wraparound support including mental health and wellness services provided by our licensed mental health therapists at no cost to students.

Prebys Foundation is the largest independent private foundation in San Diego County and works to create an inclusive, equitable, and dynamic future for all San Diegans.



In 2023, transcenDANCE received a two-year, **\$450,000 grant** through the **California Department of Social Services Stop the Hate (STH)** program. The project period for this grant encompassed part of 2023 and all of 2024, and will continue into the first half of 2025.

Stop the Hate is committed to preventing and combating hate and providing support services to individuals and communities affected by hate incidents and crimes. At transcenDANCE, STH funding supports our work to provide mental health and wellness services for youth, as well as community healing opportunities through our annual CREATE performances.

The values of transcenDANCE and of the Stop the Hate program are well aligned, and we are excited to be a part of this amazing statewide initiative. Together, we are building safe, healthy, and inclusive communities, free from hate where everyone can achieve economic security and well being.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:

2024 Scholarship Recipients



"My goal is to put myself out there, try new things at my school, have fun and be focused. I want to take advantage of the resources offered to me and end on a good note before transferring to either UCLA, UCSD, or UCSC. Overall, having this college experience was possible because I had support from my school, transcenDANCE, and this scholarship opportunity." —**Linzy, Southwestern College**



"This assistance not only improved my academic achievements, but also defined my professional ambitions, putting me on the route to a successful future. I want to say thank you. By the end of the year, I had a strong feeling of belonging and enthusiasm for the future."

—**Ruth, Howard University**



"This scholarship has given me so much peace of mind. This is such an incredible blessing and it's certainly helping me stay on the track for academic success as I prepare to transfer to UC San Diego next fall. Thank you so much, you beautiful humans!"

—**Haragni, Mesa College**



"I am a first-generation college student... My first year was impactful and helped me get accustomed to college. It made me feel ready for this year... Living at the university has also made me more independent as a person. Overall, being at college has really helped me grow as a person and broaden my horizons." —**Sofia, San Diego State University**



"My first year was one of the best school years ever. Starting my college journey was very exciting and living in a dorm had a big impact on me... I love my college and my college experience! I can't wait for my second year. Once again, I'm so grateful for this scholarship that allowed me to live on campus. Thank you so much and I appreciate every single one of you!"

—**Janine, California State University, San Marcos**



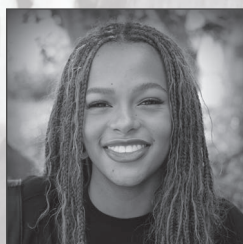
"I appreciate the support transcenDANCE has provided for me. It allows me to keep pushing on my goals because I see there is support and love around me. I worked hard each semester because as a first-generation student I want to be able to make an impact on my family... Thank you for this opportunity and thank you to everyone behind this."
—**Alma, Mesa College**



"With the help I received, I was able to take a step back from thinking about money and get involved with my new community. I flourished academically, socially, and focused on my future career pursuits. All these opportunities make me feel incredibly hopeful for my future career in the film industry and none of this would have been possible without the help of transcenDANCE."
—**Kira, University of California, Santa Barbara**



"I am very grateful for having this support and want to let you know that my life, and I'm sure other recipients as well, has positively been impacted due to this scholarship award. I am pursuing a degree in Psychology, a field that I am passionate about. I love my school. I work very hard to keep top grades. I feel myself expanding mentally through this college experience. Once again, thank you very much!"
—**Adali, California State University, San Marcos**



"The transcenDANCE scholarship will allow me to continue my studies at the Alvin Ailey School for the next three years! This means so much to me, and I honestly couldn't have done it without your support. Thank you again for believing in me and encouraging me to chase my dreams. I can't wait to keep you updated."
—**Ananda, Alvin Ailey School**



"I am incredibly grateful for this wonderful opportunity through this dance program where I grew up and the space where I learned to be completely myself. The time that I have been a part of transcenDANCE has been most incredible. It has been my biggest motivation to make my future bright... I would also like to add that I was given so much inspiration and motivation to go to school and do my best with my education."
—**Kimberly, San Diego City College**



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Dance Teaching Artist

Cybele Peña

Dance Teaching Artist

Ilana Queiroz

Capoeira Teaching Artist

Miesha Rice

Performance Poetry Teaching Artist

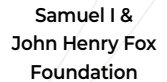
Keomi Tarver

Dance Teaching Artist

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