

BERKSHIRE PULSE RECEIVES \$10,000 GRANT FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

Housatonic, MA — Berkshire Pulse, South County's dynamic dance and performing arts education center located in downtown Housatonic, has been approved for a **\$10,000 Challenge America award from the National Endowment for the Arts**. This award will support **Moving Life Stories**, a project offering movement and community-building activities to people of different ages, cultures and communities, including recent immigrant families to the Berkshires. Pulse's project is among 168 projects across America totaling \$1,680,000 that were selected to receive fiscal year 2022 funding in the Challenge America grant category.

"The National Endowment for the Arts is proud to support arts projects like Moving Life Stories," said NEA Acting Chair Ann Eilers. "Berkshire Pulse in Housatonic is among the organizations nationwide that are using the arts as a source of strength, a path to well-being, and providing access and opportunity for people to connect and find joy through the arts."

"We are thrilled to have been selected to receive this grant," says Pulse Artistic Director Bettina Montano. "It is validation of our belief that dance can provide people of many different cultures – and in particular, recent immigrants – with ways to engage in the arts, find community connections, adjust to cultural differences, and celebrate and share their heritage."

Moving Life Stories is a free dance workshop series led by teaching artist and choreographer Tom Truss. Classes are held weekly at St. Stephen's Church in Pittsfield and at Pulse's studios in Housatonic. Through partner organizations including the Berkshire Immigrant Center, LitNet and Volunteers in Medicine, Moving Life Stories serves recent immigrants and refugees, but is also open to local residents of all ages and backgrounds. Spanish translation is provided at each session. The workshops introduce participants to modern dance techniques, improvisation, storytelling and dance-making. Through the process, participants find connections to one another, and learn about the diverse cultures that make up our community. For more information or to participate, visit www.berkshirepulse.org.

Moving Life Stories has also received support from the Lee Bank Foundation and Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation's Bridging Divides, Healing Communities Grant Program. The Challenge America program requires grantees to raise matching funds of \$10,000 from community sources. Individuals and companies interested in supporting this project can call (413) 274-6624 for more information or to make a donation.

About Berkshire Pulse: A dynamic nonprofit dance and performing arts education center located in a renovated mill building in downtown Housatonic, Berkshire Pulse's year-round programming provides children, teens and adults with the opportunity to engage in the joy of movement and music while learning the rewards of commitment, community involvement, and the vast benefits of artistic expression.