

RENEWAL

A POAH MIDWEST NEWSLETTER



Red Clay Dance Center Now Open at Woodlawn Station



Woodlawn celebrated one of its most highly anticipated grand openings in early August with the arrival of a new cultural amenity — Red Clay Dance Company's 3,700-square-foot dance center at Woodlawn Station. The new venue brings the company into the heart of the Woodlawn community with its focus on transforming cultural and socio-economic inequities through the creation, teaching and performance of dances rooted in the African diaspora.

In addition to dance programs, the Center's Red Clay Dance Academy and Youth Ensemble brings world-class training to people of all ages, aiming to serve as a pipeline toward professional careers in the arts. The Center also offers dance education to schools and community groups throughout the city, while its innovative Making the Activist program

creates spaces that empower local youth to share stories while learning to work toward social change.

"Red Clay Dance Company represents another cultural asset that is vital to a growing, vibrant community," said Bill Eager, Senior Vice President, POAH. "During the pandemic, they were a valuable community partner — providing virtual dance classes, free access to COVID-19 testing, and health screenings — all of which made a difference in people's lives."

Formed by Vershawn Sanders-Ward, Red Clay's new facility at the mixed-use Woodlawn Station, 63rd Street and South Cottage Grove, is its first space of its own in the company's 13-year history, giving the company virtually complete control over when and how they use it. The new space will allow Red Clay to more than triple its class capacity, livestream its programming beyond Chicago, expand its community engagement efforts, recruit new artists, and stage more performances. It will also help support artists through mutually beneficial residency and development programs.

The Woodlawn Station location, Sanders-Ward says, "is ideal. It's right off the Green Line in a visible location, not far from where the Obama Presidential Center will be. Plus, it's large enough for us to grow, but not so large that it's overwhelming. Best of all, it gives us space to become an institution in the community."

Red Clay Dance Company joins the Johnny Twist Blues Museum, the historic Grand Ballroom, and the Ariel Joseph Art Gallery as the latest cultural institution located in Woodlawn.

For additional information about Red Clay Dance Company, as well as its programs and services, visit <https://www.redclaydance.com>.