

## CDT 2020 Senior Reflections

ISABELLE AGLAURE

I joined CDT in sixth grade, as school was becoming hard and friends were becoming people I didn't like to be around. I walked into dance on the first day and, although I may not have looked or sounded like it, I was terrified. Not having grown up in CDT, I was an outsider who came from a different school district but everyone instantly accepted me with all of my loud talking and crazy dancing. (Sorry Miss Mary Ann!) Whether we were Bells of China, Flying Fish, a conveyer belt, or Vikings, we leaped into dance with excitement. Even when people fell, we were always there to reassure and encourage each other. As we embark on a new chapter, we will all be stronger, more confident, and more creative for the love we felt growing up surrounded by this amazing company. I have made lifetime friends, and I love them with all of my heart.

ELIZABETH BROWN

When I first started dancing I joined Miss Tina's sixth grade class. It was when Tanner Dance was located in the old natural History Museum in Presidents Circle. I would go every Wednesday at 6:00. Dance became something I learned to enjoy and a new-found passion. I continued taking Tina's class through 7th grade. She referred me to CDT. At the time I had never even heard of Children's Dance Theater. I had decided to take a risk and leap into this new world of dance. When I walked into my first CDT class with Diana, I looked across the room and saw all the other individuals that had a passion for dance. In this I found a whole new community and a new meaning of passion in dance.

JAYNE COONS

I started CDT my sophomore year in high school, and for the few years I have been part of this company, I have loved every minute of it. I wish I would have found this company earlier because it truly feels like a home with family who loves you. From day one I was welcomed with open arms. CDT has helped shape me into the person I have become. I feel more outgoing and excited to meet new people, confident in my dancing, and confident in myself. Some of the highlights for me include attending summer camps, as well as volunteering in different youth classes. These were great opportunities to meet others, and learn from some amazing instructors in a fun environment. I would especially like to thank Miss Corinne, Miss Joni, and Miss Chara for everything they have done to make my years perfect. Thank you CDT.

PHIA JAMES

When I joined CDT in second grade, I had no idea what an incredible journey I was beginning. Over the years, I have cultivated not only confidence, but friendships to last a lifetime. I have countless memories of skipping down the halls during show weeks with my friends, or playing card games in the dressing rooms. Even more memorable are the hours we've spent working together to polish our pieces, or figure out a difficult pattern. I have loved every minute with this community, and I know the skills I have learned from my incredible teachers and peers will stay with me for the rest of my life.

CATHERINE KIRKHAM

I will never forget the call when Miss Joni asked me to be in CDT. I couldn't sleep at all that night because I was so excited. I had no idea then how much I would grow to love CDT. Every class, rehearsal, and performance for the past eleven years have become some of my favorite memories. From dancing on slides in second grade, to this final year in Dance Ensemble, I am grateful for every part of it. Thank you to all of my teachers; I look up to you in every way. Thank

you to my class. I am so lucky to have grown up with such amazing people who have taught me so much. Thank you to every costumer and musician who makes every performance possible. CDT has a special place in my heart, and I will always let my Magic Eye shine.

#### LAUREN KLEINMAN

I have been dancing at CDT and Tanner Dance since I was two, and some of my favorite memories have been at dance. Having slides in my second grade dance, helping stage crew, tickle trains, and being partners with my cousin almost every year. CDT gave me the opportunity to meet some of my closest friends that I would never have met otherwise. CDT has also given me the chance to dance with my sisters on multiple occasions which was so special for me. I have grown to love dance because of the amazing teachers that I have been lucky enough to have. CDT gave me the chance to travel the world for dance and meet people from all around, and I am so grateful for these opportunities. CDT is a part of who I am and forever will be.

#### JOHN MATTHEWS

Oh what an adventure it has been. I started dancing in CDT my fifth grade year. Now, I'm a senior, and the beginning of it all seems like it was both ages ago and just yesterday at the same time. It's hard to believe how many years have passed between then and now; harder still to believe all the things that have happened and all the changes we've gone through. So as an open letter... To my class and CDT family, I can never thank you enough for the memories you've given me. Thinking back to our shenanigans will always bring a smile to my face. To my parents, thank you so much for giving me opportunities, opportunities to grow and be myself. To my teachers, the lessons you taught, be they about dance or life in general, will always be with me and I will never forget you. And finally, to Ms. Chara, the teacher who started it all, thank you for helping me find this family - a family that I can't imagine life without.

#### AUDREY NAGASAWA

I've been dancing with CDT since 2nd grade and it's sad to think there won't be another Capitol Week for me. I have been a part of the best dances and have met the best people through CDT. I have had experiences I never thought I would be able to have, and they have all led me to who I am today. I have learned to feel comfortable and confident on stage because we spend so much time in the beautiful Capitol Theatre. All my years of dancing have provided me with new and exciting opportunities. Invention will be one of the last shows I perform with a company and I am so honored to have been a part of it. I always dance to feel better and enjoy trying new dance styles. I will miss the opportunities and memories CDT has offered.

#### RACHEL PRINCE

CDT and Tanner Dance have been a part of my life since I was three. Some of the earliest memories I have from that time were coming to class in the green room of the old building and all throughout class peeking at ourselves in the mirror even though Joni and the other teachers would tell us that it didn't matter what we look like as we dance as long as we're dancing full out and with our magic eyes. CDT has taught me so much about myself and others, and I've gained so many amazing friendships from it. Through my 15 years I've grown from hopping from foam shape to shape on the floor and hanging like a monkey off the bars, to choreographing solos and duets and performing with some of my closest friends. And now I can proudly say I know how to point my toes without sickling my feet. My class has become my family, and my teachers are some of my greatest inspirations. They have all taught me valuable lessons that I hope to never forget. I will always treasure my time at the studio and the wonderful memories from it. Thank you to all that have encouraged me and supported me; it has changed my life.

#### MAYA RABBIT

I have been dancing with Tanner Dance since I was three. My parents were busy so they needed something for me to do after preschool and for whatever reason they chose dance. It ended up being a perfect fit. I was a hyper kid and absolutely loved being able to just run around and move as I pleased while also making friends and learning an art form. In second grade I tried out for CDT and was accepted. CDT was and is an amazing experience. We are a close knit community of dancers from all different backgrounds. I can't even begin to describe how much these people mean to me. Going to dance is akin to going to group therapy with your best friends. There's an air of understanding, commitment, strength, and vulnerability that I have never experienced anywhere else. As I got older I began to actually love dancing. It became something I was legitimately proud of, and enjoyed.

As my classes got more difficult I found that I didn't really have an outlet for the mounting stress. And as more of my time was consumed by academia I was losing touch with my friends and my hobbies. CDT became the outlet I needed. It was relieving to have a place twice week where I could be concerned with something other than school. When I was at dance I didn't have to worry about the next calculus test or if I had a C in chemistry lab. When I was there I just had to try, and that was enough. CDT and dance in general is so special to me because you can talk about insanely complicated things concisely and rationally, but with all the nuance and emotion it deserves. It's an organic expression of everything you can't or are too afraid to describe in the open. Dance taught me how to find the joy in doing something difficult. But much more importantly it taught me that being successful doesn't have to mean giving up what matters.

#### ISABEL RANDALL

CDT has been a part of my life ever since I can remember. I would go to my sister's performances when she was in CDT and think to myself that I want to be up on that stage dancing my heart out! I have been in CDT from second grade through my senior year. Being in CDT, I have learned what it means to be a part of a wonderful group, but also to find my own voice. My home is at the Tanner Dance building with my wonderful teachers and my class. Being a dancer has taught me discipline, control, focus, and creativity. I loved everything about being a part of CDT.

#### MIMI REEDER

Some of the best sunsets I have ever seen have been out the windows of Tanner Dance. We would all take a moment to admire the vibrant whirling colors bleed through the mountains, and then proceed to let those colors shine through our magic eyes. Throughout my years at CDT, it was moments like these that made me feel most at home. My gratitude grew every year as I was surrounded by the most influential teachers and passionate dancers. To say my time here was well spent would be a big understatement, because CDT shaped me to be the person and dancer I am today, and I know that deserves all the credit in the world. Even though the sun has set on my time here, the beautiful colors of CDT will always be with me.

#### ANNA SWIFT

My Mom always tells me the story about when she was trying to teach me to walk, and I just refused. But finally, my Mom had music playing, and I stood and began to dance. Once she turned off the music, I'd plop right back down onto the ground. Naturally my parents put me into dance lessons right away. I've been at Virginia Tanner dance since I was two-years-old. This place has been my second home. And CDT has been such a blessing in my life, I don't think I'd be who I am without it. It's crazy to think that I might not have ever been in this wonderful program. I had no idea that I was auditioning to be in this program. I remember that phone call very well. Miss Tina called my Mom and asked to speak to me. I went walking outside talking on the phone and she asked if I wanted to be in CDT. I had NO IDEA what that was, and I

honestly almost said no, but I am so, so, so grateful that I didn't. CDT has brought so many great memories, feelings, emotions, and experiences that I can never fully explain to anyone who has not experienced the same. I'll miss this place terribly, but I know that it's time to move on and start a new chapter in my life. I'll be forever grateful to all of you at CDT, and will hold these dear memories close to my heart forever and always.

KATE WIRTHLIN

CDT will forever hold a special place in my heart. For as long as I can remember dance has been a part of my life. From age two in the parent tot class, to senior year, Tanner Dance has been my dancing home. I have learned how to express myself through the power of movement. Dance has taught me to respect and appreciate the gift of a strong body. It has taught me to love movement. I have learned to create art and discovered new ways to think. Dancing has taught me that movement transcends culture and language. The amazing faculty has inspired and motivated me year after year to not only become the best dancer I can be, but the best person as well. I am grateful for the opportunity to do one more dance across the floor and out the door into the unknown.

ELIZA WRIGHT

I have danced at CDT for seven years, starting in sixth grade. Dancing here has instilled confidence in myself that I don't think I could have gained any other way. It has also given me a family outside of my actual family. I danced at two other companies before coming to CDT, and neither one of them ever felt as much like a family as this one. I've been able to dance with my two cousins and have created memories with them that I will cherish forever alongside the amazing experiences of dancing with the rest of the girls in my senior class. I will forever love the friendships that I have gained through dancing at CDT. I will always be grateful for the opportunity that I have had to spend seven years of my life dancing with some of the most amazing people I know and taught by incredible teachers.