

## ***A Note from the Owners -***

In light of the current state of our world, we, the owners of Revolution Dance Center, want to speak from our hearts and be very clear with our words: **Black Lives Matter**. We stand with the Black community in calling for change to protect their safety and well being and combat systemic racism in this country. We say these words not just because it is the right thing to do, but because it is the human thing to do. The Black community has been unjustly treated for too long, and it has taken another senseless murder of an unarmed Black man at the hands of the police to open the world's eyes to say "enough is enough." Black Lives do Matter, and we want our students, our staff, and our community to know that RDC will continue to be a space where our students can learn, grow and express themselves, exactly as they are, in a safe, loving and supportive environment. After all, dance would not be what it is today without the influence of black culture, and we must strive to understand, protect, and honor those who built the history of our art form- those who still need and deserve the right to be treated with dignity and equality in all aspects of life.

We realize we are not the first to speak out but we wanted to thoughtfully consider how we can be part of a solution. Our Mission Statement reflects who we are and sets the framework for how we participate in our community. We are making some clarifications to reflect our commitment to all parts of our community.

"Revolution Dance Center was founded in 2006 with the aim of providing high quality, age appropriate dance instruction in a fun, positive, family-oriented environment. Our goal is to cultivate our dancers into well-rounded individuals who not only have an appreciation for dance as an art form, but who also reach for high achievement in everything they do, remembering and assisting those who are less fortunate. To achieve this goal, we seek to "teach" our children in two ways.

- To provide proven, rigorous, syllabus-based dance instruction at recreational and pre-professional levels, where every child is supported and challenged.
- To provide an avenue for participation in local and national service projects through our various community outreach programs.

*RDC is a space where our students can feel valued, learn & grow and express themselves, exactly as they are, in a safe, loving and supportive environment."*

Following our mission statement, we are first and foremost dance educators. Dance education is more than just learning steps, it is studying and understanding the development of our art form. All rhythm styles are rooted in black culture, but even the more "European" styles - jazz, musical theater, modern & contemporary - are influenced by other cultures as well. To ignore or to not even support that heritage would be in direct conflict with providing dance education. Through this historical lens, we want to acknowledge and celebrate the influence, contributions, talent, creativity, hard work and sacrifice of artists, in addition to the cultures that serve as the backbone of the entertainment/dance industry. Without them, there would be no dance. Black artists'

contributions must be honored, and to do so properly, we must also be willing to fight for their right to justice and equality.

As educators and responsible community members, our mission is also to support our community and all of its members – including our studio community (dancers, their families and RDC staff), our local towns surrounding the studio's physical location, and beyond. In providing our students with opportunities to participate in community outreach programs and performances, we strive to inspire values of Respect, Dignity, and Compassion in them. We strive to lead by example so that our students might go forth and do amazing things for their communities, and our world as a whole, always remembering to stand up for those who are treated unfairly, unequally or who are marginalized by others.

The concept is simple – each person, no matter the color of his or her skin, has the right to be treated justly and fairly by others and our government and its institutions. When those rights are violated, changes must be made. However, it's really not that simple, because the solution must reach into every corner of society - from the criminal justice system, to education, to healthcare, to housing, to jobs, and beyond. Real, sustainable change cannot be accomplished by a single person, group, community or ethnicity - it has to be a collective effort, led and supported by all members of society, regardless of age, gender, religion or skin color. To be treated fairly and equitably is a basic human right and we are all responsible for taking the steps and doing the work to make it happen.

While we, the owners of RDC, do not have the individual experience to “walk in their shoes,” we can and we will take the time to listen, to educate ourselves, and to continue to be a safe, loving, and supportive space for our community. Ultimately, we will stand shoulder to shoulder, arms linked, raising our voices, working together for a better future.

Please feel free to reach out to us if you have any concerns.

Respectfully,

Julie Kay, Darrell & Melissa