



ESPERANZA DANCE PROJECT FINAL REPORT 2022-2023

Prepared by Beth Braun, Founder/Artistic Director

Esperanza Dance Project's 2022-2023 Season was one that has included significant growth, many successes, as well as barriers that were necessary to overcome. We are not only recovering from the impact Covid-19 had on us as a performing arts organization, but seeing how our programming and work with youth is needed now more than ever.

In 2011, our Founder and Artistic Director, Beth Braun, dancer, choreographer and dance educator, created EDP after Braun's daughter, at the age of 18, disclosed to a friend that she had been sexually abused by her biological father for as long as she could remember, and at that point her pain was so great that she no longer wanted to live. This experience was the personal catalyst for Esperanza Dance Project (EDP), and as a high school dance educator, Beth saw first hand how many youth were impacted by sexual trauma, as her daughter had been.

EDP has been quite successful with its high school program, **House of Hope**, and has received tremendous recognition and awards. Last spring we started our new high school initiative in partnership with Rincon/University High Schools (RUHS). We created and facilitated multi-level Peer Advocacy Trainings and worked with their student leaders, giving them the tools to be advocates for their peers and helping to create a more positive and supportive campus culture. We continue to offer our high school program, along with now expanding our reach to youth in middle schools with our new initiative made possible through funding organizations, such as Arizona Women's Partnership, **ProjectRIS: Respect, Inspire, Support**. **ProjectRIS** will utilize an age appropriate dance performance, curriculum, and Peer Advocacy Training that will focus on empowering youth, offering tools to help them create healthy relationships, and build safe and supportive school communities. **ProjectRIS** will premiere at our yearly spring EDP Emerging Choreographers Showcase, followed by a performance at Nosotros Academy in Tucson for their middle school students. Creating **ProjectRIS** and expanding to youth ages 11-14 has been included in our long-term strategic plan since EDP was started, and is truly one of our greatest successes of 2023.

When Beth started EDP in 2011, she was directing the dance program at RUHS and had the resources to create the Project on an extremely marginal budget. Rehearsal/performance space was donated by the school and EDP was a volunteer-run organization. In 2018 we had the capacity and need to create our first 10 hour/week part-time position. Beth retired from her position at RUHS during the Covid-19 shutdown, and as a result, lost access to the use of that space. When EDP returned to in-person programming, we were in need of rehearsal/performance space. One year ago we had the financial resources to join Catalyst Creative Collective, a program under Southern Arizona Arts and Culture Alliance (SAACA), in Tucson Mall. As a creative partner, our outreach has expanded exponentially and we have had the opportunity to impact and support a greater number of survivors of sexual trauma.

As a result of our generous grantors, such as Arizona Women's Partnership, throughout 2023 we have had the ability to increase our part-time position from 10 hours/week to 20 as well as being able to pay dancer stipends. One final success of 2023 is our partnership with Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation's (SAAF) youth program, LINK. Together EDP and LINK have been able to work together and directly reach 50% more youth of marginalized populations.