

Artistic director steps down from The Wooden Floor dance company



Melanie Rios Glaser is the artistic director and co-CEO of The Wooden Floor, a Santa Ana-based dance nonprofit.
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Melanie Rios Glaser, artistic director and co-CEO at The Wooden Floor, will step down next week after 17 years with the organization.

Her decision was based on her desire to pursue more opportunities as a freelance choreographer, dance educator and dancer, as well as wanting to spend more time with her family, according to a statement issued by the group.

Rios Glaser was recruited in 1999 as The Wooden Floor's first guest choreographer by the nonprofit organization's founder, Beth Burns. Upon Burns' retirement in 2005, Rios Glaser became artistic director, later adding the responsibilities of

executive director in 2008 and most recently co-CEO in 2012.

Rios Glaser's time at The Wooden Floor is marked by the organization's continued commitment to teaching dance through exploration, improvisation and creative movement.

The Wooden Floor focuses on teaching contemporary dance to young people from low-income backgrounds and will stay committed to this mission, officials said.

"During her tenure, Melanie has helped our award-winning organization continue to rise in artistic prominence on a national scale," board Chairman James A. Driscoll said in a statement. "Over the years she has assembled an exemplary creative team for our annual concert and outside performances with artists who

are at the top of their fields in dance, lighting, costumes and music."

Rios Glaser, who was born and raised in Guatemala, graduated from the Juilliard School, and has received numerous honors for her contributions to dance, including being named a Kennedy Center Fellow and a Paris Fulbright Scholar.

In the coming years, The Wooden Floor will move forward with plans to phase in its first licensed partner, Washington D.C.-based CityDance, as well as prepare for the opening of an annex in Santa Ana that will allow it to serve 100 more youths and their families annually.

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