

10th CONSECUTIVE YEAR OF 100% HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND IMMEDIATE COLLEGE ENROLLMENT TO BE CELEBRATED AT THE WOODEN FLOOR'S *STEP BEYOND BREAKFAST*

SANTA ANA, Calif. (March 28, 2014) – In a stark contrast to the 50.9% high school graduation and college enrollment rate for other low-income high school youth¹, 100% of graduates from **The Wooden Floor** will finish high school on time and immediately enroll in college. An innovative arts-based youth development organization, The Wooden Floor provides its 375 primarily Latino students with year-round dance, academic, and family service programs, arming them with problem-solving, collaboration, and creative thinking skills to become the next leaders of our community.

At the organization's annual Step Beyond Breakfast, the Class of 2014 will be celebrated for their individual achievements, as well as for being the markers of a major milestone for The Wooden Floor - the 10th consecutive senior class to have 100% of students graduate high school on time and immediately enroll in higher education. The event will spotlight these individuals, most being the first in their families to attend college, and announce to the community which colleges they have chosen to attend. In addition, students will hear an inspiring keynote address from **Thom McElroy, Co-Founder of Volcom** on his journey to higher education and how it influenced his entrepreneurial spirit.

Almost all students at The Wooden Floor attend tuition-free and the majority falls under the federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) poverty classification of "extremely low income." The Wooden Floor successfully helps its students overcome the obstacles of poverty through a long-term arts immersion process, combined with college preparatory programs, academic workshops, tutoring, and family services. "Over their 10 years with the organization, students develop through dance, the ability to think differently about themselves and learn how to innovate, communicate, and collaborate—necessary 21st century skills for school, work, and life," says Dawn S. Reese, Executive Director and Co-CEO of The Wooden Floor.

This fall, many of The Wooden Floor's graduates will attend prominent universities such as **UC San Diego, UC Irvine, UC Riverside, Boston University, Cal Poly Pomona, and DePaul University**. Like the 136 alumni of The Wooden Floor currently in college, most of the graduates will earn merit-based college scholarships from The Wooden Floor totaling \$4,000 to \$10,000 over their college career. Many students of The Wooden Floor say that without this financial assistance, attending college would not be possible.

Step Beyond Breakfast Event Details

When: Thursday, April 24th, 2014

Where: The Wooden Floor – 1810 N. Main Street, Santa Ana, CA 92706

Details: 7:30am Registration, 8:00am Breakfast, 8:30am Keynote Address from **Thom McElroy, Co-Founder of Volcom**

Tickets: \$75 per person, available at [www.TheWoodenFloor.org/Step Beyond](http://www.TheWoodenFloor.org/Step%20Beyond) or at 714-541-8314 ext. 140

About The Wooden Floor

Founded in 1983, The Wooden Floor is a Santa Ana arts-based organization that delivers hope and opportunity to 375 low-income youth annually. Dance education and performance are the core transformational elements through which youth change the way they think about themselves and aspire beyond the grip of the poverty cycle. In the dance studio, rigorous training, creativity, and self-knowledge lead to confidence, leadership, teamwork, well-being, and joy. Academic programs, pre-collegiate mentoring, and college scholarships ensure that students succeed in school and are college-ready. **Since 2005, 100 percent of graduates from The Wooden Floor have enrolled in college**, exceeding the national average for their peers threefold. Family Services at The Wooden Floor, including counseling, crisis intervention, and social service referrals help families overcome hardships and navigate challenges. Community support enables these year-round programs to be offered free of charge. Bringing about generational change to break the cycle of poverty in our community is the long-term goal of The Wooden Floor.

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¹ Source: Pew Research, January 15, 2014 - "In 2012, the most recent year for which NCES figures are available, 50.9% of recent low-income high school completers (a category that includes both graduates and people who completed an equivalency degree and who are ages 16 to 24) were enrolled in a 2- or 4-year college."