

## **100% HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE CELEBRATED FOR 12<sup>TH</sup> CONSECUTIVE YEAR AT THE WOODEN FLOOR**

SANTA ANA, Calif. (June 16, 2016) – In a stark contrast to the 45.5% college enrollment rate for other economically disadvantaged high school youth<sup>1</sup>, 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 under-served 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.

Almost all students at The Wooden Floor attend tuition-free and fall under the federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) poverty classification of very-low to 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 and career readiness programs, academic workshops, tutoring, and family services. Over their 10 years with the organization, students develop the ability to think differently about themselves and learn how to innovate, communicate, and collaborate—necessary 21<sup>st</sup> century skills for school, work, and life.

“The Wooden Floor’s students are our future leaders,” states **Dawn S. Reese** Executive Director and Co-CEO of The Wooden Floor. “It is important that we give these students access to the arts and higher education, which will not only change their lives for the better, but will create a massive ripple effect as they become change-agents within their families, their neighborhoods, this community, and globally.”

This fall, many of The Wooden Floor’s graduates will become the first in their family to attend college. They will attend prominent universities such as **UC Los Angeles, Pitzer College, CSU Fullerton, and University of Florida**. Like the nearly 100 alumni of The Wooden Floor currently in college, most of the graduates will earn merit-based college scholarships from The Wooden Floor, totaling up to \$10,000 over their college career. Many students say that this financial assistance, along with other scholarship and financial aid resources learned at The Wooden Floor, makes attending college possible.

The Wooden Floor extends a special thanks to its *Lead Class Partners* for their leading commitments to underwrite college and career readiness programs for each graduating class, including: Bank of America, Capital Group, Jane & James Driscoll, Ginnie & Rich Hunsaker, O.L. Halsell Foundation, PIMCO Foundation, The Sharon D. Lund Foundation, and Drs. Donald & Constance Sperling.

### **About The Wooden Floor**

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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, college and career readiness programs, 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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*High-resolution images of students are available upon request.*

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Center for Education Statistics [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14\\_302.30.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14_302.30.asp)