

THE WOODEN FLOOR CELEBRATES LARGEST GRADUATING CLASS AND 100% HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE FOR 13 CONSECUTIVE YEARS AT 5th STEP BEYOND ANNUAL BREAKFAST

Award-Winning Creative Youth Development Nonprofit Will Celebrate Graduates and Feature Keynote by Dr. Alice Police, Medical Director of UC Irvine's Pacific Breast Care Center

Santa Ana, Calif. (March 31, 2017) – In celebration of their largest graduating class to date, and the 13th consecutive year that 100% of its low-income graduates are on track to complete high-school on time and immediately enroll in college, The Wooden Floor will host its 5th *Step Beyond* Annual Breakfast® on Thursday, April 27, 2017, at its campus in Santa Ana. Local business, civic, and community leaders are expected to gather for the event, which was named one of the Orange County Business Journal's Top 3 Fundraising Breakfasts in 2014, 2015, and 2016. Proceeds from the morning benefit The Wooden Floor's college and career readiness services and college scholarship program that helps 375 low-income students access and succeed in higher education to break their family's cycle of poverty.

Breakfast attendees will enjoy a keynote address from noted Surgical Oncologist, Dr. Alice Police, who serves as Medical Director of UC Irvine's Pacific Breast Care Center. Dr. Police has worked towards establishing culturally-adapted programs that help diverse patients discover healthy coping mechanisms within their unique situations and empower them to draw from their own resources. In 2014, Dr. Police was named on the list of 100 Most Influential People by the Orange County Register.

Dr. Police will be joined by Class of 2017 student speaker, Leslie Mateo, a 17-year old high school senior at Samuelli Academy in Santa Ana. Leslie has a 4.0 GPA and will be the first in her family to graduate high school and enroll in college. So far, Leslie has been accepted to USC, the University of San Francisco, UC Riverside and Chapman University, and has an interest in studying economics or global business.

Almost all students at The Wooden Floor attend tuition-free and the majority fall 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 and career readiness programs and family support services.

"Through dance, our students develop confidence 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. "The 10-year investment we are making in these young people, with the support of our generous supporters, is empowering them to pursue higher education at a rate more than double that of their socioeconomic peers nationwide."

Many of The Wooden Floor's Class of 2017 have been accepted into prominent universities such as New York University, West Virginia University, and Mount Holyoke College in addition to University of California schools and California State University schools.

Like other alumni of The Wooden Floor currently in college, most of these graduates will earn merit-based college scholarships from The Wooden Floor totaling up to \$10,000 over their college career. Many students of The Wooden Floor say that this financial assistance, in addition to the one-on-one pre-collegiate mentoring and

academic help, makes attending college possible.

Event Details

What: 5th Step Beyond Annual Breakfast™

When: April 27, 2017 – 7:30am Registration; 8:00am Breakfast

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

Tickets: \$75 Individual Tickets; Sponsorships Available

Website: www.TheWoodenFloor.org/StepBeyond

Event Underwriters (As of March 28, 2017)

Lead Class Partners: Bank of America • Capital Group Companies, Inc. • Don Yoder Foundation • Gilbert & Jacki Cisneros Foundation • Ginnie & Rich Hunsaker • O.L. Halsell Foundation • PIMCO Foundation • The Sharon D. Lund Foundation • Drs. Donald & Constance Sperling • Willette Charitable Foundation

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Innovation Underwriters: Cohn & Swartzon, a Professional Law Corporation • Michelle & Timothy Dean • Edwards Lifesciences Foundation • Employees Community Fund of Boeing California • Ruth Ann Moriarty • Trish O'Donnell • Larry & Marge Sutton • US Bank • Wells Fargo

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Encouragement Underwriters: Marion & William Barstow • Catherine MacIver & Jim Slaughter • Ann McDonald • R.S. Hoyt, Jr. Family Foundation • Judy & David Threshie • Mary & Gary Tolar

About The Wooden Floor

Founded in 1983, The Wooden Floor is one of the foremost creative youth development nonprofit organizations in the country. We transform the lives of young people in low-income communities through the power of dance and access to higher education. In Orange County and through national licensed partners, we use a long-term approach grounded in exploratory dance education to foster the confidence and gifts within each child to innovate, communicate, and collaborate – skills necessary for success in school and in life. 100 percent of students who graduate from The Wooden Floor immediately enroll in higher education. Our students become change agents and beacons of hope within their own families, their neighborhoods, our community, and our world.

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High-resolution images of the Class of 2017 and the 2016 event can be downloaded: