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WHO: Santa Ana nonprofit, The Wooden Floor, was chosen as one of five organizations nationwide to win the prestigious 2012 Afterschool Innovator Award from the Afterschool Alliance and the MetLife Foundation.

WHAT: This specific award recognizes The Wooden Floor's innovative work integrating dance education with social services to help students become successful in school and life. Among some 500 organizations who applied for the award, The Wooden Floor was the only arts-based youth development organization to be recognized.

Santa Ana Mayor Miguel Pulido issued a proclamation from the city recognizing The Wooden Floor on its major accomplishment and celebrating its over 29 years of serving low-income youth in Orange County. Javiera Cartagena, representative of Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez, issued a certificate of congressional recognition for the award.

WHERE: 75 members of the community attended the award ceremony at The Wooden Floor's campus, which featured a student-choreographed contemporary dance piece, and remarks from the Afterschool Alliance and the Metlife Foundation.

WHEN: Thursday, October 18, 2012

WHY: The Wooden Floor in Santa Ana is an after-school organization formed in 1983 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 finished high school on-time and enrolled in college, outperforming their socioeconomic peers three-fold. Additionally, 132 alumni of The Wooden Floor are currently enrolled in colleges across the nation with 80 receiving college financial aid from the organization.

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If you wish to cover this award or interview Artistic Director Melanie Ríos Glaser, contact Payal Kumar at 714.541.8314 ext. 119 or Payal@TheWoodenFloor.org. High-res photos are available upon request.