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## Hundreds of Low-Income Families Expected Saturday to Gather at Esteemed Afterschool Organization for Enrollment

**SANTA ANA, Calif. (October 15, 2012)** - The Wooden Floor, an arts-based youth development nonprofit, is expecting a large turnout on **Saturday, October 20, 2012**, as it opens its doors for its **Annual Auditions day**.

A safe afterschool haven for 375 under-served youth year-round, **The Wooden Floor** provides its students with the tools to lead fuller, healthier lives through intensive dance education, focused academics programs, pre-collegiate mentoring, and family services. Last year 364 low-income students and their families vied for a chance at securing a spot in the organization, a number that is expected to rise this year.

The number is a poignant reminder of the growing need in Orange County. Many students, age 8 to 13, arrive with their families as early as 2 o'clock in the morning for a spot in line and a chance to begin their 10-year journey at The Wooden Floor. One alumni of the organization, Mario Chavez '10, recalls his audition day. "My parents got up early and took me and my sister to get in line outside The Wooden Floor. I'm so glad I got in that line because it changed my life. The Wooden Floor leads you on the path to be successful in life." Mario, the first in his family to go to college, is currently attending Santa Ana College.

Students need only two requirements to audition-show that they have the desire to move and come from a family with significant financial need. A typical family at The Wooden Floor is a family of five living on \$32,124 a year, a figure deemed "extremely-low Income" for Orange County by the **Department of Housing and Urban Development**.

Annual Auditions day is held at the culmination of The Wooden Floor's **Dance Free Weeks**, a successful three-week community engagement endeavor to provide approximately 3,000 students in Santa Ana schools and surrounding cities with free dance classes. The program has won praise from local educators and administrators who note the positive communication and motivation dance fosters within the students, who are then invited to audition for The Wooden Floor.

"Annual Auditions day is the most moving day for me, as I drive up and see a line stretched around the building," states **Artistic Director & Co-CEO Melanie Ríos Glaser**, "It is so very encouraging to know that if these students stay at The Wooden Floor for up to 10 years, they will most likely be the first in their family to enroll in college." **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.

### EVENT DETAILS

**What:** The Wooden Floor Annual Auditions

**When:** Saturday, October 20, from 8:30am-1:30pm

**Where:** 1810 North Main Street, Santa Ana, CA 92706

**How:** Complete information is available in English and Spanish at [www.TheWoodenFloor.org/Auditions](http://www.TheWoodenFloor.org/Auditions) and by calling 714-541-8314 ext. 128.

**Auditioning families should be aware the process may take up to several hours, depending on the number of auditioning youth.**

**Sponsors:** Chase Bank and Target



*Hundreds of families line the sidewalk between 18th and 19th streets on Main Street in Santa Ana in 2011.*

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*To cover this event, schedule an interview with The Wooden Floor's Artistic Director & Co-CEO, or to interview participating students, please call Payal Kumar at 714-541-8314 ext. 119 or e-mail Payal@TheWoodenFloor.org. High resolution photos and video of auditions or other The Wooden Floor activities are available upon request.*