



ARTS EDUCATION RESULTS IN 100% GRADUATION RATE FOR LOW-INCOME MINORITY YOUTH

SANTA ANA, Calif. (May 15, 2012) – For the seventh consecutive year, 100% of graduates from **The Wooden Floor’s** year-round dance, academic, and family service programs will graduate high school on time and enroll in college. As an innovative arts-based youth development program that strives for artistic, academic, and social success, The Wooden Floor, its 375 students, and their families take this tremendous triumph as not only an honor but a hard-fought step toward a brighter future. In contrast to the national average of other under-served high school youth, students at The Wooden Floor out-perform two-thirds of their socio-economic peers by pursuing higher education after high school. The Wooden Floor’s young artists graduate with skills and experience in problem-solving, collaboration, and creative thinking, becoming leaders of society.

Long-term arts immersion prepares students to develop the ability to innovate, communicate, and collaborate, priming them for success in school, work, and life. A recently published study conducted by the **National Endowment for the Arts** states, “Teenagers of low socioeconomic status (SES) who have a history of in-depth arts involvement show better academic outcomes than do [those] who have less arts involvement. They earn better grades and demonstrate higher rates of college enrollment and attainment.”ⁱ

This fall many of The Wooden Floor’s graduates become the first in their family to attend college. The Class of 2012 will attend prestigious universities such as **UC Riverside, CSU Fullerton, CSU San Francisco, Boston University,** and **Northern Arizona University,** carrying with them their new found self-awareness, discipline, respect, and tenacity. 14 of the 17 graduates will earn merit-based college scholarships from The Wooden Floor totaling \$4,000 to \$10,000 over their college career. The class of 2012 will also have access to a \$35,000 pool of need-based financial assistance procured by The Wooden Floor from the College Access Foundation of California. Many students of The Wooden Floor say that without this financial assistance, attending college would not be possible.

Almost all students at The Wooden Floor attend tuition-free and fall under the federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) poverty classification of “extremely low income” to “very low income”. The Wooden Floor provides college preparation guidance, including SAT preparedness, financial aid and scholarship guidance, and assistance with entrance essays. One hundred percent of The Wooden Floor’s high school juniors take the SATs, compared to 35 percent of their regional peers. Ginnie and Rich Hunsaker, the Lead Class Partners for the Class of 2012, generously underwrote the pre-collegiate mentoring programs for the 17 graduates.

The Wooden Floor Graduation Ceremony Event Details

For Press attendance only – not open to the public

When: Friday June 8, 2012 – 6pm

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

About the Wooden Floor

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 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 photos of The Wooden Floor's students are available upon request.

ⁱ National Endowment for the Arts. *The Arts and Achievement of At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies*. Washington, DC, March 2012