

FEATURE STORY:

Free Community Dance Workshop Program; Free Flow Dance Theatre Company

Free Flow Dance Theatre Company offer free dance workshops to a number of participating community groups, working with a variety of ages, groups, backgrounds and ability levels. Previous groups have included youth, visible minorities, at risk populations, newcomers, individuals with varying mental or physical abilities, family groups, and senior citizens in Saskatoon. **“Our goal is to increase individual’s quality of life through the enjoyment and appreciation of dance as an art form,”** shared Jackie Latendresse, Artistic Director. **“The specially tailored workshops are a fun sample of dance and create opportunities for disadvantaged groups to have direct contact with and learn from local professional dancers in a fun and intimate environment.”**

The popularity of the free dance workshop program has grown each year. The program began in 2011 with 3 workshops and has since expanded to 30 workshops in 2019. Dance classes are often expensive and unattainable for many people due to accessibility or suitability. This program lowers barriers for participation. **“This season we will visit each group twice, as we feel that hosting a second workshop with each organization will enable us to follow up with the participants on their experiences and further engage them through movement,”** exclaimed Latendresse. **“We also aim to solidify our relationships with the participating organizations for potential future endeavors such as community performances.”**

“These exciting, educational, and creative workshops give participants the opportunity to express themselves through movement and to experience the joy it can bring,” Latendresse shared. **“We have so many letters of support for this program that our archive is bursting at the seams. Everyone loves to get moving. It is good for the body, mind and spirit!”**

“Our participants most definitely benefited from this workshop by improving their gross and fine motor skills through physical activity participation, as well, were able enhance their overall aerobic and strength endurance. Additionally, they had the opportunity to improve their emotional regulation through guided breathing techniques for relaxation, and through dance expression, were given the chance for social interaction with their peers while learning creative movement! ...”

- SaskAbilities

“... Those who attended had a great time! As a staff member, I thoroughly enjoyed watching the residents have a great time laughing, moving and dancing. Thank you for brightening the day of the people who live and work at Central Haven.”

- Central Haven

“... An evening performance took place in our main gather hall called The Tawaw Centre that brought our Elders so much joy and really sparked a lot of creativity. The fact that the performance came to our community was an added bonus and was truly appreciated. Earlier that afternoon, several Free Flow Dance staff spent nearly two hours working closely with our Elders, staff and volunteers on the basics of dance. It was a wonderful afternoon that brought so many smiles to the faces of our Elders. We take great pride in bringing the world to our Elders and this was one of those occasions where a unique and passionate part of the artistic world was able to visit our community.

- Sherbrooke Community Centre

