



Dear Patrons, Friends, and Supporters of the Arts:

Established in the Fall of 2007, the D'AIR Project is a 501c3 not-for-profit community arts organization with a **mission to weave the fabric of the greater Atlanta community together to serve and empower our youth and teens, through aerial dance, cultural and movement arts.** D'AIR is a youth-centric organization that builds confidence, self-awareness, acceptance, and cross-cultural understanding through working with others from different communities and physical abilities. Our belief that "everyone is a student and everyone is a teacher" is evident throughout our organization. D'AIR Aerial Dance Theatre, our artistic backbone, brings exciting, innovative, thought-provoking, and humorous aerial dance theater productions to the Atlanta community while serving as mentors to our teens. In turn, through our 'pay it forward' program, our teens are expected to pass on the skills that they learn to both the youth in our program as well as community partner organizations. It is in this spirit of paying forward that we reach out to you for financial support with a gift that continues to give.

As we commence the new year we reflect upon our successes and dream for the future. In our first four years D'AIR has made a significant impact on the Atlanta community, breaking boundaries not only in the way that we approach youth outreach, but also in our approach to the creative process. Our successes include:

- * D'AIR instructors offer over 500 hours of FREE aerial dance classes to Atlanta area youth and teens annually, serving approximately 100 students in our in-house programs and 100's more through long and short term outreach and long term partner residencies.
- * D'AIR teens offer over 600 mentoring hours to other youth in our programs and community partners annually. To foster commitment and a sense of responsibility, teens earn their own classes by participating in our 'pay it forward' program, where all students are expected to pass on what they learn – thus becoming peer mentors to those around them.
- * D'AIR partners with organizations to specifically target at-risk youth, including youth who are dealing with homelessness, affected by or infected by HIV / AIDS, recently resettled refugees, or youth who are living in poverty. Over 60-70% of the youth in our programs are on free/reduced lunch at their schools.
- * D'AIR is fostering positive behaviors during this critical juncture of adolescent development through providing a healthy after school alternative that develops physical and emotional strength. D'AIR imparts invaluable skills to our youth and teens that translates directly to increased functioning in all aspects of their lives including at school, at home, and with their peer. Through our programs at D'AIR teens develop creative thinking skills, learn to conquer fear on a daily basis, build pride and confidence as they perform and teach, and foster a greater acceptance of diversity and responsibility to their community.
- * D'AIR offers a variety of family friendly events and productions to our local community. These include student showcases by our youth and adult classes, our Cultural Revival Series events that celebrate the beauty of diversity, and salsa dance socials. Our teens have also performed at events such as Fiesta Atlanta, festivals for organizations such as Boys and Girls Club, Agape Community Center and Big Brothers Big Sisters and under the Big Top with an opening act for the UniverSoul Circus.

D'AIR Aerial Dance Theatre has established itself as a prominent professional company in the Atlanta dance community. The company's first production, 'VIEWS Through a Window', performed in March 2009 received rave reviews from audiences, including arts critic Steve Seiberg who claimed that VIEWS 'must be the most original performance piece in town.' D'AIR has continued to produce one show annually in addition to being invited to work collaboratively with other prominent dance companies in the Atlanta area such as Brooks and Company and Project Seven as well as having been commissioned to present new work for FLUX in 2011.

- Reinstatement and growth of our partnership with HERO for Children, serving children infected by or affected by HIV/AIDS. As part of our pay it forward program D'AIR teens plan to dedicate every Saturday from April through June, 2012 to mentoring children from HERO while learning valuable lessons about the effects and the prevention of HIV/AIDS. In June we plan to offer a week long camp for HERO, which will culminate into a show that the kids will perform at HERO's annual 'HERO for a Day' event serving over 500 in the Atlanta community. Funding is needed to help with transportation, additional teacher salaries, production costs and related general operating expenses.
- Fund our professional artists who collectively volunteer over 1,000 hours of rehearsal time, over 150 hours in the artistic development for both company and student productions and countless mentoring hours annually simply because of their belief in and dedication to our programs.

D'AIR is fortunate to be filled with heroes. However, even heroes have to pay rent and that is why the D'AIR Project is reaching out in request for sponsorship and support. Our children need credible heroes; and credibility is earned. Please help us build a stronger community by making a financial contribution in support of D'AIR's heroes.

Dream, Accept, Inspire, Revolutionize, dare to D'AIR.

Respectfully Yours,

Nicole Mermans
Executive Director

"Untamed was an entertaining, jaw-dropping performance by daring D'AIR Aerial Dance Ensemble... It was at times humorous and fun, and at other times mystical, daring or beautiful. D'AIR Aerial Dance Ensemble should be proud of their astonishing aerial skills. They are all strong, incredibly fit, flexible and brave! I was thoroughly impressed by the performers' talents as well as their heart for teens and the local community."
Dance Informa Magazine: 30-March-2011

"(The D'AIR to be a HERO program) not only helps the kids in here express themselves while teaching and learning, but we could help the community, too. We have to teach them about the disease and that it's not what defines a person. The best way is for everyone else to see kids who don't have the disease interacting with kids who do. It's really beautiful how we can all express ourselves and have fun and not worry about things like that."

Iris T., 8th grade, Atlanta Charter Middle School