

Louisville Ballet

Arts Programming Overview + Teaching Artist(s) Bio

Programming

Louisville Ballet provides numerous community engagement programs throughout Louisville and surrounding counties in various capacities and locations. Approximately 18,000 - 20,000 people are served each year through in-school residencies, after-school programs, in-school performances, student matinees, scholarship opportunities and community workshops.

Currently, Louisville Ballet partners with and provides programming on-site to the following community organizations and schools:

Heuser Hearing and Language Academy
Visually Impaired Preschool Services
Down Syndrome of Louisville
Summit Academy
Americana Community Center
Wesley House
The Louisville Free Public Library (multiple locations)
J-town Elementary
The Brown School
Lincoln Performing Arts School
Cane Run Elementary
Maryville Elementary
Overdale Elementary
Keneseth Israel Preschool
Girl Scouts of Kentuckiana
Olmsted Parks Conservancy (multiple locations)

We partner with FEAT of Louisville each year for our Sensory Friendly Performance of The Brown Forman Nutcracker.

We host a FREE program for 20 students ages 7-9 to study classical ballet at our downtown studios for one year with opportunities to matriculate into The Louisville Ballet School and remain on scholarship until high school graduation.

We host approximately five student matinees each season where over 100 schools (public and private) along with several homeschool groups join us at The Kentucky Center and The Brown Theater.

Participants receive an in-depth study guide for each performance to deepen their engagement with the experience.

We donate over 2,500 Brown Forman Nutcracker Tickets to Title 1 schools and social service agencies each year through our Bridge the Gap program.

Teaching Artist(s) Bios(s)

Stacey Blakeman is a dance education and arts integration specialist who holds a M. Ed in Integrated Teaching Through the Arts from Lesley University. She has taught dance and movement integration strategies in a variety of settings including studios, after-school programs, community centers, public schools and performing arts institutions. Stacey worked for the San Francisco Ballet Center for Dance Education for over ten years as a program manager, curriculum specialist and teaching artist. She trained staff, developed curriculum and assessment tools, conducted professional development workshops for classroom teachers and identified select students for scholarships to SF Ballet School. During her tenure, she helped grow existing programs, establish new programs and implement policies and procedures that streamlined administrative processes for the department. Stacey has done consulting work for the San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, San Francisco Unified School District, Dizzy Feet Foundation, Stern Grove Festival, Arts Education Matters, Jefferson County Public Schools, Kentucky Performing Arts and is an active member of the National Dance Education Organization and Dance USA. As the Director of Community Engagement at Louisville Ballet, Stacey has grown her department staff along with existing programs and launched several new initiatives for the organization. This includes the establishment of Ballet Bound, a tuition free program focused on building diversity in the art form, The Brown Forman Nutcracker Sensory Friendly performance, which is designed for individuals with sensory sensitivities, and the Community Advisory Council, which is a group of individuals from the community who help advise Louisville Ballet on current initiatives - helping to ensure access and inclusion in the organization. She is grateful to be able to bring dance education to her community and continue to break down barriers and stigma related to the study of ballet.

Molly Kays is a Kentucky native from the small town of Lawrenceburg where she first started dancing at the age of five. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree with a focus in Musical Theatre from Western Kentucky University. Her dance journey has taken her all over from studying in Lexington, Ky at Diana Evans School of Dance, performing overseas in Italy while attending WKU, dancing in Bardstown, Ky on the Stephen Foster Story stage, and auditioning and attending class in New York City. She is the Community Engagement Coordinator at Louisville Ballet giving her the opportunity to travel throughout Louisville teaching others about movement and dance and furthering her own dance education. In her free time she enjoys participating in shows throughout the Louisville's theater community and occasionally choreographing.

Amy Haley grew up in the Elizabethtown, KY area and began her dance training at Allegro Dance Theatre at the age of six, where she was privileged to study with several former Louisville Ballet Company

members. She is a 2003 alum of the Kentucky Governor's School for the Arts in ballet, attended The Harid Conservatory in the summer of 2004, and danced pre-professionally through the Louisville Ballet School. Amy graduated from University of Kentucky with a BA in Arts Administration and after a few years in the banking industry, took a full time job at Bluegrass Youth Ballet in Lexington, KY as a full-time Administrator and Teacher. Amy joined The Louisville Ballet School Administration Staff in 2021 and subsequently took over as Uniforms Manager for the school while simultaneously substitute teaching for some of our younger classes. She has taught at several Louisville, Lexington, and Elizabethtown area dance studios for 15 years. In the fall of 2022 Amy joined Louisville Ballet as a full-time staff member in the Community Engagement department as Programs Manager.

Artistic Content of Programming

The content of each of our programs depends on the community and age groups we are serving. The core content of the majority of our programs that operate in-school during the school day utilize the National Core Arts Standards in Dance along with Brain Compatible Dance Education Techniques. This allows us to ensure that participants are engaging in developmentally appropriate movement that is based on goals set at a National level for participating in dance education programs. Brain Compatible Dance incorporates movement that stimulates and re-wires the central nervous system, laying the foundation for sensory-motor development and lifelong learning. All of this is done through a creative dance approach which provides structure for students to engage in critical thinking, problem solving, collaborative work and self expression through movement.

Several of our partners experience what we call Adaptive Dance which is aimed at serving students with disabilities and focuses on ensuring that our teaching artists are trained to work with such populations.

Some of our after-school programs that operate at schools or in our downtown studios (such as Ballet Bound) are ballet based and utilize a curriculum based on ballet technique through the Vaganova Method.

Our programs are assessed through program evaluations from participants, families, educators and our community partners. Surveys are sent via mailchimp and google forms to allow for feedback - allowing us to gather feedback and alter our programs accordingly to ensure success.

Goals are set for each of our groups and classes, and it depends on the group. Our teaching artists develop weekly lessons through a student centered approach - meaning what they had planned doesn't always happen in the classroom as they are capable of meeting the students where they are at (and that can change week to week).

Our team of teaching artists meets weekly to discuss challenges and successes of each program - bouncing ideas off of one another and offering advice for how to possibly approach classes differently.

Educational Content of Programming

Please view our work samples and the following links for an understanding of the Educational Content of our programming:

<https://www.canva.com/design/DAFPTy7qG3Q/1Zi6KoeXROHHmZXmHP4jLQ/view?#1>

<https://www.canva.com/design/DAFPB8wBTCs/DUdKsLgy2acByN8lNYKohw/view?#1>

<https://www.canva.com/design/DAFOwBb2MoU/D2j8D4gUesi2q7O-H6PtA/view?>

<https://vimeo.com/439858009>

Process for hiring, training, and evaluating performance/effectiveness.

We hire experienced dance professionals who understand the importance of working in community. It is different that teaching ballet in a studio, as you are a traveling teacher entering spaces that are not traditionally set up for dance and teaching students who do not always choose to be there (for example - their 5th grade teacher signed them up for a residency and now you have to convince all the 5th grade boys that it is okay to dance and try ballet). So first and foremost, our focus is on working in community and adapting our approach as needed and determined by who we are serving. We all participate in general arts education groups such as the local Cultural Consortium which provides minimal professional development on working in the Louisville Community. We are also members of Dance USA and attend monthly affinity calls with our counterparts from ballet and dance companies across the country - discussing successes and challenges of our dance education and community engagement programs. We are all also members of NDEO (National Dance Education Organization) and attend the annual national conference (when funding allows) and take advantage of the virtual training that is offered. We also do our own internal training and offer advice to one another and share our expertise in our own niche ways.

How are participants of all backgrounds and abilities included in programming?

The goal of Louisville Ballet Community Engagement programs is access and inclusion which ensures we are diversifying a eurocentric art form of ballet.

All of our community programs are offered for FREE or at a low and affordable cost to groups, schools and families.

We are trained and continue to train in best practices for Adaptive Dance to ensure that when we work with individuals and groups with disabilities that we are doing our best.

Ballet Bound is building diversity in our ballet school by offering five students each year from the program to continue their ballet studies at the Louisville Ballet School on scholarship until high school graduation.

We have been doing workshops focused on boys in dance to help break the stigma of male dancers and some of the bullying that boys who dance experience from their peers outside of the dance world.

We have a community Advisory Council that consists of 15-20 folks who work in various fields and offer their feedback and advice about the programs we are offering.

The Louisville Ballet Board has a DEI Committee that focuses on how to ensure that DEI exists throughout the organization and not just in our community engagement programs.

How do we engage teachers and community center staff before, during, and after programming?

We offer study guides to prepare students, surveys for feedback, emails and worksheets of what to expect to ensure they know what we will need from them when we get to their school or center. We ask them about their students to ensure that we are planning properly. We check in with them throughout the program to make sure they are pleased or if they need something different from us. Constant communication is what it takes to be successful and asking for critical feedback and being able to take it and adapt is key.

How do we engage participants in the creative and learning process?

Creative Dance naturally engages participants in the creative process. All of our programs are engaging and teach multiple intelligences. We like to use visuals and teaching tools that help all types of learners engage in the program and the content that is being delivered.