

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 283

Is your organization a 501(c)3 nonprofit?

Yes

According to your 501(c)3 letter, in what town is your official office located?

Hartford

Where will your project be performed or exhibited?

Hartford

Will this activity occur after August 1, 2023?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

Yes

Enter your Report Code

102723-Roberts2022

Organization Name

CREC Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts Half Day Program

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

060853106

Principal Contact Name

Alexa Melonopoulos Fleury

Title

Dance Chair

Email

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Phone

(860) 757-6338

Address

15 Vernon Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06106
United States
[Map It](#)

Website

<https://ghaahd.crecschools.org/>

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Amount requested this application

\$8,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

CREC Mission: Equity, excellence, and success for all through high-quality educational services.

The mission of the **CREC Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts**, a magnet public high school program, is to bring together people of diverse cultural heritage and to develop in all students the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to reach their fullest artistic potential, to live a productive life, and to contribute to society as creative engaged citizens.

Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.

The Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) started in 1966 as a grassroots organization of local public school districts working together to solve common problems in education. CREC is a Regional Service Center (RESC) established under Connecticut Statute 10-66. Through this legislation the state permits local boards of education to support RESCs in providing high quality educational programs to local districts. CREC's mission is to work with boards of education and community based organizations to improve the quality of public education. CREC serves over 35 school districts through 150 educational programs and inter-district magnet schools. The Capitol Region Education Council is governed by the CREC Council (made up of Board of Education members from 35 central Connecticut school districts). The council meets six times each year. In addition, CREC has a 10-person Board of Directors elected by the CREC Council. Membership on the Board includes representation of small, medium, and large school districts. They meet 10 times a year, sets program direction and makes personnel and fiscal decisions.

The CREC Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts was founded in 1985, as one of the first inter-district Magnet Schools in Connecticut. It began as a half day program with an original mission as a resource for gifted and talented students in 9th-12th grades from 40 member districts with an interest in and affinity for the arts. The Academy relocated to the Learning Corridor campus in 2000 and became part of the State's efforts to address the requirements of the *Sheff vs O'Neill* lawsuit which articulated racial and socio-economic disparities inherent in State funded public education formulae. The Academy is a unique organization in central Connecticut: It is both an important educational resource serving a diverse regional population and an arts organization presenting multiple performances in theater, dance, music, and the visual arts to the larger community.

Describe the demographics of your audience/people served by your activities.

Our program serves approximately 40 towns in the Hartford region providing us with a diverse population of students and families. We hold a matinee for students, and our main performance includes family members of all ages, local dance artists/groups and the general population. We expand the reach of work created in CS by performing pieces locally and nationally. Next year, we will perform at Trinity College, Ted Hershey Dance Marathon and the Regional High School Dance Festival (Virginia).

Describe your organization's governance.

CREC is governed by the CREC Council and a ten person Board of Directors (as stated in our history). The CREC Foundation was established in 2005 to support CREC's programs and its mission. The Foundation's board of directors meets four times a year. Board members are required to attend at least 2 board meetings to remain in good standing. There have not been any substantial changes to the leadership this fiscal year.

Describe the diversity of your board.

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CREC is an intentionally diverse social justice organization whose members work to acknowledge, respect, and empathize with people of all different identifiers. For more on our DEI work please refer to our website <https://www.crec.org/dei/index.php>

The CREC Foundation Board is made of representation from sending school districts and community leaders. The current breakdown is as follows: African American 11 %, White 89% and 44% Female, Male 66%.

What percentage of your board makes personal financial contributions to your organization?

70% of the CREC Foundation board of directors makes financial contributions supporting CREC's programs and services. This is up from 25% last year.

Project Name

Choreographers' Showcase 2023

Is this project related to the Visual Arts?

No

Project Description

In October, we'll celebrate an exceptional 20 year history of professional level dance here at the Academy and in Hartford while looking toward the future. The framework that we created has served us well: Students audition for choreographers in the spring; pieces are cast and students sign contracts in June; choreographers rehearse with students in August; from September to the performance, faculty continue to rehearse students. Pieces presented in 2023 include: *Leggieros (1975)*, a piece of local dance history created for the Hartford Ballet by Lotte Goslar, a well-known pantomime artist, clown & dancer; a work by Syren Modern Dance, one of the first dance companies to present work in CS, directed Lynn Peterson & Kate Sutter; a piece by Tendayi Kuumba, a 2023 Dance Magazine "Top 25 to Watch" artist, celebrating BIPOC dancers; a work by Tandy Beal at Trinity College; and through an exciting new relationship with the internationally known Mark Morris Dance Group, a piece by Mr. Morris!

Total estimated project budget

\$24,715.00

Project start/opening

08/07/2023

Project end/closing

10/21/2023

Project venue

Theater of the Performing Arts, 359 Washington Street, Hartford, CT 06106

Project town

Hartford, CT

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Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

The performance is presented for one paying audience of 275– 350 and a free matinee performance for approximately 300-350 middle/high school students. Ticket prices are \$5 for students/seniors and \$15 for adults. Cast and crew members are given 2 comp tickets (which usually equal about 80-100 tickets). We will increase our audience reach with additional performances of pieces from the performance at Trinity College and the Regional High School Dance Festival, among other opportunities.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

We hope to develop & cultivate our audience through the following: press releases to local papers highlighting our 20th anniversary, Social Media marketing, online calendar postings, poster distribution to local businesses, E-blast to mailing lists, offer group/discount admission, target marketing letter to dance studios (and to the studios our students attend), flyers, and information distributed to college Dance programs and internal marketing to CREC employees (approximately 2,000 people).

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

The Foundation's support allows us to bring nationally and internationally celebrated choreographers to Hartford and to provide high school students with a truly unique dance experience by helping us fund artistic and production fees. Funds from the Excellence in Arts grant also allow us to create equitable opportunities for our students as there are no costs associated with the students' participation in CS.

How will Roberts support be recognized?

The Roberts Foundation will be acknowledged, and the Foundation's logo prominently displayed, in all print, media and social media materials. The Foundation will also be thanked publicly at all performances.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

We evaluate excellence by asking the following questions: (1) Does the work describe meaning about an aspect of an individual life or community, (2) Is there a clear objective articulated in the work, (3) How well does the work communicate an idea, concept, feeling or emotion, (4) Does the work demonstrate a command of the medium of expression, and (5) How does the individual fit into and collaborate with the larger community both in being part of a performance and a member of the community?

How does this project align with that definition, and how does it advance your mission?

The demands, and benefits, of this immersive experience directly relate to our mission. CS helps our young artists foster the skills needed for college and professional level work and create a climate of professionalism which encourages all students to expand their technical knowledge and creative abilities as dancers. As a social justice institution our mission includes "bringing together people of diverse cultural heritage through the arts." As a school we continue to celebrate diversity and to strive for equity in all that we do. To that end, we are mindful about offering opportunities to all of our students regardless of experience or background. And we include artists from all backgrounds and genres as we invite choreographers to participate in our showcase. We are committed to adding diversity of experience and dance genres to our program and to openly celebrate the accomplishments of underrepresented dancers.

How will your audience and the community benefit from this project?

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We believe that public performance presents a unique opportunity for both performer and audience to build community. Our work brings people to our school and to Hartford so they may share in the rich artistic and cultural events that we offer. We are one of the few dance institutions that brings choreographic work of this prestige and notoriety to Hartford. Our student population presents a unique opportunity to bring together families and the general public from varied geographical, social, economic, racial and ethnic populations. And the Academy's location near the south end of Hartford provides accessibility to a population that may find it difficult, for reasons both geographical and economic, to take advantage of cultural and artistic resources available to the Hartford community. But our students benefit most of all, as participation in CS gives them an advantage in the college process – of our 11 seniors in CS, 7 will be attending 'top ten' college dance programs in the fall.

How will this project be evaluated?

We continuously evaluate every part of our process – auditions, rehearsals and performance. We begin by answering the questions posed in how we define Artistic Excellence. We ask faculty to assess students during rehearsals and performances using rubrics designed to assess dancers' understanding of movement, musicality, spatial and emotional awareness. We have had great success in surveying our students and the faculty. A new ticketing system gives us better audience data and we hope to implement audience surveys next year. In the end, anecdotal responses are often the most meaningful. *I staged TV Rerun by Merce Cunningham with a cast of 12 dancers, all of whom rose to the challenges and technical demands of the work. I was amazed by the work ethic and passion for dance that these young artists have cultivated at GHAA. It's a rarity to find such professionalism and mental acuity at the high school level, a true testament to the leadership and guidance of their teachers.*(Andrea Weber).

Cover letter

- [CREC-Cover-Letter-Kim-Stroud.pdf](#)

Board list

- [CREC-Foundation-Board-Members-22-23.pdf](#)

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

- [CREC-Foundation-501c3designationletter.pdf](#)

Financial statement

- [CREC-Annual-Comprehensive-Financial-Report-2021-20222.pdf](#)

Last year operational budget

- [CREC-Budget-June-30-2022-Financials-4th-Qtr.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

- [CREC-YTD-Budget-Report-as-of-4-30-23.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [CREC-Balance-Sheet-as-of-4-30-23.pdf](#)

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Project budget

- [CREC-Choreographers-Budget-2023-Proposed.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

Yes

Annual report

- [CREC-Annual-Report-2021-2022.pdf](#)

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

No

Grant Report

- [CREC-Greater-Hartford-Academy-of-the-Arts-Half-Day-Program-Grantee-Reporting-Form.pdf](#)

Other materials?

- [CREC-Choreographers-Bios-2023.pdf](#)

In case it is helpful to you, our full application can be found here

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/15V8gL9ZNPKE3VqgAP6ojgGQNSVXDDAnB/view?usp=sharing>

All of our supplemental material can be found here

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1I6SpohbUpyRQWFeGBqxvEtduN2ole8J8?usp=sharing>

Thank you so much for this opportunity! We appreciate your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexa Melonopoulos Fleury, Dance Chair, CREC Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts Half Day Program

Have you contacted the Executive Director by email or phone to discuss this proposal?

Yes

Is your cover letter signed by your senior executive? on your letterhead? with your official office address?

Yes