

# Back to School Brings a New Focus on the Arts

*Justice Dance Performance Project's Moving Matters! multi-arts residencies are making the new school year special at Moylan elementary school in Hartford, CT.*

HARTFORD, CT, USA, September 5, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The new school year has just begun, and students at Expeditionary Learning Academy at Moylan elementary school (ELAMS) have a lot to look forward to, including a new principal and a new approach that foregrounds the role of the arts in their education.



Moving Matters final sharing performance in 2023

Justice Dance Performance Project (JDPP) launched its first pilot Moving Matters! multi-arts residency at ELAMS in February 2020, just before the start of the pandemic. "The third-grade classes held a final performance of what they learned with the JDPP teaching artists on February

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*Judy Dworin, Executive & Artistic Director of JDPP*

26. We had no idea that two weeks later the whole world would shut down,” recalls Kathy Borteck Gersten, JDPP’s Moving Matters! project director. At the time, former principal Christine McCarthy had asked JDPP to run the residency to counter the level of trauma she observed in her students. Three and half years later, with the pandemic in the rear view, ELAMS students need the program more than ever.

Moving Matters! unique programming for the first time will be offered throughout the school year in units for grades

K-5 that integrate dance, movement, visual art, song, and story into the curriculum. The theme text will be Amanda Gorman’s Change Sings. Through the story, students will learn to use their personal abilities to make positive change in their lives, their community, and the world. The takeaway message is that anything is possible when we work toward a common goal. “Moving Matters! has nearly thirty years of data to show positive impact on the in-school experience for participating students,” notes JDPP Executive Director, Judy Dworin. “Students are more creative,

more engaged in learning, more cooperative, and more aware of their behavior. Their teachers agree. And they're having more fun. Having this arts presence throughout the year makes its impact even more powerful."

The first residency unit appropriately begins on September 18, right after National Arts in Education Week, which runs from Sep. 10-16. Passed by Congress in 2010, [House Resolution 275](#) designates the week that follows the second Sunday of September as National Arts in Education Week, bringing attention to the vital contributions of arts education to elected officials and educational decision makers across the country and supporting equitable access to the arts for all learners.

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Moving for change since 1989, the Justice Dance Performance Project (JDPP) is a critically acclaimed dance and multi-arts organization. Its mission is to educate, inspire, and ignite awareness, bridging the boundaries of art and social justice to create a more equitable society in ways that spark individual growth and collective action. We approach all work from an anti-racist stance.

JDPP receives operating support from CT DECD Office of the Arts, CT Humanities, Greater Hartford Arts Council, the J. Walton Bissell Foundation, the Diebold Foundation, and other sources. For a complete list of funders, please visit [www.jdpp.org](http://www.jdpp.org).

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