



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ballet Des Moines announces the Ballet Des Moines Campus for Arts and Education in downtown DSM

A headquarters for non-profits, educators, artists and leaders will be built within the previous Kaleidoscope Hub owned by EMC Insurance

Des Moines, Iowa (August 8, 2023) - Ballet Des Moines will catalyze downtown Des Moines' ongoing revitalization efforts with the development of the Ballet Des Moines Campus for Arts and Education, to be located at 655 Walnut. Support for the project was first backed by EMC Insurance, followed by grants from Bravo Greater Des Moines and the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines. A capital campaign will kick off expanded fundraising efforts in the coming months.

The campus will serve as a physical and virtual hub and connector between disciplines and communities, providing shared resources and a physical space for collaboration, pop-up performances, professional development workshops for arts and education professionals, and low-cost space rentals. The campus will also provide a new home for Ballet Des Moines' award-winning arts-integrated education programs that benefit all members of the community, from at-risk families to young professionals to corporate executives.

"This exciting project would not be possible without the partnership of future landlord EMC Insurance, and we are grateful for their transformational leadership and commitment to building vibrancy in downtown Des Moines," said Blaire Massa, CEO, Ballet Des Moines. "The strategic support from Bravo Greater Des Moines, the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines, and local leaders has also been critical to help us ensure that this project is relevant, timely, and meeting important needs in our community."

Kaleidoscope transformation

"We are excited to welcome Ballet Des Moines to the downtown community, and proud to make this investment in the Kaleidoscope that further demonstrates our commitment to preserving and growing our city's vibrancy," said Beth Nigut, Executive Vice President at EMC Insurance Companies.

The campus will revitalize the downtown neighborhood with every day, everywhere art, while making enriching programs more accessible. By placing large windows into active, exemplary

art and educational work right in the heart of downtown Des Moines, this project will provide opportunities for city residents and employees to engage with art every day, whether walking past a window, watching an open rehearsal, participating in an adult or youth education opportunity, or attending a performance.

“The Ballet Des Moines Campus for Arts and Education supports the vision laid out within the Downtown DSM: Future Forward vision plan and action plan — ensuring our Downtown continues to be a destination for inclusive opportunities and welcome surprises,” said Tiffany Tauscheck, President & CEO, of the Greater Des Moines Partnership. “We are pleased to celebrate Ballet Des Moines as they continue to forge creative connections with the community and strengthen the vibrant fabric of our region through their new space and vision for the future.”

Impact of arts and downtown revitalization

Americans for the Arts has collected data on the role the arts play in downtown revitalization efforts in more than 90 cities, with populations from 9,000 to 7 million people. Across the board, the arts attract visitors, residents, and tourists, complement and attract adjacent businesses, increase feelings of belonging and pride-of-place, and define communities as vibrant and dynamic places to live, work, and play. These benefits are even greater when the development is rooted in intentionally inclusive programs that ensure that growth is centered on equity and access.

“At the Community Foundation, we know investing in accessible, creative and inclusive arts and culture opportunities pays dividends for the entire community and is core to a thriving region,” said Kristi Knous, Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines. “The Ballet Des Moines Campus will not only bring people and organizations together to experience, create and celebrate the arts, but will catalyze transformation in downtown Des Moines and beyond.”

A vibrant community hub for Ballet Des Moines and its partners

In addition to ground-breaking, world-class performances, Ballet Des Moines has established itself as a local innovator and state-wide leader in interdisciplinary learning, redefining the role of the arts in education by wielding creativity as a tool to improve academic outcomes, teach empathy, and build the confidence and curiosity in the next generation of leaders. More than free tickets, Ballet Des Moines’ intentional approach to inclusion and access focuses not just on opening doors, but establishing trust-based partnerships with community leaders, educators, and neighborhoods, creating programs that are relevant and resonant across the entire community, and empowering diverse voices to lead.

“Our work in the community is redefining accessibility, forging authentic partnerships where underrepresented communities are invited to share our stage and influence our programs,” said Massa. “With each engagement, we strive to validate, affirm, build, and bridge communities, using performing arts as a vehicle and action towards greater understanding.”

Massa attributes ongoing institutional partners as having fueled a commitment to making significant and lasting change within the greater Des Moines community. “From Oakridge Neighborhood Services to 4-H Youth Development, it is these relationships that ensure our success.”

“Greater Des Moines boasts a rich depth and breadth of organizations contributing to the cultural tapestry,” said Sally Dix, Executive Director, Bravo of Greater Des Moines. “Bravo Greater Des Moines is proud to support the new Ballet Des Moines campus which further strengthens opportunities for creative collisions and every day, everywhere art that will inspire and connect all Iowans through movement and music.”

About Ballet Des Moines

A 2023 [Bravo Spotlight award winner](#) and [Capital Project Grant recipient](#), Ballet Des Moines is Iowa’s resident professional ballet company. BDM presents internationally-renowned artists, produces innovative and interdisciplinary programming, and inspires local youth with opportunities to learn and engage with ballet and other forms of dance. Ballet Des Moines embraces inclusion, diversity, equity, education, and access through all facets of their programming. From free and immersive performances across Iowa to a full night featuring emerging female choreographers, providing access to digital programs to unique collaborations with 4-H Youth Development and Iowa PBS, Ballet Des Moines has engaged with tens of thousands of Iowans.

Ballet Des Moines is a purpose-driven dance company with a mission to enrich lives through inspiring performances, inclusive education and outreach programs, and innovative community partnerships. Learn more at www.balletdesmoines.org.

Learn more about the research and data supporting the project:

[Regional Cultural Assessment, Bravo Greater Des Moines
Iowa 2022 NEA Fact Sheet](#)

[Why the Arts Matter in Iowa, Americans for the Arts](#)

[State Profile for IowaNEA Arts Investment Fact Sheet](#)

[Summary of Arts Education Research and Facts, Americans for the Arts](#)

[Advantages of Arts Learning Continue Over Time](#)

[Inequity in Access to Arts Education](#)

[Early Childhood Education and the Arts](#)

[Improved Academic Performance for Students with High Levels of Arts Involvement](#)

[Building Worlds Together: The Many Functions and Forms of Arts and Community Development](#)