



Baltimore Dance Company marks 15th anniversary with Cancer Benefit Concert

10/2/2015, noon

BALTIMORE — Since 2001, the Baltimore City Cancer Program (BCCP) has screened more than 31,000 Baltimore City residents and provided more than 10,000 free clinical breast exams, 11,500 mammograms, 6,000 cervical cancer screenings, 3,000 oral cancer screenings, and 460 colonoscopies. Of those diagnosed with breast cancer, more than 70 percent have been diagnosed in the early stages of the disease.

Since 2000, Full Circle Dance Company of Baltimore has been presenting choreography that tackles the serious issues that both divide and unite Baltimore. Under the artistic direction of Donna L. Jacobs, Full Circle marks its 15th anniversary by partnering with BCCP, a group that changes lives in our city, especially for women with breast cancer and their families.

On Saturday, October 3, 2015, Full Circle Dance Company presents Fight and Flight, an evening of inspiring and powerful dancing, with proceeds to benefit the BCCP, which is part of the University of Maryland Marlene and Stewart Greenebaum Cancer Center.

At the heart of the performance will be a new work that draws on stories shared by the women of the BCCP's "Living and Loving Life" Breast Cancer Support Circle. Choreographer Donna L. Jacobs has drawn on her own experiences with breast cancer as well as on the insights provided by women in the group to create a new work that expresses both the individuality and universality of the experience of cancer.

Earlier this year, dancers from the company met with women in the support group to hear and record their stories. The dancers translated some of the stories into movement, and the choreographer built on this experience to create the new work.

"The creative process has been quite incredible," said Jacobs. "Some of these stories are very difficult, and there were tears as the women in the group saw the dancers interpret their words through movement. It can be very validating to see your story onstage, to claim your space. Art can express things in new ways that help others understand and relate to a difficult, seemingly alien, experience. And because the dancers are deeply invested in the work they are doing, they are giving themselves fully to the task of telling these stories with their bodies."

In addition to this premiere, the performance will include some of Full Circle's best repertory works. The concert will be followed by a reception featuring live music and refreshments. All artists are

donating their time, with rehearsal space also donated by Morton Street Dance Center and performance space donated by Chesapeake Arts Center.

“We are so grateful that the passion and talent of these dancers will help provide screening, care, and support for people in need in Baltimore City,” said Rhonda M. Silva, Division Administrator for the Baltimore City Cancer Program. “What makes this benefit so unique and personal is that it truly reflects the voices of patients themselves and actually gives a voice to those who have yet to muster the courage to speak. The dancers and the patients are sharing their stories, some of them deeply personal, in hopes that others might gain insight, understanding, strength, and even courage to take the first steps in getting screened.”