

## MECU Neighborhood Grant 2013

### Event Summary for Full Circle Dance Company's Resounding Reflections Workshop

Full Circle Dance Company hosted a two-part workshop, Resounding Reflections, at the Maryland School for the Deaf, Columbia Campus on Tuesday January 14, and Tuesday January 21, 2014 from 6-8pm. Both evenings catered to an elementary group of students (about 15 total) from 6-7pm and a middle school group of students (about 20-25) from 7-8pm.

Prior to the workshops, Full Circle members met with a representative from Gallaudet University who had prior experience working with the deaf and hearing impaired population. She specifically has experience teaching dance to deaf students of many ages, and provided some helpful tips as to how to get deaf students to stay on rhythm, follow basic commands, and understand movement sequences. The company also learned some basic phrases in sign language, such as "hello," "nice to meet you," "my name is," and learned to spell names for introductory purposes at the workshops.

Both groups began their sessions with a warm-up in the center of the gym at the Maryland School for the Deaf. Students were led by select Full Circle Dance Company members as well as an interpreter to distinguish some of the more specific directions given by the company members. Students were then directed to form lines and dance in specific ways across the length of the gym floor (movements high above versus low to the ground, simple rhythmic and repetitive steps that traveled, and some freestyle movement of their choice).

After each group completed the exercises across the floor, a choreographed dance was taught. The younger group of dancers and older group of dancers each had part of the song, "Let the Beat Hit Em" to dance to, resulting in a full 4 minute choreographic work showcasing the movement taught to each group. The piece was completed by the end of the second workshop. Full Circle Company members demonstrated the movement they wanted the students to do, and they were repeated several times over until the students could repeat the movements on their own. Between sessions at the second workshop, Full Circle dancers showed a brief duet that will be performed in their annual concert *Impulse* scheduled for February 21-23, 2014 at Baltimore Theatre Project, further encouraging the students to dance.

The students who participated in the workshops were all provided permission slips to give to their parents/guardians that served as Full Circle's invitation for the students to perform the piece taught to them in the company's performance scheduled on February 23 at 2:30pm. The company anticipates that the vast majority of the students who participated in the workshops will participate in Full Circle's performance as well. The interpreter who assisted both evenings expressed interest in participating, too.

Full Circle received a warm and enthusiastic response from the students as well as the administrative staff at the Maryland School for the Deaf. As a result, the company has also considered taking the entire *Impulse* concert, including the work taught to the students, to the Maryland School for the Deaf to be performed at the theater located on the Columbia Campus in the late spring of 2014. This thought will hopefully materialize in the near future. The company and students felt this was a unique opportunity to share dance to a population that would otherwise not have such exposure, and the company members were extremely impressed with the students' attention and willingness to try something new.