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NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS EARN OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY DANCE ON FULL SCHOLARSHIP AT DANCEWAVE

Dancewave is pleased to announce a \$50,000 2-year grant awarded to the organization by **The Edward and Sally Van Lier Fund of The New York Community Trust**. The fund provides support for talented, economically disadvantaged young people who are seriously dedicated to a career in the arts. The grant will provide full fellowships for five of **Dancewave's Kids Company and Kids Company II** members over the next two years. This year's recipients include **Kelly Rodriguez** and **Princeton Spicer** of Dancewave's critically-acclaimed **Kids Company** and **Simplee Marvelous Gittens** of **Kids Company II**. All tuition and costs associated with a two full years of Dancewave training and education are covered by this prestigious award.



Princeton Spicer and Kelly Rodriguez after performing **Garth Fagan's *From Before*** James Cohan Gallery NYC November 6, 2008
Photo by Nick Sowards
Artwork by Beatriz Milhazes

Snapshot bios of fellowship recipients:

Kelly Rodriguez, whose family hails from the Dominican Republic, is a first generation Latina and lives in East New York, Brooklyn. She is a sophomore at the Talent Unlimited High School in Manhattan where she also studies Dance. Ms. Rodriguez began dancing in the fifth grade in a Hip Hop dance team. She was discovered in Dancewave's annual **Kids Cafe Festival** in 2006 by **Diane Jacobowitz, Dancewave's Artistic/Executive Director**. Jacobowitz offered Ms. Rodriguez a partial scholarship to join Dancewave's Kids Company II and to begin her training at the school. Since then, she has had the wonderful opportunity to learn and perform the works of **Astrid VonUssar, Garth Fagan, Mark Morris, Twyla Tharp, Susan Marshall** and **Paul Taylor**. In addition to working with renowned choreographers, Ms. Rodriguez has had the pleasure of taking technique classes from a diverse array of dance professionals. She plans to attend college to study dance and ultimately become a professional dancer. Currently a member of Dancewave's Kids Company, Ms. Rodriguez has earned a solo part in ***Name by Name***, a piece choreographed by **Susan Marshall**. Ms. Rodriguez has proven herself to be a vital member of this hard-working pre-professional company.



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Facing economic challenges, paying for dance classes and company tuition was difficult for the Rodriguez family. Her talent potential, strong work ethic, and maturity enabled Ms. Rodriguez to be a competitive candidate for the fellowship. As a recipient of this special opportunity, Kelly is proud and feels confident of her potential as a professional dancer. *"I am very thankful for Dancewave because they are giving me the chance to work with so many renowned choreographers. I couldn't imagine my life without dance involved in it, and with Dancewave there is dancing non-stop!"* exclaimed by Ms. Rodriguez.

Princeton Spicer is an African American student and junior at the Bishop Ford Central Catholic High School in Brooklyn. He joined Dancewave's Kids Company in 2007 upon learning of Dancewave's dance companies for kids and teens through a local paper. Mr. Spicer has been dancing and singing since he was nine years old with a debut on Broadway's *A Christmas Carol* in 2001. He has especially enjoyed the work of choreographer **Garth Fagan**. Kids Company commissioned Fagan's *From Before* which the company continues to perform. Mr. Spicer looks to major in Dance in college with a conservatory focus. After college, he is interested in possibly joining **Garth Fagan Dance, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**, and various European dance companies. Like Ms. Rodriguez, Mr. Spicer is rehearsing the work of Susan Marshall and continues to expand on his own choreography. He is currently creating a new duet which he hopes will be accepted into Dancewave's Kids Cafe Festival.

Spicer's dedication to Dancewave and his dance training ethic reflects his strong commitment to his future career in dance. As a recipient of the fellowship, he has been awarded the resources to reach his potential with the support of a pre-professional company. Mr. Spicer expresses, *"A company is a bigger deal than just taking class. A company can show me what classes do for you. I think my Dancewave training has prepared me better for the professional dance world."* He has expressed a great sense of honor in receiving this fellowship and that *"I am doing what I am supposed to be doing."*



Kelly Rodriguez performing in
Astrid von Ussar's *Past/Present* 2008
Photo by Nick Sowards

Simplee Marvelous Gittens is a Caribbean American sophomore at the Sinnott High School in East New York. She has been dancing since for the past six years and is honored to receive this prestigious fellowship. Ms. Gittens possesses a natural dance talent and Dancewave looks to provide her with dance education in technique and performance as a member of Kids Company II. She is currently rehearsing the work of emerging choreographer Sydney Skybetter. With this fellowship, her family's economic struggle will not hold her back from realizing her true potential.

Kids Company and **Kids Company II** are professionally oriented performance training programs for teens thirteen to eighteen years of age who learn and perform a repertoire of dances by internationally renowned modern dance choreographers including **Paul Taylor, Twyla Tharp, Trisha Brown, Mark Morris, Garth Fagan, David Dorfman, Doug Varone, Bill T. Jones, Donald Byrd, and Meredith Monk**. The program is designed to provide students with both a solid foundation in dance technique, and versatility in adapting to different choreographic



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styles. Dancewave's program provides exposure to a broad range of dance artists representing the diverse styles of today's modern dance companies.

During the fellowship period, recipients will have the opportunity to study, rehearse, and perform in Dancewave's **Kids Company and Kids Company II** programs. Company members participate in two weekly rehearsals and a minimum of two weekly technique classes, in addition to an average of ten (10) performances for the course of the season, which runs from September to June. In the course of one year, company members have the unique opportunity to perform in both large, prestigious venues and at local community festivals and schools. These opportunities help young dancers develop a mature, professional, and versatile performance attitude, which assists them in navigating professional careers in the adult world.

Diane Jacobowitz states, *"We are thrilled with this award which offers us the incredible opportunity to establish a fully funded multi-year fellowship program, and continue our successful track record nurturing disadvantaged youth through their early teens on to acceptance at top universities throughout the country. Our commitment to provide our dancers with world-class artists, teachers, and mentors makes the cost of running our programs extremely high. Now is the time to support Dancewave, and we are very grateful to **The Edward and Sally Van Lier Fund of The New York Community Trust** for their support and confidence in this important program. As we continue to grow our programs, foundation partners like (New York Community Trust) take on an important role in our mission of encouraging and supporting the talents of young people."*

Dancewave's five programs include **Kids Company, Kids Company II, and Young Movers** performing ensembles, **D-Wave in Motion** outreach into NYC public schools, **The School at Dancewave, Summer Dance Intensive**, and our annual **Kids Cafe Festival**. Dancewave also encourages its students and the community to learn the craft of choreography and to submit applications to its upcoming Kids Cafe Festival to take place on March 7 and 8 at the Kumble Theater on the Brooklyn Campus of Long Island University. This citywide festival showcases the talented work of young dancers, musicians and actors from every part of the city and this year celebrates the work of Arab and Israeli cultures. **For more information on Dancewave programs, please call Dancewave at 718.522.4696 or visit our website at www.dancewave.org.**

Since 1924, New Yorkers and their professional advisors have relied on **The New York Community Trust** to help them turn their charitable passions into meaningful and effective philanthropy. As the second largest community foundation in the nation, The Trust made \$166 million in grants from assets of \$2.1 billion in 2007. To find out more about The Trust, please call Ani Hurwitz, Communications Director at 212-686-0010 x 224, or visit www.nycommunitytrust.org.