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TEEN DANCE COMPANY SPREADS HOPE, INSPIRATION THROUGH INTERNATIONAL DANCE TOUR

ATLANTA, Georgia – June 7, 2011—Six teens from Moving in the Spirit’s most advanced program, The Apprentice Corporation, will embark on an international dance tour to Panama from July 5-17, 2011. In addition to performing, the teens will engage with youth at Malambo Orphanage, participate in service projects, and discover the country through cultural exchanges. The tour will kick-off with a performance, “Tour Explosion!” on June 30, 2011, 8pm at 7 Stages Theatre in Atlanta, GA.

Moving in the Spirit transforms the lives of young people in Atlanta, many from the city’s most under-resourced communities, and creates compassionate leaders through the art of dance. The opportunity to work with children and teens at Malambo Orphanage is an integral part of the group’s tour to Panama. Moving in the Spirit dancers ages 14-18 will not only perform at the orphanage, but connect with the young people there through collaborative workshops.

“We want our students to have the experience of digging deep and going beyond the surface of merely performing,” explains Dana Lupton, Executive & Artistic Director of Moving in the Spirit. “As young leaders, our Apprentice Corporation students must work hard to overcome the challenges they face each day in their neighborhoods and schools, find their voices, and realize the potential for their lives. Through the movement workshops at Malambo, they’ll have the opportunity to engage with other youth who face immense challenges, encourage *their* voices to emerge, and learn from those unique perspectives. It’s a beautiful reminder of how the arts can reach across cultures and inspire meaningful exchange.”

Reflecting on the upcoming international tour, Apprentice Corporation member Tenesia Benson, age 18, shares, “Experiencing people who are different from me is key to my growth as a leader. I have never had a passport or been on an airplane, and I’ve never travelled outside of Georgia with anyone else other than Moving in the Spirit. My fellow dancers and I are all excited to practice the Spanish we’ve learned in our school classes, and use it to make new friends in Panama. I am looking forward to my first airplane ride, and to leading by example and being a mentor. I believe I can make a difference.”

Besides their work at Malambo Orphanage, Moving in the Spirit's teens will present their hopeful, uplifting dance pieces at the National Institute of Culture, rehearse with Ballet Nacional de Panama, and learn traditional Panamanian dance from local group Ritmos y Tradiciones.

The tour will kick-off with a performance, "Tour Explosion!" on June 30, 2011, 8pm. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$8 for students and seniors, and can be purchased at the door on the night of the event. Cash or check only please. 7 Stages Theatre is located at 1105 Euclid Ave Atlanta, GA 30307. "Tour Explosion!" marks the beginning of Moving in the Spirit's summer-long partnership with 7 Stages Theatre's Youth Creates program. Teens from both programs will create and share work with each other, culminating in a series of community performances.

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Founded by Dana Lupton and Leah Mann in 1986, Moving in the Spirit is a nationally recognized youth development program that integrates high quality dance instruction with performance, leadership and mentor opportunities for young people in Atlanta's urban communities. Moving in the Spirit educates, inspires and unites young people through dance, in order to help them become compassionate leaders.

Moving in the Spirit's Apprentice Corporation, comprised of the organization's most advanced students, offers uplifting performances of modern dance that celebrate diversity and make a difference in the world. Over the past twenty years, teens in its Apprentice Corporation have toured throughout the United States, France, the Czech Republic and Hungary.