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HoustonBallet  
50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY SEASON

## HOUSTON BALLET EXTENDS THE SEASON OF GIVING WITH ANNUAL GRACEFUL GIVINGS EVENT

**PHOTOS:** [bit.ly/2Fhpm7u](https://bit.ly/2Fhpm7u)

**HOUSTON, TEXAS [January 6, 2020]** — Houston Ballet hosts its 12<sup>th</sup> annual Graceful Givings event at the Center for Dance this week. Since beginning in 2008, this annual dancewear giveaway has grown to benefit more than 60 Houston-area schools with dance and theater programs.

“Graceful Givings began after I transitioned from being a performer to a full-time teaching artist,” says Lauren Anderson, former Houston Ballet Principal Dancer and current ECE Program Manager. “I started visiting numerous schools and noticed public school students did not have the resources to purchase appropriate dancewear.”

In line with Houston Ballet’s Education and Community Engagement programming mission, Graceful Givings benefits schools largely from low-income communities with 75 percent or more students identified as economically disadvantaged. During this unique event, representatives from each school take turns shopping for their students, collecting donated dance wear free of charge. The event concludes when all donations have received new homes.

“Providing access to these resources simultaneously motivates students and helps teachers achieve learning outcomes,” says Houston Ballet Director of Education Jennifer Sommers.

Through the support of the community, Houston Ballet is able to bridge the gap, giving away more than \$60,000 of dance apparel, costumes, shoes and accessories annually. Items are generously donated by local dance stores such as Georgie Girl Costumes, Jazz Rags Dancewear and Leapin’ Leotards, among the Houston Ballet Boutique and others. Volunteers also donate their time to sort the many donations and ensure the event runs smoothly.

This year’s Graceful Givings event takes place on January 11, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. at Houston Ballet Center for Dance. To learn more about donating or to register a school to receive donations, visit [bit.ly/2ZgHM1o](https://bit.ly/2ZgHM1o).

## ABOUT HOUSTON BALLET

Celebrating 50 years of creativity, Houston Ballet has evolved from a Company of 16 dancers to one of 61 dancers with a budget of \$33.9 million and an endowment of \$79.2 million (as of June 2019), making it the country’s fifth largest ballet company. Its Center for Dance is a \$46.6 million state-of-the-art performance space that opened in April 2011 and remains the largest professional dance facility in America. Houston Ballet’s reach is global, touring in renowned theaters in Dubai, London, Paris, Moscow, Spain, Montréal, Ottawa, Melbourne, New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles and more.

Houston Ballet attracts prestigious leaders in dance. Australian choreographer Stanton Welch AM has served as Artistic Director of Houston Ballet since 2003, raising the level of the Company’s classical technique and commissioning works from dance legends such as Julia Adam, George Balanchine, Aszure Barton, Christopher Bruce, Alexander Ekman, William Forsythe, Jiří Kylián, Edwaard Liang, Trey McIntyre and Justin Peck. Executive

Director James Nelson serves as the administrative leader of the organization, a position he assumed in February 2012 after serving as the Company's General Manager for more than a decade.

Beyond its stage presence, Houston Ballet maintains a strong foothold in continuing to foster a love for dance in future generations. Its Education and Community Engagement program reaches more than 70,000 individuals in the Houston area annually. Houston Ballet Academy trains more than 1,000 students every year, producing more than 50 percent of the elite athletes that comprise Houston Ballet's current Company.

For more information on Houston Ballet, visit [houstonballet.org](http://houstonballet.org).

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