



Transforming Lives Through Creativity and Connection



# How can we better support children facing rising levels of anxiety, depression, isolation and discord?

## Can college students be part of the solution?

CityStep is the celebrated program that brings together college students and schoolchildren in a powerful partnership of creative self-expression, collaboration and mentorship. Rigorous and values-driven, CityStep's movement-based curriculum supports the social-emotional well-being and cognitive development of each child and powerfully connects children to one another in mutual understanding and shared enterprise. At a time when children are increasingly isolated from one another, on screens, and facing rising levels of anxiety, depression and discord, CityStep is a vital, embodied experience of connection. College students gain an unparalleled experience of collaborative leadership, social impact and the arts.

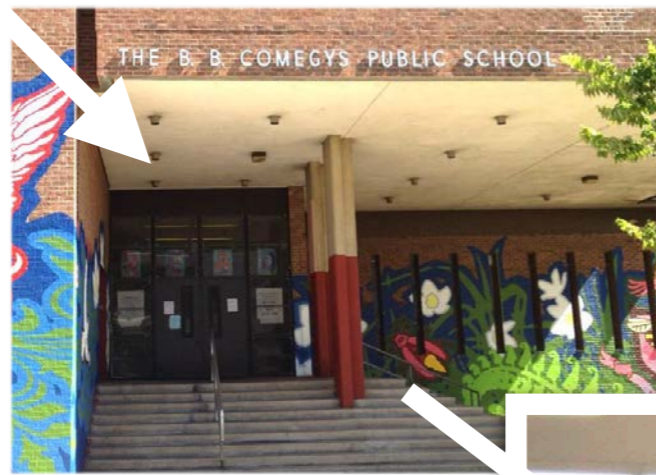
Each teaching year culminates in an original performance that brings children together from across a city, engaging the entire community. Founded at Harvard by Sabrina Peck 35 years ago, CityStep has since spread organically to other colleges and communities. We have embarked on an ambitious expansion plan with a vision to provide the transformative CityStep experience of creativity and connection to children nationwide.

**How are we all going to get along? CityStep has an answer.**

# The CityStep Model



College-Student  
Teachers



City Schools



Collaborative Dance



Performance

# Our Values-Based Pedagogy

## Individual



Self-expression



Exploration



Meaning Through Movement



Mastery

## Relationships



Mutual Understanding



Collaboration



Mentorship



Problem Solving

## Community



Inclusion



Diversity



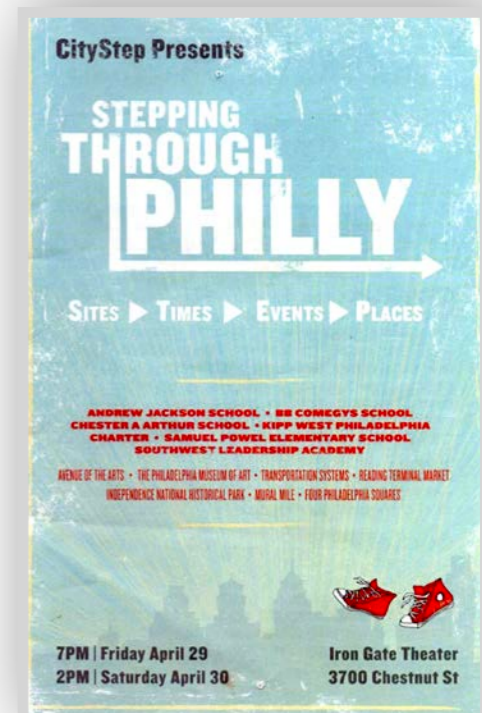
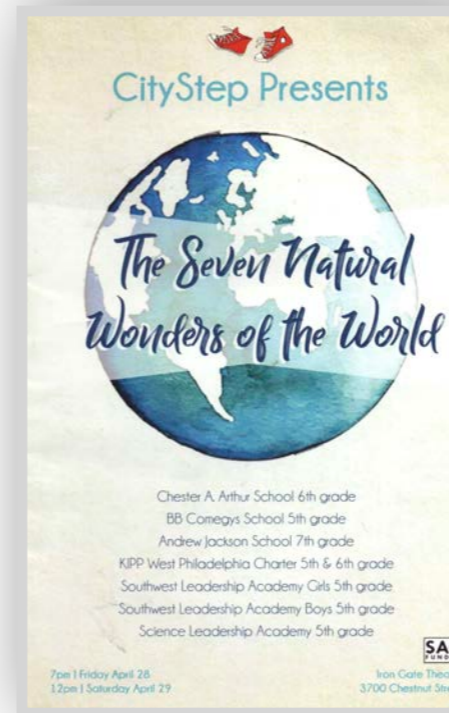
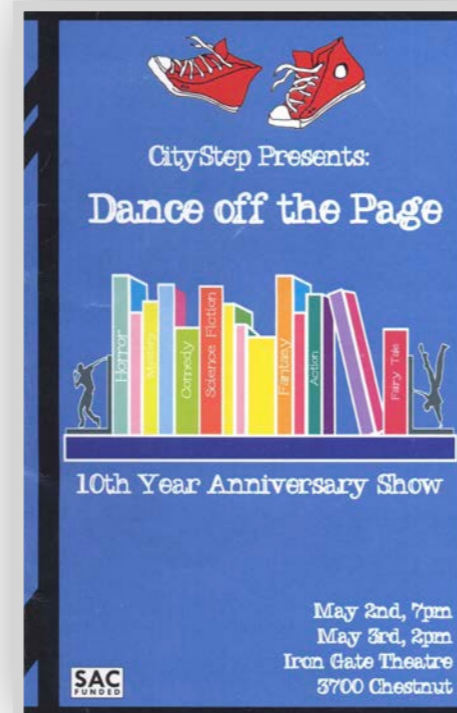
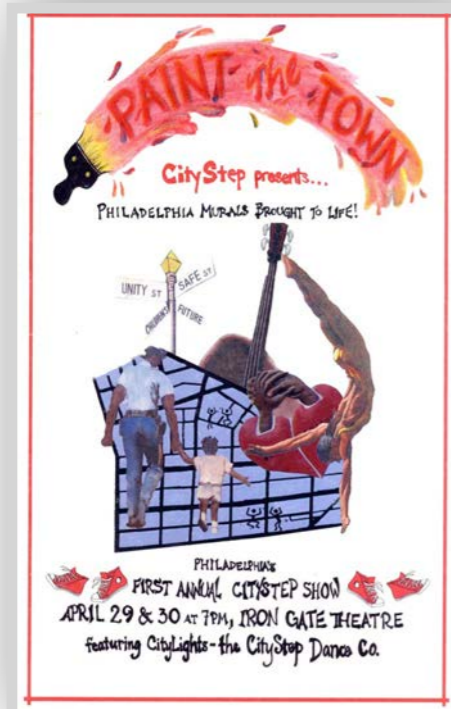
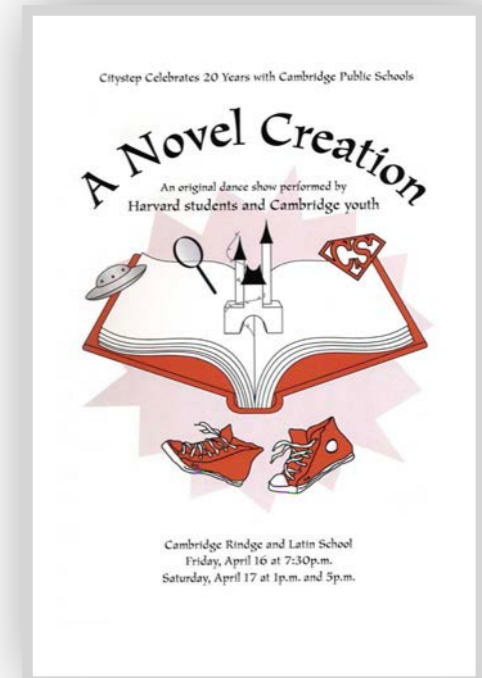
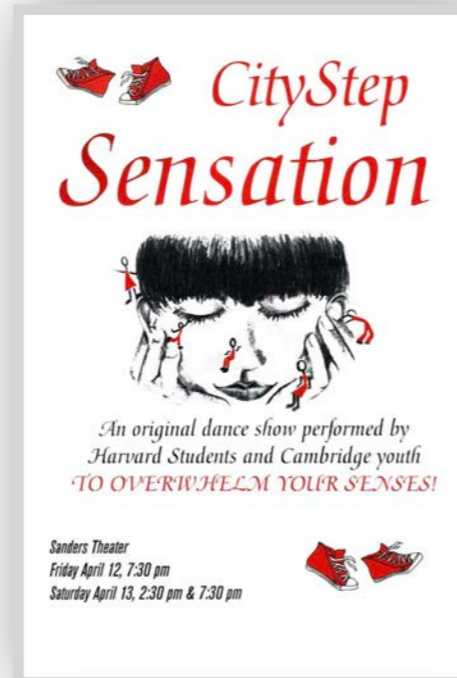
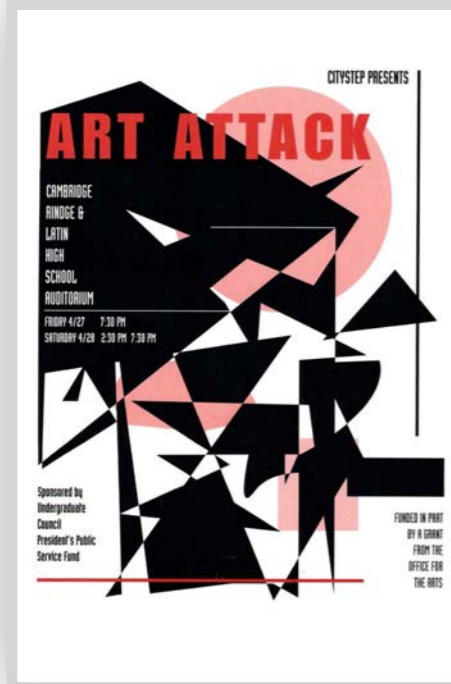
Choreography



Unity

# End-of-year Performances

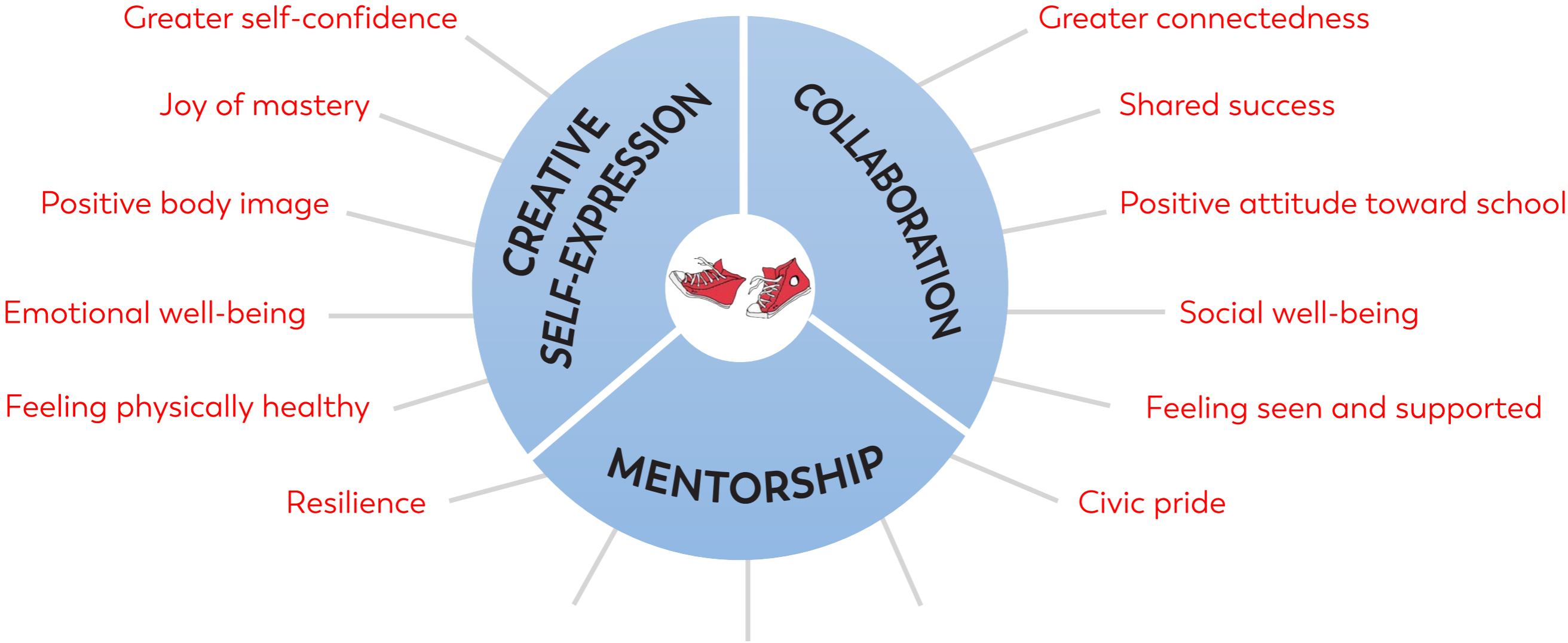
Original works created by all participants that explore themes relevant to children's lives



Told through dance and performed by children from across the city for the entire community

# Results

An embodied experience of Creativity, Connection and Mentorship has powerful effects:



Strengthened problem-solving abilities, observational skills, creative thinking, cognitive abilities, communication skills

# Four Communities and Growing



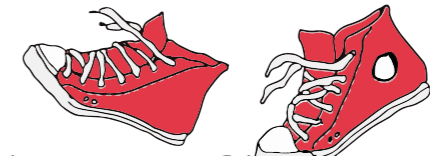
**CITYSTEP**  
PeNN

in Philadelphia, 2004



**CITYSTEP**  
PRiNCeTON

in Trenton, 2012



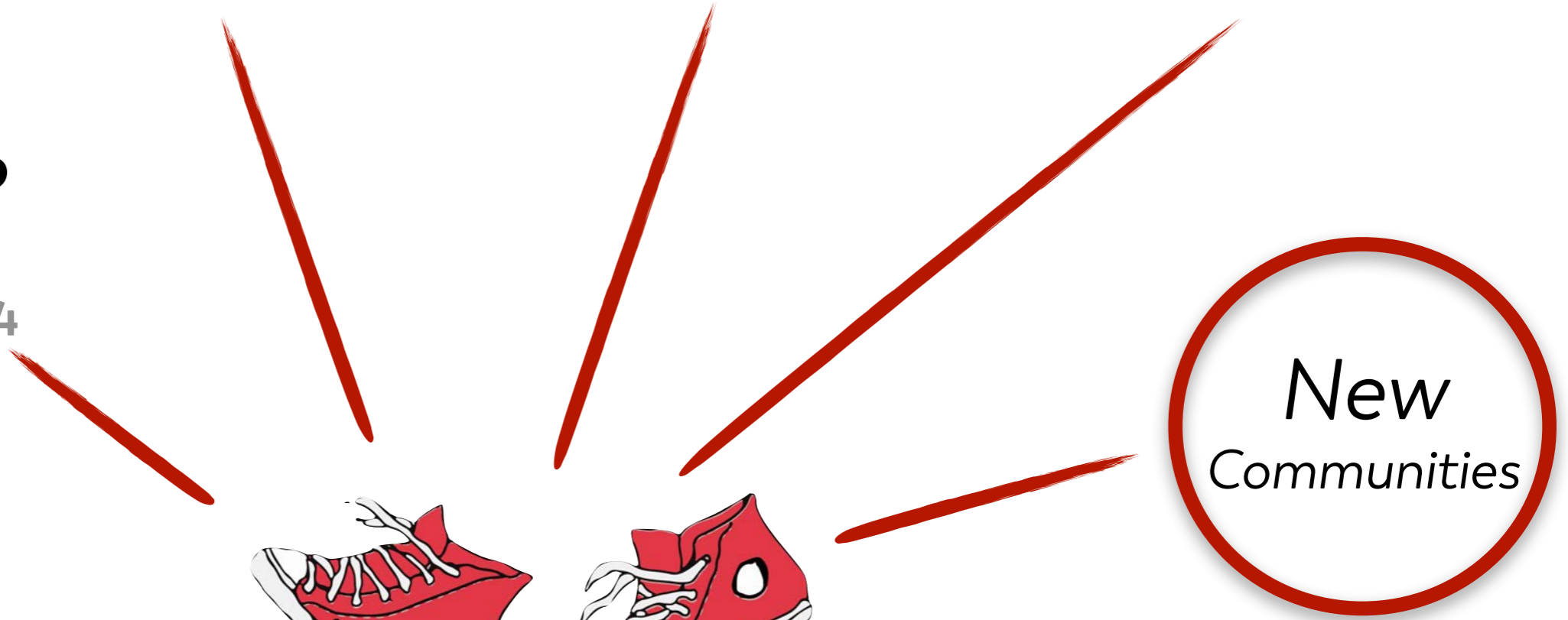
**CITYSTEP**  
YaLe

in New Haven, 2015



**CITYSTEP**  
HaRVaRD

in Cambridge, 1984



**CITYSTEP**

# CityStep **Harvard** in Cambridge

30 College-student teachers  
5 classes in 3 schools | 120 kids





# CityStep Penn in Philadelphia

34 College-student teachers

6 classes | 120 kids



# CityStep Princeton in Trenton

11 College-student teachers

4 classes | 140 kids



# CityStep **Yale** in New Haven

20 College-student Teachers

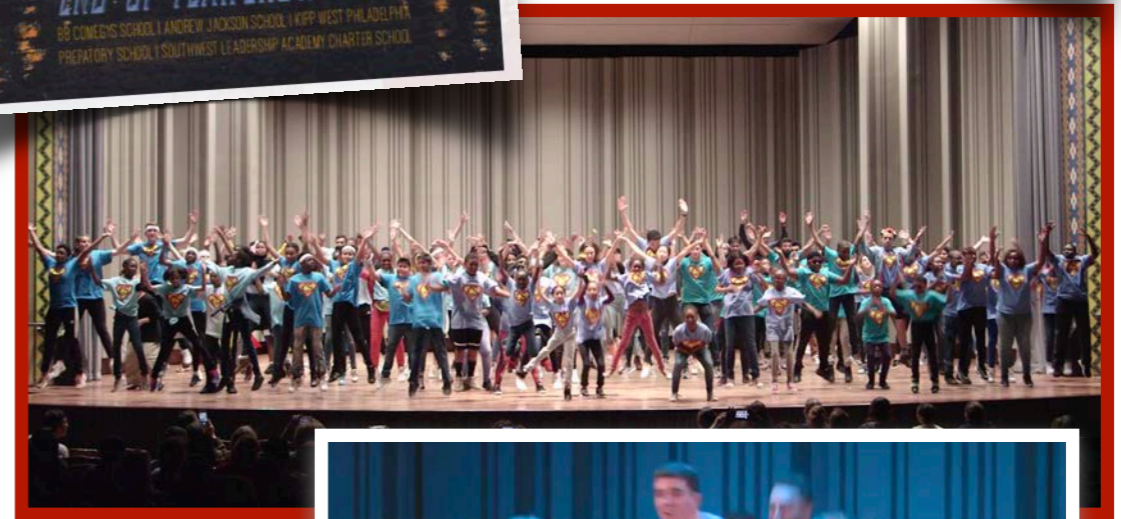
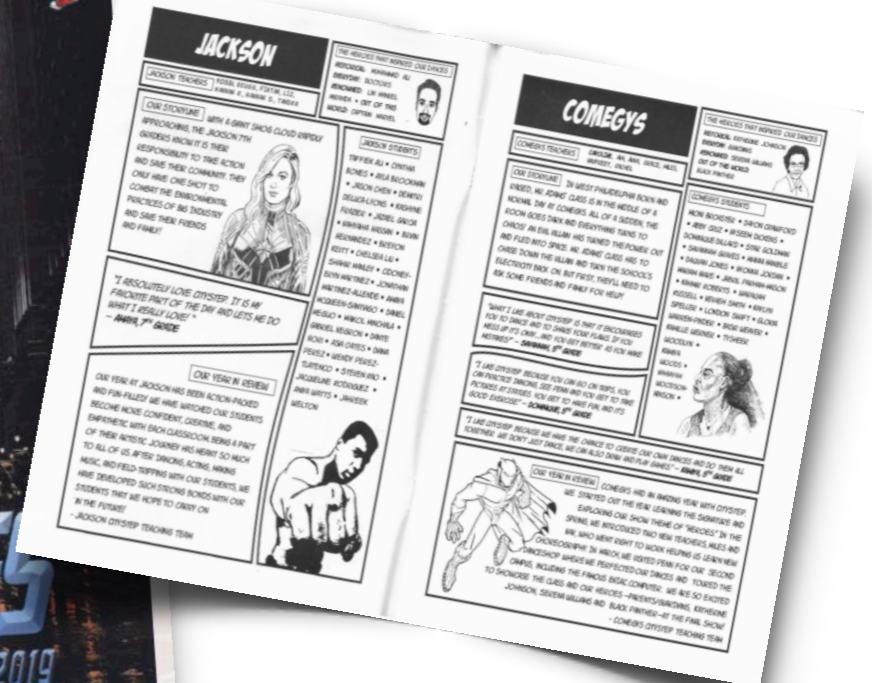
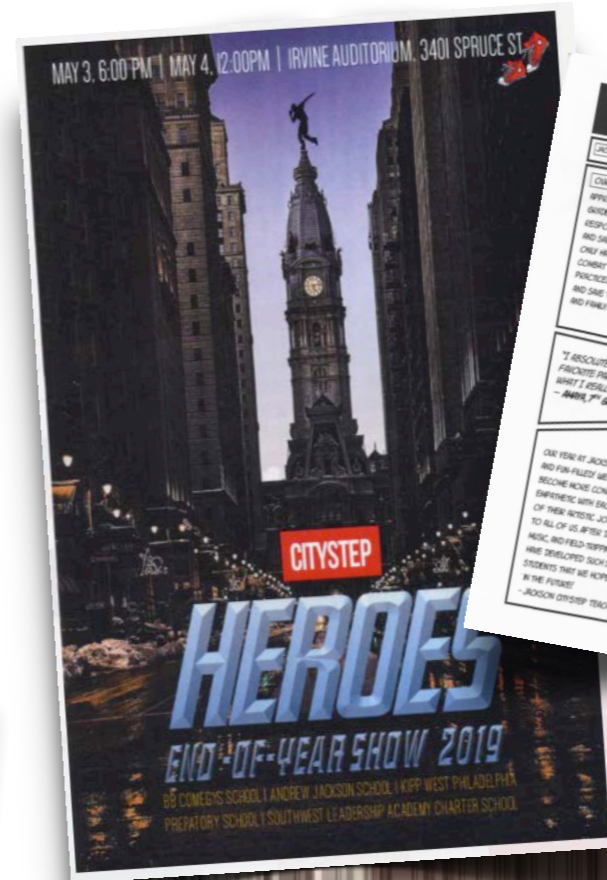
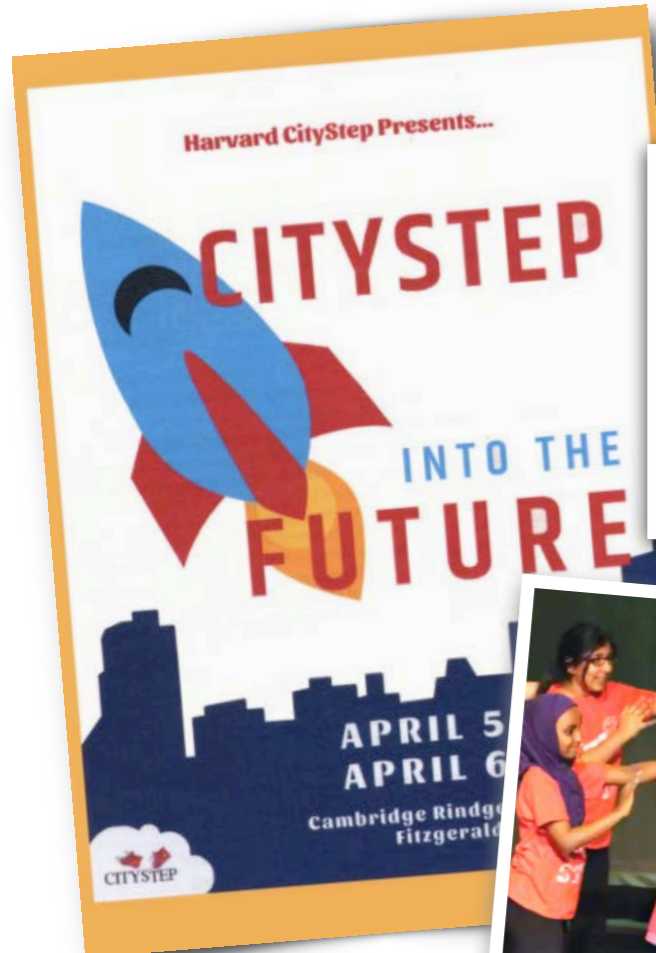
2 community partners | 60 kids



CityStep **Harvard**  
in Cambridge

# Recent CityStep Shows

CityStep **Penn**  
in Philadelphia

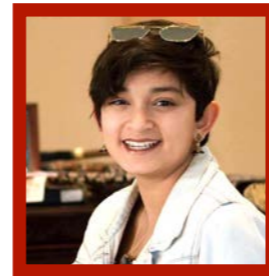


# CityStep Leadership on Campus

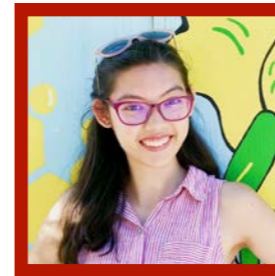
## CityStep Harvard



Dara Badon



Vismaya Kharkar



Eris Mihelic



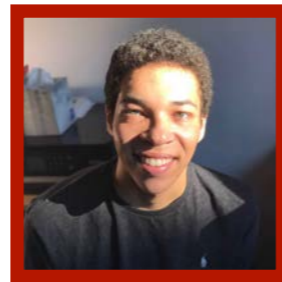
K. Stawasz

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## CityStep Penn



Ace Evans



Miles Meline



Sunny Reardon



Grace Wu

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## CityStep Princeton



Becca Berman



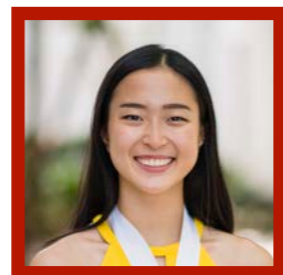
Natalia Lalin



Ally Yan

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## CityStep Yale



Dora Guo



Hema Patel



Adrian Venzon

# CityStep HQ in NYC



**Executive Director**  
Sabrina Peck



**Media Director**  
Adam Solsburg



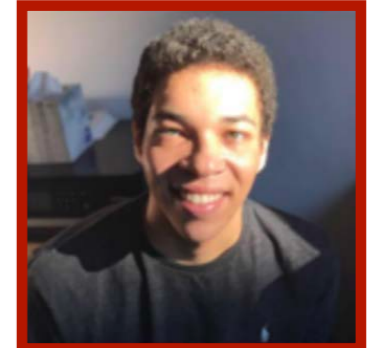
**Programming**  
Dayja Nelson



**Education**  
Luana DeBorst



**Administration**  
Brianna Bellamy



**Research Intern**  
Miles Meline

**CityStep HQ** supplies enrichment, training and support to the student-run companies



**All-Company  
Teacher-Trainings**



**Inter-college  
conferences**



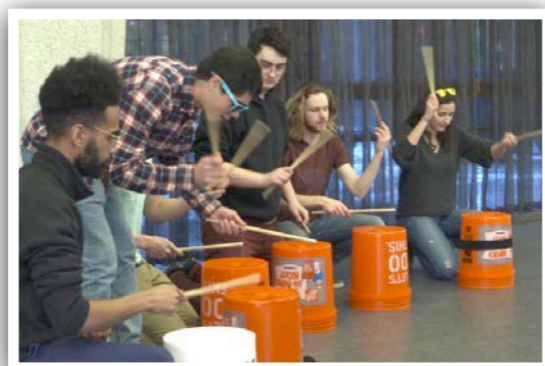
**Curriculum Retreats**



**Leadership Summits**



**On-Campus  
Workshops**



**Music Initiative**



**Visual Arts Initiative**



**Guest Artists**

# Impact

## Our Reach:

**7,000** students + **2,000** undergraduate mentors

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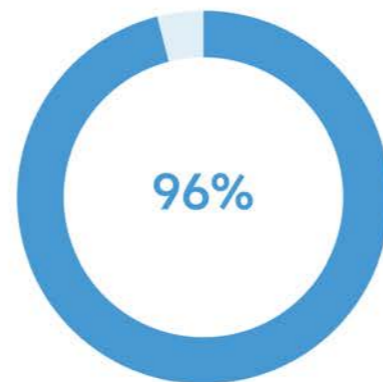
Changing the lives of **9,000** young people and **thousands** of community audience members

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## Student Pilot Survey



reported an overall **positive** experience



felt more **confident**



felt they gained the ability to **express** themselves through movement



felt **closer** to their classmates

# From Our CitySteppers

“Every single time I go to CityStep I feel more confident, not just in dance but overall. I can do many other things because of CityStep.” —**Elijah, Amigos School**

“CityStep makes dancing fun... we use our body and we get to show how we actually feel while we’re dancing.” —**Ara, Graham & Parks School**

“I like that it’s not just that they make a dance for us and we just have to do it. They take our ideas and we get to make some choreography for ourselves, we get to work on the dance and make it our own.” —**Lizzy, Cambridge 3YP**

“I usually get really really really mad, I like to dance it out and sing it out as well. CityStep just helps me control myself”. —**Beth, King Open School**

“Thank you for a great year. You and the other teachers showed me how to do things I never knew I could do. And when I thought I couldn’t do it you gave me the encouragement I needed to continue.” —**Graham, Morse School**

“Coming from a neighborhood full of obstacles, this program took me away from that environment and helped to steer my energy toward something creative and helped me think differently.” —**Alexie Rodriguez, reflecting 35 years later on his experience as a 5th grade CityStepper**



# From Our Teachers

“It’s really impressive to see the impact that even one class has on a group of students, tapping into this creative, collaborative energy. Kids open up to each other and are much more collaborative and accepting of one another when they are dancing and being creative.” —**Sarah Betancourt**

“CityStep is the perfect medium and method of executing one of my personal goals: to make an impact. I get to go into classrooms and I get to mentor students and help them realize their limitless potential. It is my favorite part of the week! CityStep has made me realize that I cannot live a happy, virtuous life that I’m proud of without uplifting those around me.” —**Miles Meline**

“CityStep has allowed me to take risks artistically—and take risks as a leader. I had never really viewed myself as someone who could take charge, control a group of 40 college students or 150 elementary school students. The growth CityStep provided me in terms of collaborative leadership skills and management skills is something I will take with me. I’ve learned a lot about myself as well.” —**Grace Wu**

“My favorite memory of CityStep was a student telling us that she had lost a parent and was really distraught. But instead of staying home from school, which would have been allowed, she decided to come in because CityStep gave her a lot of comfort and a sense of community. She felt like she’d rather be with us than be home. It touched me so deeply. I would continue to do CityStep for the rest of my life if I could!” —**Ella Cohen**

“CityStep transformed my perspective on education. The experience inspired me to pursue combatting both education inequality and healthcare inequality as an aspiring physician-educator.” —**Matt Duda**

# From The Community

“Of special importance to me is the huge impact these mentors have had on our young students. The students that have participated have shown tremendous academic and social progress. We feel that this huge turnaround can be directly attributed to CityStep. I have been in the school district for twelve years, and I have never seen such a dramatic improvement in the students in such a short period of time.”

—Sharif El-Mekki, Principal, Shaw Elementary School, Philadelphia

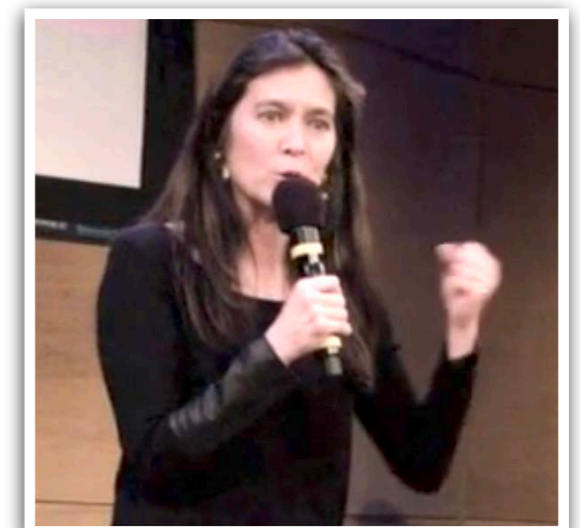


"There's so much in our society that teaches us that we have to be afraid. And CityStep is about removing the fear, and that is as deep and as beautiful a task as I can imagine."

—Bill Rauch, Artistic Director, Perelman Center for the Performing Arts

“Thinking about what CityStep means to me, three words come to mind: Commitment, Collaboration and Challenge. It was an ethos that kids could be as great as adults. And we were not going to talk down to those kids, we were going to treat them as colleagues. We were going to ask for their commitment, ask for their collaboration and challenge them.”

—Diane Paulus, Artistic director of the A.R.T. and CityStep alum





# A Force for Positive Change

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