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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BalletX Awarded \$565,250 in William Penn Foundation Grants to Offer Dance Education in Philadelphia Public Schools and Free Performances in Philadelphia Neighborhoods

WHAT: BalletX, Philadelphia's Premier Contemporary Ballet Company, has received a \$247,500, 36-month grant to offer *Dance eXchange*, a dance residency for 3rd and 4th graders, in Philadelphia public elementary schools, as well as an additional \$317,750, 36-month grant to present BalletX *Pop-Ups*, free performances that bring BalletX dancers into Philadelphia neighborhoods. The award totals \$565,250, and is part of the William Penn Foundation's highly competitive Arts Education and New Audiences/New Places strategy to keep art in the classroom and in the public eye.

The grant will allow BalletX to continue building on its groundbreaking in-school dance education initiative, *Dance eXchange*. Based on the award-winning methodology of the National Dance Institute (NDI), *Dance eXchange* uses live music and structured creative learning to teach Philadelphia students the basic vocabulary of dance, while fostering personal growth skills like self-confidence, focus, teamwork, and determination. Founded in Spring 2014 with a class of 24 students at Andrew Jackson School, the program has since grown to reach nearly 200 3rd and 4th grade students in the 2016-2017 school year. *Dance eXchange* brings two teaching artists and a live musician into the classroom twice every week for thirteen weeks, for a total of 26 class sessions per year, and features a mid-way performance for students' peers, as well as a final performance on a professional stage for friends, family, and the community.

The William Penn Foundation award will also help further establish BalletX *Pop Ups* as a fundamental and vital component of Philadelphia's thriving performing arts scene. Having successfully launched ten *Pop Ups* in and around Philadelphia as part of BalletX's 10th Anniversary celebration in 2015-16, the company will broaden the scope of the program in 2017-18, reaching more neighborhoods and audiences than ever before. The performances will continue to be free and open to the public, and staged in interesting and unexpected places utilizing the company's customized Portable Dance Floor. With three *Pop Ups* already scheduled, one at University City District's The Porch at 30th Street Station on September 22, and one at Fisher Park on September 23, the program is off to a strong start.

"This incredibly generous support from the William Penn Foundation breathes new momentum into *Dance eXchange* and our *Pop Up* performances," says Christine Cox, Co-Founder, Artistic and Executive Director of BalletX. "BalletX has gained national recognition as a leading innovator in contemporary ballet due to our hard work and perseverance over the past eleven years, so we are proud to be at the forefront of sharing this beautiful art form and discipline with our community here at home."

The William Penn Foundation considers opportunities to increase arts education for economically disadvantaged children. The Foundation's funding is intended to expand, increase, and deepen the arts learning for students, through partnerships with outside providers. The Foundation also supports a diverse range of high quality art projects in a wide range of public, civic, and community spaces with the overarching expectation that the works will be highly accessible to the public.

For more information on BalletX, visit the company website at: <http://balletx.org/>. And for more information on the William Penn Foundation, visit the foundation website at: <http://www.williampenfoundation.org/>.

VISUALS: Dance education, contemporary ballet, music, costumes, stage production, community arts engagement

WHO: BalletX, William Penn Foundation, Christine Cox, Tara Keating, BalletX dancers

WHERE and WHEN:

BalletX Dance eXchange

- Final Performance TBA

BalletX Pop Ups

- University City District The Porch at 30th Street Station
Friday, September 22, 2017
12:30pm
- Fisher Park
Saturday, September 23, 2017
1:00pm

More Pop Ups to be announced soon!

ABOUT: BalletX, Philadelphia's premier contemporary ballet, unites distinguished choreographers with an outstanding company of world-class dancers to forge new works of athleticism, emotion, and grace. Founded in 2005 by Christine Cox and Matthew Neenan, and now under the direction of Cox as Artistic & Executive Director, BalletX challenges the boundaries of classical ballet by encouraging formal experimentation while preserving rigorous technique. The company is committed to producing new works of the highest quality and integrity that bring the combined visions of choreographers and dancers to life and cultivate in audiences a collective appetite for bold, new dance. For more information, visit www.balletx.org.