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April 22, 2009

To: The California Endowment

From: Catherine Corral, Executive Director
transcendANCE Youth Arts Project

Re: Building Healthy Communities RFP

Dear California Endowment Representative,

The many current activities of our youth-centered organization all support the outcome of HEALTHY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT in City Heights. transcenDANCE Youth Arts Project is a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering culturally diverse, City Heights neighborhood youth to mobilize social change through the **Performance Arts**. Our youth citizen artists go through intensive technical dance theatre training and personal exploration - by way of leadership development, community-building activities, and service projects - with the ultimate goal of creating dynamic performances that synthesize their artistic strengths while addressing complex social issues that impact their community. transcenDANCE youth performers share these inspiring performances with a greater audience to provoke community engagement with the material. Our core programs, based out of our studio – a storefront space on University Ave. – draw teens and children from our local City Heights schools to participate in the following:

- Teen Performance Group: *Teens in the Performance Group go through an intensive training and leadership process. Members are selected by audition and commit to 12 hours/week of classes and rehearsals. The Performance Group stages an annual production in a special theatre venue and tours the work to 10,000 audience members per year.*
- Student Leadership Team/Performance Company: *The members of our most exceptional student leadership tier are chosen by invite only; they must have a minimum 2 years experience in the Performance Group, exceptional*

dance/performing and leadership skills. They act as mentors and leaders in the programs.

- Studio Community Engagement Program *is an intergenerational broadening of our service base to include younger youth and parents. The program, (1) subsidizes class fees, (2) supports community involvement and service, and (3) encourages individuals to participate in physical activity and creative expression. On average, 75 students attend at least a weekly class each month.*

As the Executive Director of transcenDANCE, I acknowledge our organization's understanding of this proposal and am committed on behalf of transcenDANCE to participate in the planning process. We are prepared to dedicate 33% of our AmeriCorps staff's time, 10% of our Program Director's time, and 10% of our Executive Director's time as in-kind staff time devoted to the planning activities. In addition, we are happy to offer up our space at no cost for community gatherings, meetings, and other formal or informal workshops/classes related to the planning process. Our studio space can accommodate up to 50 people and is in a central location in City Heights.

We are excited by the opportunity to participate in this planning process and to help facilitate engaging the youth voice and perspective through transcenDANCE. Please feel free to contact me directly for more information about our organization or our commitment to the 9-month planning process with this California Endowment project.

Sincerely,
Catherine Corral
Catherine Corral,
Executive Director