



MOVIN' and GROOVIN'

UNLOCKING CHILDREN'S POTENTIAL

“Moves & Grooves started out with dance but grew into so much more. It keeps growing because these kids just need and want this stuff so badly.”

JIM ROBERT
Board President



Dancing through Barriers

“**D** dreamed of learning to dance. In fifth grade she found Moves & Grooves and started making her dream come true. She became passionately engaged with the arts and was thriving. And school was going well.

But by seventh grade, D’s world changed dramatically. The pandemic shut down Metro Nashville Public Schools and online learning was a challenge for her, especially reading and math. And she was feeling isolated.

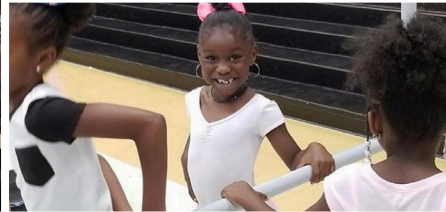
With D’s father in prison, her mother remained single-handedly dedicated to D’s success. She did all she could, but she knew that D needed help.

D’s mom reached out to the school, only to be referred to expensive tutors who were not only far out of the family’s budget but also outside of public transportation routes and difficult to reach.

The family was ready to give up, as were many Nashville families — the educational barriers just seemed too high.

But Moves & Grooves was there for them. D’s mother told Jherykah, her daughter’s dance teacher at Moves & Grooves, about her situation and they worked together to set up a free tutoring routine to address the gaps in D’s learning. During and after regular school hours, Jherykah worked closely with D helping her to build confidence, deepen her understanding of math and reading and improve her grades.

Although the pandemic presented many challenges, Moves & Grooves’ ongoing commitment to building relationships with its students never wavered. Its dedicated staff walks alongside students and their families to help forge a successful path to graduation and adulthood.



Success through Movement, Mentoring

Moves & Grooves started as a college assignment by Dr. Emerald Mitchell. When she expanded it into a nonprofit in 2003, she had a classroom of five students. Today through a partnership with four local middle and elementary schools, Moves & Grooves reaches more than 250 students annually in South Nashville.

Since its beginning, Moves & Grooves has inspired students not only to create art themselves but also to discover, learn and grow through the arts. Although most students come to Moves & Grooves for dance and arts programming, they ultimately discover more about themselves, their goals and their dreams.

Free before- and after-school programs for grades five through 12 offer students a science-based, art-integrated learning experience, tailored to the individual. The programs provide hands-on science experiments, dance choreography and art activities to cultivate future artists, thinkers, leaders and achievers.

Moves & Grooves also seeks to introduce girls and children of color to opportunities they might not have thought of pursuing, especially STEM careers — those in science, technology, engineering and math. Moves & Grooves programming inspires them to see technology as exciting and to envision themselves as makers and inventors.

Programming that Grooves

“I’ve seen Dr. Mitchell around these teenage girls, and they just think she hung the moon. Her personal influence in their lives is extraordinary.”

LAURA COOPER
First Lady of Nashville

The Moves & Grooves Summer Dance & Music Camp provides high-quality arts in a creative atmosphere where students enjoy dance, theater, music and academic classes taught by professionals.

By integrating dance, a seven-week day camp presents traditional science and math in a non-traditional way. Students enjoy dance training, proper nutrition, self-image workshops and more. The goal is to help students discover the connection between dance, science and health to reduce obesity in children.

The Prepare, Learn, Unite and Graduate program guides Moves & Grooves alumni in grades nine through 12 in preparing for life after graduation. P.L.U.G. participants attend workshops that focus on college and career readiness,

financial aid, interviewing skills, goal setting, SAT/ACT prep and dressing for success. The program not only offers youth employment, entrepreneurial development, work experience, college tours and scholarships, but it also works to ensure each high school student graduates on time to either attend a four-year college, begin a career or serve in the military.

The Moves & Grooves Innovate STEAM initiative connects black and brown girls to science, technology, engineering, entrepreneurship, art and math through an integrated curriculum that incorporates creative thinking and applied arts. Students learn math through music, science through dance and merge coding and choreography to spark curiosity and creativity.



Come for the *Music*, Stay for the Growth

Although Moves & Grooves leans heavily on dance and the arts in general, its focus is on the whole child, meeting students' needs through:

- **ARTS:** Encouraging students to be creative and use various forms of art as a positive outlet.
- **EDUCATION:** Inspiring them to excel in school.
- **HEALTH:** Promoting positive health through nutritious snacks and daily physical activity.

- **DIVERSITY:** Developing young people to take pride in their own culture while holding cultures of all people in high regard.
- **SERVICE:** Creating opportunities for students to give back to their neighborhoods and beyond.
- **LEADERSHIP:** Empowering them to become self-reliant and independent citizens.



Empowering a Community

Moves & Grooves' programs have made a positive difference in the lives of more than 1,600 children over 20 years and immensely impacted the community, resulting in:

- 95% of high-school students graduating.
- 90% of parents reporting an increase in their child's self-confidence.
- 80% of students improving in math, reading and other academic subjects.

- 91% of middle-school students saying that Moves & Grooves provides them with a sense of safety and provides a positive challenge.
- 96% of students expressing greater interest in attending college and pursuing STEM careers.

Moves & Grooves works primarily in Antioch, one of the fastest-growing areas of Nashville. Youth violence and child suicide are prevalent there, yet

without Moves & Grooves, there would be no space or programs for children in that community.

Rather than being reactive, the goal is to be proactive. The pandemic has triggered upheaval in families and increased social unrest. Moves & Grooves is focused on how this is affecting children mentally, emotionally, socially and academically.

Moves & Grooves programs help students to better cope with stress, transition and challenges through movement, mentoring and meditation.



Expanding the Groove

For Moves & Grooves, the pandemic brought into focus the need for its own facility.

When schools closed, staff scrambled to stay engaged with students and families. Parents looked for help with online learning platforms. Disadvantaged and disenfranchised children, mainly those of color, lacked resources and suffered.

To connect and encourage students, Moves & Grooves offered virtual programs and reached out to families via phone calls, texts and video visits.

The effort re-ignited Moves & Grooves' passionate desire to have its own space. With a home of its own, the organization could reach and serve many more students.

Plans for growth include the purchase of at least two acres of land with a new 20,000- to 25,000-square-foot Moves & Grooves Center for the Arts. With multi-purpose classrooms for academics, visual arts, photography, music

recording, video production and graphic design, the space also will house:

- Study lounge
- College and career center
- Computer lab
- Cafeteria and kitchen
- Office space
- Dance studios
- Retail store
- Performance auditorium
- STEAM lab
- Administrative offices

Such a development would allow Moves & Grooves to not only serve more children but to also offer programs and services like culinary arts and mental health counseling. Plus, the center could operate as an emergency shelter for children and families within a one-mile radius.

Recognizing the need for connection and purpose, Moves & Grooves seeks to create a safe space for all children to feel seen, heard and accepted.

"Moves & Grooves is helping our children achieve an education. It is giving them the shot at the equality and equity they deserve — particularly young girls."

WANDA LYLE
President, UBS



Moves & Grooves' mission is to enhance the academic achievement of children through creative arts programs.

MovesAndGrooves.org