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CONNECTICUT BALLET AND STATE OF CONNECTICUT JUDICIAL BRANCH
ANNOUNCE EXPANDED RECREATIONAL SERVICES & MENTORING PROGRAM

Stamford and Hartford, CT....Connecticut Ballet has been awarded a 26-month contract to provide recreational services to youth in detention at the state's three detention centers and two private facilities serving females under contract to the state. The director of the ballet's Center for Dance Education, Dana Rodriguez, announced the contract and the launch of a unique mentoring program for talented and motivated youth once they are released. The competitive contract was awarded to the ballet as an outgrowth of its Juvenile Justice Outreach Program which has provided dance and drum instruction to youth in detention for the past seven years with leadership funding from The Tow Foundation and Renee B. Fisher Foundation.

"We are delighted to be able to serve this unique population of youth who would otherwise never have such an opportunity," stated Ms. Rodriguez. "Often it only takes one class with a dynamic teaching artist providing stimulation and encouragement to light the spark which will ultimately return these boys and girls to the mainstream," she continued. The ballet's teaching artists currently provide classes in hip hop, African percussion, ballroom and martial arts at Bridgeport Detention Center, New Haven Detention Center, Hartford Detention Center, Washington Street Detention Center for Girls, and SAGE Detention Center for Girls in Hamden.

"The goal of our efforts," said Bill Carbone, Court Support Services Division Executive Director, " is to provide children with exposure to pro social activities and create connections to organizations that can provide opportunities for mentoring and after care services. These kinds of activities can improve long term outcomes and encourage behavior change to prevent children from re-entering the system."

In partnership with the Judicial Branch's Department of Probation and the Department of Children and Families, the ballet's new Mentoring Program provides continuing instruction and work/study stipends to youth first identified as standouts whilst in detention. "We are proud to be a conduit for society to invest in these youth," stated Artistic Director and CEO Brett Raphael, "to do our part in providing career-track alternatives to young people who are emerging from a legacy of trauma and dysfunctional family lives." The

mentorships culminate in a week-long internship at Connecticut Ballet's headquarters and assistance in job placement and/or counseling about college prospects.

The program is part of the ballet's expanded Center for Dance Education which provides educational assembly programs, community-based dance instruction, professional development, and accelerated training scholarships to students throughout the state.

For further information, contact 203-964-1211 or 860-293-1039, or visit www.connecticutballet.com.