DanceSyndrome receives Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

Tuesday 4 June, 2019

Lancashire charity DanceSyndrome have been honoured with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK.

On Sunday the London Gazette announced the charity is one of the groups to be awarded a 2019 Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. The winners are announced each year on 2 June, the anniversary of The Queen's Coronation.

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service is the highest award given to local volunteer groups across the UK to recognise outstanding work benefitting their own communities. It was created in 2002 to celebrate the Golden Jubilee. It is the MBE for volunteer groups. This prestigious honour recognises the exceptional contributions made to local communities by groups voluntarily devoting their time for the benefit of others.

DanceSyndrome is an innovative, multi-award winning dance charity that was founded by Jen Blackwell, a dancer who happens to have Down's Syndrome and her parents to enable her and others to find the right opportunities and training in community dance no matter their disability. DanceSyndrome's ethos is that disability should never be a barrier to following your dreams and they empower people with and without disabilities to pursue a career in dance.

Thanks to funding from Spirit of 2012 and the National Lottery Community Fund, DanceSyndrome has grown significantly over the last three years and now regularly works with over 40 volunteers. The charity provides inclusive weekly community dance workshops which are co-led by volunteers who have completed their unique leadership training course. The charity also has an inspirational performance team of volunteers, who give inspiring performances at special events to challenge the way that people think about disability.

The Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire, as The Queen's representative, will present the group with a certificate, signed by The Queen, and a commemorative crystal award at a local ceremony. Later this summer. DanceSyndrome Spokesperson and Ambassador Becky Rich was also invited to a royal garden party at Buckingham Palace on 15th May.

DanceSyndrome Founder Director Jen Blackwell said, "Wow, I'm just stunned and over the moon.

It is the most amazing thing ever. I could never have thought DS could have won this award when we started out 10 years ago when it was just me with no one, nowhere to go, no other dancers".

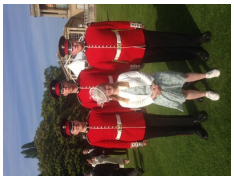
DanceSyndrome Managing Director Dawn Vickers said "For charities like DanceSyndrome the Queens Award for Voluntary Services is the highest honour that we can achieve, and we are thrilled to have been chosen to receive the award this year. DanceSyndrome wouldn't exist without the hard work and dedication of our incredible volunteers and we are delighted that their effort has been recognised at such a high level! We hope that this award helps to raise the profile of volunteering and helps people to see how much value there can be in giving your time to your local community."

DanceSyndrome Spokesperson and Ambassador Becky Rich said "This is biggest and best thing that has ever happened to me personally and I was so proud to represent my dancing family DanceSyndrome at Buckingham Palace where I met so many caring and interesting people. It was a real privilege and I'm very excited and overwhelmed with gratitude".

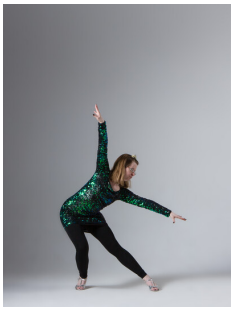
For more information about DanceSyndrome, please visit www.dancesyndrome.co.uk

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