



2021 Annual Report

Signature's Mission

Signature Dance Company (SDC) is a performance dance company for women and girls ages 3 years old through adults in Milwaukee, WI. Our mission is sharing, without compromise, all our God-given gifts and talents while helping others realize their own. Through combining the technique and ministry of dance, we create environments that change the lives and hearts of audience members and dancers. Our hope is that as each dancer grows technically, that they would also grow personally, emotionally and spiritually through mentorship and accountability. Every girl should be a Signature Girl!



Message from the Board

Hello Signature Friends and Family,
2021 was a year of as many surprises and changes as 2020 came with for Signature Dance Company.

In one short year we expanded our board by 30% and welcomed a new Executive Director, Malaika Osei!

With so much change for us internally, in addition to what was changing in our world, 2021 was a true test of getting back to focusing on our mission of sharing, without compromise, all our God-given gifts and talents while helping others realize their own.

The beginning of 2021 started with lots of transition of leadership, while toward the end the year was on strengthening the core of who Signature is. We spend the summer and spring in focus groups with parents, teachers, volunteers, and dancers to fully understand how we can be better at serving our communities. As a result, we ended the year with new energy and excited for what is to come as Signature moves into year 18 serving the Milwaukee community!

Signature is officially an adult! As a young adult embarking in a new way of the world with social distancing and masks still being a community norm, getting back into the world of "real life" to create collaborations and partnerships, and having more touch points with our community of support, we are excited for what is to come.

Through continued leadership decisions, we are working to strengthen the organization and position Signature Dance Company strongly for the future.

To our friends, family, allies, grantees, advocates, and partners, we want to thank you for ALL that you do!

Sincerely,
Signature Dance Company Board of Directors

Board Members



Desiree Cocroft,
Board Chair
FranklinCovey



Andrew Ellis,
Director
MKE Fellows



Bridget Whitaker,
Secretary
Safe and Sound



Markesha Hillard
Director
Milwaukee Public Schools



Malaika Osei,
Executive Director/Co-Founder
Signature Dance Company



Emerald Mills
Director
Diverse Dining



Tecia Sellers,
Chaplain/Co-Founder
US Department of Health and
Human Services



Jona Moore,
Director
African-American
Chamber of Commerce



Cierra Chesir,
Director
Thee Traveling Attorney LLC



Deana Velazquez
Director
Milwaukee Public Schools

Despite the challenges of 2021, Signature has so much to celebrate!

139

**GIRLS AND
WOMEN
SUPPORTED**

Signature supported the artistic growth, personal life, and spritual life of girls and women within our performance company and in the community at large.

Along with being able to have more in-person events, we continued to offer our Free March Women's classes online as well. As a result, we captured 1,000s of views from people all of the world!

1,000s

**OF AUDIENCE
MEMBERS**

Because of gracious donors and grants, we raised 30% more than the year prior through leaning on our supportive donor community and establishing new funding partners.

\$51,540

**DOLLARS
RAISED**

7

MENTORS

2021 mentors provided 100 hours of mentor time collectively to our performance company girls! We are so honored to have them part of pouring into our girls.

900

**HOURS OF
VOLUNTEERISM**

Our volunteer hours increased 75% in 2021. Our mentors and volunteers showed out and increased their time with us to ensure that Signature operated well during our period of leadership transitions on our board and leadership team.



**Signature Dance Company
2021 Finalist
Best Dance Company**





2021 Senior Company

Our Senior Company is made up of our volunteers and part-time staff/teachers that are also dancers, choreographers, and mentors that help carry out the vision of the company.

Malaika Osei
Executive Director/Co-Founder

Jessica Woolridge
Company Director

Shalome Cox
Costume Director

Christiana Robinson
Administrative Assistant

Ra'Anna Cobbs
Teacher

Ania Morrow
Teacher

Kimberly McKissic
Teacher





Jazmen Greer

Once a Signature Girl, Always a Signature Girl
Signature's Long-Term Impact

What was your first experience with Signature?

My first experience with Signature was walking into my first dance class at the age of 7 or 8. I was VERY scared and nervous, but they welcomed me with open arms and made it easier for me to open up.

How has it impacted your life?

Signature has impacted my life tremendously. It was my safe haven then and now. This company has been my anchor when I felt like I was drowning, helped me find my love for dance, and gave me the spiritual tools as a child to keep going, even in my adult life.

What do you do with the organization now?

I dance with the organization, and volunteer when needed be.

What is your favorite part about engaging with the organization?

My favorite part about engaging in the organization is the sisterhood. The bond is unbreakable, and you'd be surprised how much you can learn from each lady.

Why should people give to Signature?

People should give to Signature because it's worth it. I know it sounds cliché but majority of the most influential girls/women in our community, especially in the dance community, have come from Signature. It's not JUST giving to the organization, but giving to the girls within the organization and continuing to give us a place to be molded, and therefore thrive in life and for the sake of our community.

What was your first experience with Signature?

My first experience with Signature was when I was around 9 or 10 years old. I came to see a show that was recommended by a friend of my mother's. When we went, I remember I was immediately drawn in by not only the choreography of the show but also the content. The show had substance and meaning and it was very rare for me to see things like that in my own dance journey. Of course, when I was younger, I didn't know that was what was attracting me to the company, but I knew that Signature was bigger than just dance. Once I auditioned, I noticed the spiritual aspect of the company and I didn't know that Signature would be the catalyst for laying the groundwork for my own spiritual growth.

How has it impacted your life?

Signature is what molded me into the spiritually connected dancer that I am today. Without that first encounter, I would not have gone into teaching and I can say that I probably wouldn't have continued my journey in dance. The sisterhood has also lasted to the point that I am still close to many of the girls that I joined with back when I was 10. I've also been so blessed to have the founders continuously mentor me and be there for me in ways that I couldn't imagine when it comes to the different areas of my life whether it be spirituality or growth in my own artistic aspirations.

What do you do with the organization now?

Currently I am on Signature's Senior company, but I've been on a little hiatus due to other obligations, but this upcoming year, I will be back in full capacity which I am really excited about. I also serve as a teacher whenever I'm needed whether it be out in the community or with the different levels of Signature from level 1 all the way up to Junior Company.

What is your favorite part about engaging with the organization?

My favorite part about Signature is the sisterhood and the mentorship. Without the connections that I have made through Signature, I don't know how I would have progressed through different obstacles in my life. My Signature sisters have been with me through thick and thin and even when we don't speak or see each other for a long time, we pick right back up like we never left. Not many people get to experience a sisterhood like the one housed in Signature and so I feel so overjoyed to be a part of the company.

Why should people give to Signature?

Little girls of color are growing and thriving in their own skin due to the freedom that Signature gives each of us to be ourselves. When people give to Signature, they are investing in the lives of many little girls and women who may have felt marginalized or silenced in other communities, but who can come into Signature and feel heard and seen. People should give because Signature's mission is bigger than money, it invests in the future of our sisterhood and the ability for us to share our gifts with others so they know they can be heard and seen too no matter what medium they choose to grow in.



Kimberly McKissic

Current Teacher, Dancer, Leadership Team
Volunteer, and Costume Director



PARTNERS AND DONORS

