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Musicopia and Dancing Classrooms Philly announce leadership transition

PHILADELPHIA (September 8, 2020) After 15 years of extraordinary service, Denise Kinney is stepping down as the Executive Director of Musicopia and Dancing Classrooms Philly (DCP), to be succeeded by Catherine Charlton, effective September 8th, 2020. Though Denise is looking forward to spending more time with family and friends, she will continue working with Musicopia and DCP over the next year to ensure a seamless transition.

Under Denise's guidance, Musicopia and DCP have grown into two of the region's most impactful providers of music and dance education, serving more than 20,000 students each year through in-school and after-school programming. Denise oversaw both organizations during an era of expansion and transformation in the areas of funds raised, services provided, and communities served, and was integral to the strategic growth of after-school programming including the Musicopia Drumlines, Musicopia String Orchestra, and DCP Academy. She also facilitated the forming of the dynamic partnership between Musicopia and DCP in 2012, providing both organizations with a more efficient infrastructure while advancing their missions and community impact.

In addition to serving as Executive Director from 2005-2020, Denise also served on the Musicopia Board of Directors from 1995-2005 and was Board Chair from 1999-2005.

"The Board of Directors, Staff, and Teaching Artists of Musicopia and Dancing Classrooms Philly are immensely grateful to Denise for her leadership and many contributions over her 15-year tenure," said Ebony Lee, Board Chair. "Her strong management ability, combined with her passion for all children having access the arts—regardless of circumstance—has allowed both organizations to flourish and inspire thousands of students each year. We wish her all the best in this next chapter of her life, and are thrilled that she will remain as a trusted advisor over the next year."

The Board of Directors is delighted to announce that Catherine Charlton has been selected as the new Executive Director. Catherine has served as the organizations' Grants & Corporate Development Director for the past three years, and in that role, managed an institutional funder portfolio of over \$1.5M and increased the number of institutional funders by more than 15%, significantly increasing grants receivables.

"Being the Executive Director of Musicopia and Dancing Classrooms Philly has been the journey of a lifetime, and after 15 years it is time to 'step back' and prepare for life's next chapter," said Denise Kinney. "Catherine is the right leader to meet today's challenges: she has a true passion for music and dance, is a pianist, composer, and true arts advocate. As a not for profit leader, she thinks strategically, acts with integrity, and leads by example. She has a proven record of successful fundraising as our Grants &

Corporate Development Director, and she will be an amazing Executive Director. I am confident both organizations will further fulfill their missions into the future under Catherine's leadership."

Catherine has a B.S. in Engineering with Distinction and a minor in Music, and holds an Executive Certificate in Financial Success for NonProfits, all from Cornell University. A recording artist on the prestigious roster of Steinway Artists as pianist and composer, she has released 12 albums in her twenty-five-plus year recording career, and has won several recording awards. She is also an avid enthusiast of ballroom and Argentine tango dancing, taught ballroom dance to youth in West Philadelphia, and has taught hundreds of students over the course of more than twenty years as a piano teacher. She currently serves on the Board of Governors of the Philadelphia chapter of The Recording Academy ("The Grammys®"). Her full bio is available on the [Musicopia website](#).

"I am so thankful to our Board of Directors for their confidence in me, and I am looking forward to continuing our important work of making the arts accessible to all children," said Catherine Charlton. "I am incredibly honored for the privilege to carry on and reinforce the fiscal and reputational strengths of our organizations, built through the leadership of our Board and with the inimitable Denise Kinney at the helm for the past 15 years. I am excited to work with our staff, Board, Teaching Artists and many supporters in this new capacity, and plan to bring my empathy, caring, deep listening and sensitivity to those we serve."

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About Musicopia

Musicopia's mission is to provide opportunities for children to experience, learn, perform, and appreciate music. Since its founding 1974, Musicopia has helped more than 345,000 children experience the benefits of first-hand exposure to the arts, and is a recognized leader in rebuilding and revitalizing school music programs. Musicopia reaches thousands of children each year in the Delaware Valley through in-school music education, a string orchestra program, a drumlines program, and its Gift of Music Instrument Donation Program. Musicopia places a priority on reaching students who are underserved and cut off from the region's rich cultural life. Through its high-quality programs, Musicopia aims to give all children, regardless of circumstances, the opportunity to have their lives transformed by music. For more information, visit www.musicopia.net.

About Dancing Classroom Philly

Dancing Classrooms Philly's mission is to foster self-esteem, social awareness and joy in children by providing the opportunity to learn and perform ballroom dance through school residencies, a Saturday Academy program, and our Allstars. Through our ballroom dance instruction, we help to improve the climate of school communities across the Philadelphia region by building confidence in students, breaking down social barriers, and inspiring respect for all individuals. We envision transformative arts programs in all school communities that nurture creativity, build confidence, and promote a culture of mutual respect and well-being. For more information, please visit www.dancingclassroomspilly.org.