

The Halestone Foundation

STRATEGIC PLAN for the period July 2020 through June 2024

Adopted March 5th, 2020

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Executive Summary

In August 2019 the Halestone Foundation began conversations about adopting mission language and a new strategic plan.

We partnered with the Washington and Lee Consulting student group, who assisted us with background research for our mission language and provided perspective on how our concerns around marketing, mission language, grant writing, and donor solicitation were intertwined. We worked with them throughout the fall of 2019 and in December they presented their report to the vice-president of the board and the artistic director.

In November of 2019 we produced a fall concert and fundraiser that helped us further articulate (to ourselves, to audience members, and to donors) our role in promoting dance in Rockbridge.

Additionally, in December 2019, we met with the Community Foundation of Rockbridge, Bath, and Alleghany to discuss opportunities to establish an endowment fund with their organization.

Each of these activities undertaken by the artistic director and the board contributed to our ability to have a visioning session in January 2020 where we outlined our current strategic plan. After that session in early January, the artistic director further developed the strategic plan with input from the board and outside feedback from the past artistic director, Bailey Anderson (Artistic Director 2017 – 2018).

The strategic plan identifies four key areas of focus: access, education, artistic creation, and organizational effectiveness. All four areas are equally important to us as we develop as an organization. We will use the strategic plan to directly guide our operations moving forward and will refer to it and our mission language when we make decisions.

Board Authorization of Strategic Plan

Ann Courtney, President & Director

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Joel Kuehner, Vice-President & Director

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Don Henk, Secretary & Director

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Jessica Sullivan, Treasurer & Director

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Daniel Hinkle, Director

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Stephanie Hodde, Director

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Organizational Description

The Halestone Foundation was founded in 2016 and took over operations of Halestone Dance Studio, a local business in operation since 1978. From 1978 through 2016 Halestone was directed by two visionary individuals, Carole Winder (1978 - 1996) and Nancy Saylor (1996 - 2016) who established Halestone as a moving arts community for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to experience dance and the artistic process. Halestone has been developing community dance theater, new original dance work, and education programs in schools and with community partners long before its inception as a non-profit organization in 2016. Since 2016, Halestone has established itself as a community nonprofit and expanded its dance education programs through renewed relationships with community partners. In 2018 the Halestone Foundation received its official 501(c)3 non-profit designation from the federal government. Currently, Halestone Dance Education Programs serve students ages 18 months through adults at both a physical studio location in Lexington, VA and through outreach and education programs in local schools and preschools in Lexington, Buena Vista, and Rockbridge County, VA. In 2019-2020, Halestone offers over 20 classes per week at its studio location and provides ongoing dance classes (more regular than a one-time workshop) to 6 schools, and one-time workshops to 3 additional schools through community partners such as the YMCA. We have prioritized the growth of these classes since 2017, when we provided regular dance classes to only 3 schools. In addition, Halestone maintains a pre-professional student company that performs in the community and is in the process of rebuilding an adult performing ensemble (a community dance company). Halestone produces two concerts each year featuring staff, instructor, and student choreography and performances, and appears at more than 6 community events throughout the year.

Mission Statement

The Halestone Foundation enriches the Rockbridge area by providing access to quality dance experiences and education in nurturing environments. We foster the creative process, artistic excellence, and joy. We empower individuals and communities to make, perform, and experience original dance as a theoretical, technical, and expressive art.

Access

We are committed to providing access to dance education, performance opportunities and audience experiences to populations in Rockbridge, Lexington and surrounding areas that encounter barriers to these experiences.

We will

1. engage with communities
2. offer scholarships
3. provide access through transportation
4. develop relationships to offer dance to different populations

Rationale: We believe everybody and anybody can dance. We are therefore committed to providing quality dance education to all individuals and communities regardless of age, ability, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, geographic location, religion, socioeconomic status, or citizenship status. Because dance occupies a unique space across learning domains – social, physical, emotional and intellectual – it is important that all learners (infants through adults) experience nurturing dance experiences. Children and adults are spending more time sedentary than ever before and dance is often seen by individuals as something “I can’t do.” For these and other reasons it is imperative to make dance experiences accessible to all portions of the population.

Initiatives:

1. **Halestone will engage with communities within the Rockbridge area interested in experiencing dance** and work to build lasting relationships with those communities to bring them relevant and reliable dance experiences
2. **Halestone will offer scholarships** for all our classes and identify additional sources of funding for scholarships
3. **Halestone will provide access through transportation**
 - a. Work with existing school partners and identified community partners (such as Rockbridge Area Transportation Service) to pilot offering transportation from area schools to our studio location
 - b. Explore the feasibility of working with the county to establish a bus stop location at 722 S Main (our studio location)
4. **Halestone will take the first steps to identify how to offer dance experiences to different populations**
 - a. Develop relationships with local schools and organizations meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities, older individuals or children in foster care
 - b. Learn about these communities’ needs for movement and dance experiences
 - c. Develop a plan to be able to provide dance experiences that meet their needs

Education

We have a holistic approach to dance education, where theory and technique are taught through *experiencing the creative process*. Therefore, students are taught at all ages and levels through theory (why do we make the compositional choices we make) and technique (how do we enact these compositional choices through various styles of dance). We value original new dance work and the education students receive by participating in the creative process of making a new dance work with active dance artists. Principles of composition, expressiveness, anatomical realities, and technical skills are valued equally in our dance education.

We will

1. strengthen existing school and community partnerships
2. establish curriculum guidelines
3. pursue audience education
4. provide dance education resources to the community

Rationale: Dance technique and dance theory are inextricably linked. Learning both at the same time creates a well-rounded dancer and artist, capable of life-long learning in the arts, who can connect dance knowledge to their experiences of the greater world. Students who can think, create, and perform bring invaluable skills from dance to the rest of their lives. Because we believe that participating in performance is a key step in the creative process, it is important that we provide that experience for all our classes, not just our studio classes.

Initiatives:

- 1. Halestone will strengthen existing school and community partnerships**
 - a. Make existing programs sustainable for the future
 - i. create positive relationships with school administrators, staff, and teachers
 - ii. identify funding sources for existing programs to continue even when existing funding expires
 - iii. create a culture of dance in schools by having programs consistently serve age groups year after year
 - b. Educate school administration and staff on the value of dance education
 - i. use dance specific language based in our curriculum
 - ii. explore opportunities to offer workshops for local school teachers on ways to integrate movement activities into their classrooms
 - iii. develop relationships with classroom teachers and school administrators to understand how dance can be integrated into the school day, alongside existing after-school programs
 - iv. organize events around dance education and invite community partners to attend
 - c. Create performance opportunities for students in our school programs
 - i. focus on teaching both the technical and theoretical aspects of dance, and also its role as a communicative art form (i.e. performance)
 - ii. work to make performance opportunities accessible to all students
- 2. Halestone will establish curriculum guidelines** for studio classes and school programs based on our theoretical foundations and current standards in the arts

- a. Consider our past strengths under Artistic Directors Carol Winder, Nancy Saylor, and Bailey Anderson, and what the Halestone curriculum has been historically (1978 through 2019), alongside our current strengths
 - b. Consider the role somatics, improvisation, and modern dance have played in our development as an educational organization and what role those forms have in our current and future curriculum
 - c. Use current standards in the arts for guidance, including the 2014 National Core Arts Standards and the 2005 Standards for Learning and Teaching Dance in Arts, and use standards to guide Halestone’s relationship with Virginia Department of Education standards
 - d. Articulate our educational philosophy through consistent language and understand how it relates to the dance world outside of our community
 - i. consider how to effectively communicate who we are and what we teach to a rural community with limited dance knowledge
 - e. Consider how primarily focusing on western concert dance (ballet and modern) could perpetuate existing systems of access to dance where some people feel welcomed and others do not
 - i. in particular, consider what our relationship should be with concert dance forms other than ballet and modern (hip-hop, jazz, tap, etc.); community forms of dance not typically found in studios (square dance, clogging, line dancing, etc); and our particular geographic region
 - f. Support public school content curriculum (ie. math, social studies, etc.) with dance experiences that extend existing learning through dance
 - i. for example, teach dance lessons focus on sharing weight exercises when classroom instruction focuses on mass, weight and physics
 - ii. provide resources for Halestone instructors to effectively provide this kind of dance instruction and to meet teachers’ needs
- 3. Halestone will pursue audience education and engagement during classes, workshops and performances**
- a. Use opportunities with our audiences as educational experiences to build language for talking about dance
 - i. continue to host Open Showings, informal showings, and community events to promote discussion and feedback between artists and audience members
 - b. Construct communities around dance (students, performers, audience members, donors, educators) experiencing, watching, discussing and valuing dance
 - c. Utilize print, web, and social media marketing materials with consistent language for audience engagement
- 4. Halestone will provide dance education resources to students and the community**
- a. Provide information and guidance on summer training programs outside of Halestone/ the Rockbridge area
 - b. Provide assistance on audition preparation for students pursuing summer study or college program auditions
 - c. Continue to develop our relationships with outside dance organizations to potentially implement reciprocal student exchange programs to give students cross-cultural dance experiences

Artistic Creation

We are committed to fostering the creative process to produce new, original dance work in Rockbridge, Lexington and surrounding areas.

We will

1. teach dance through student experiences in the creative process
2. produce original performances
3. support Halestone artists and guest artists
4. develop company programs

Rationale: Supporting our staff, instructors, and outside guest artists while they explore the creative process directly improves the quality of the education programs we offer. Students learn through participating in the creative process and can see how what they are learning can develop into a career or life-long participation in the arts. Artists are inspired when the Rockbridge area becomes a livable place for them to create work. Similarly, the Rockbridge area is enriched through a more thriving moving arts community, which over time will create long lasting support and investment in the arts.

Initiatives:

- 1. Halestone will embed the creative process into our curriculum** through student participation in performances, guest artist workshops, and community ensemble programs
- 2. Halestone will produce original performances**
 - a. Halestone will dedicate time, funding and resources to produce concerts with choreography and performances by students, staff, instructors, and guest artists, and companies
 - b. For 2020-2021 Halestone will produce two annual performances (fall and spring) in professional or semi-professional settings, such as the Lenfest Center for the Arts (Lexington, VA), or other traditional theaters
 - c. Halestone will continue to approach dance multi-disciplinarily, collaborating with musicians, theater artists, and visual artists when the opportunity or need arises from the work being made
- 3. Halestone will support artists creating work**
 - a. Continue to hire guest artists from the local area and beyond to share their choreography through performances and educational workshops
 - b. Seek financing for guest artists through grants and local funders
 - c. Support Halestone instructors and staff to create new, original work
- 4. Halestone will develop our company programs into a thriving community dance ensemble**
 - a. Provide opportunities for life-long, avocational participation in the arts by growing participation in our adult company ensemble and continuing to build a culture around adult dance education in our communities
 - b. Foster multigenerational learning
 - i. demonstrate to younger dance students (children) that participation in the arts can be a life-long endeavor by creating an active adult company

ensemble that performs and participates with the high school, middle school and elementary students

- ii. develop spaces for adult and high school learners to teach and mentor each other through participation in the creative process
- c. Continue to pursue performance opportunities for our community dance ensemble

Organizational Effectiveness

We are a young organization seeking ways to make sure we can sustainably support our mission for years to come.

We will

1. structure artistic and administrative staff effectively
2. offer professional development and training
3. make our fiscal health a priority
4. focus on board development
5. develop a volunteer program
6. archive our past
7. measure effectiveness and gather feedback

Rationale: Developing consistent and effective practices and structures will allow us to build trust with our community partners, families, instructors, employees, donors, and audiences so that we flourish as a nonprofit organization. With these practices and structures in place, we will be able to devote more energy to educational and creative aims.

Initiatives:

1. **Halestone will structure artistic and administrative staff** so that our operating budget has less of an impact on fundraising efforts and the artistic director can spend less time on managerial tasks
 - a. Investigate hiring additional staff to assist the artistic director with operations and management
2. **Halestone will offer professional development and training for instructors and staff**
 - a. Using our curriculum, offer orientations, training, and written language for instructors and employees to reference throughout their employment
 - i. focus on giving instructors tools to address challenges, for example, how to address developmental differences or how to discuss gender expressions and identities with different age groups
 - b. Facilitate instructor collaborations and peer learning, for example through the ability to co-choreograph for productions, to perform together at concerts and showings and to co-teach classes
 - c. Provide resources (web, print, outside workshops and conferences) for instructors to deepen their teaching practice
3. **Halestone will focus on its fiscal health as an organization**
 - a. Diversify funding sources
 - b. Develop fundraising events
 - c. Establish an endowment with the Community Foundation for Rockbridge, Bath, and Alleghany counties (CFRBA) in 2020
 - d. Continue to improve our visibility in all parts of our community to engage donors and partners
 - e. Pursue funding opportunities through regional and national granting organizations
 - i. pursue partnerships with the City of Lexington, the City of Buena Vista and the County of Rockbridge to access funding to provide more educational dance experiences in the public schools

- ii. Continue to investigate and apply for grants from the Virginia Commission for the Arts
 - iii. Research grants through the state and federal departments of education
 - iv. Research grant opportunities specifically focused on the arts in rural areas
- f. Create a fiscal plan for a larger space to be able to offer simultaneous classes allowing us to reach additional students
- 4. Halestone will focus on board development**
 - a. Research organizations to emulate and learn who our peers are
 - b. Create a plan for board diversity and turnover
 - c. Determine if board growth is important
- 5. Halestone will develop an active volunteer program** to reduce pressure on the board of directors
- 6. Halestone will develop a plan for archiving** past photo, video, press and marketing materials because a clear view of our history helps shine light on a path forward
- 7. Halestone will develop methods to measure our effectiveness** and gather feedback from our community by collecting information on current and past students, alums, instructors, staff, donors, event attendees, etc. to improve operations, educational practices, and to more effectively market and communicate current programming