



Bonita Unified

SCHOOL DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Bonita Unified Middle School Students Find Their Groove, Hone Skills on Student-Led Dance Team

SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE – Lone Hill Middle School students are finding their rhythm as artists and leaders, building a community and developing skills to carry them confidently into high school, college and career through the school's dance team.

The Lone Hill Dance Team (LHDT) launched six years ago when a group of students approached counselor Samar Yassine for assistance in forming a team. Yassine has served as the team advisor since its inception, providing guidance and oversight, but insists LHDT is truly led by the students – who choreograph their own routines and teach them to each other, becoming strong leaders and collaborators in the process.

"Middle school can be a difficult time and being part of the team has really helped these students find a sense of belonging," Yassine said. "They walk into high school with confidence. It has been incredibly rewarding to see these dancers grow and shine as leaders, using skills they didn't even know they had, to support one another and cultivate this sense of community."

This year's team consists of 13 members – all of whom have some form of dance experience. A small group of two to five student dancers meet with Yassine during choreography sessions after school to select music and choreograph routines, which are then taught to the team during weekly practice on Wednesdays. The team is a year-round commitment; to join, students must try out and maintain a B average in their classes.

"What I love the most about LHDT is being with the other dancers," Lone Hill seventh-grader Janiya Jones said. "They always boost me up when I am feeling down and put me in a better mood."

The team showcases its artistic skill throughout the school year – performing at lunchtime pep rallies, back to school night, open house, holiday events and an end-of-year talent show. LHDT is currently working on choreography – performed to a medley of holiday pop songs – for the school's holiday assembly on Dec. 23, which will also feature choir and band performances.

Additionally, LHDT has developed strong relationships with BUSD elementary schools and San Dimas High School. In previous years, the team has hosted a "Jr. Lion Night" that invites elementary school students to learn a routine alongside LHDT and then perform for their parents, with the goal of encouraging creative expression and fostering an interest in dance.

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Many LHDT members go on to join the San Dimas High School dance team, due in large part to the collaboration between the two schools. The SDHS dance team lends its dance room to the Lone Hill dancers for weekly practice and has invited LHDT members to perform with the SDHS team on the sidelines at athletic events.

“Bonita Unified School District believes the arts play an essential part in a well-rounded, enriching education, and we are thrilled to provide opportunities for our students to express their creativity at all educational levels,” Interim Superintendent Matt Wien said. “The Lone Hill Dance Team is full of talented young dancers, and we look forward to watching them continue to grow as students and artists.”

PHOTO:

BUSD_LHMS_DANCE: The 2022-23 Lone Hill Dance Team strikes a pose before performing in the San Dimas High School Homecoming Parade on Oct. 14.

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