

Community Dance Connectors, 22-23

Dance West Network provides budget, training and planning assistance to support CDC, Community Dance Connectors and their community-engaged dance projects. Community Dance Connectors also connect to share ideas and resources.

In 2022-23, Dance West Network welcomed four new CDCs: Allison Girvan, Unceded territory of the s̓n̓çay̓ckstx Sinixt Arrow Lakes and the Yaqan Nukiy Lower Kootenay Band peoples (Nelson), Claudia Moore Okanagan Nation Territory (Kelowna), Robbyn Scott, xʷənen̓əč territory (Salt Spring Island) and Katie Wertz, Wet'suwet'en Territory (Smithers)

They accomplished some amazing things in their first year! We are so glad to have their involvement in the network.

At the end of each season, the CDCs meet in an online Wrap-Up session to share the work they have done in their communities over the year. Below are some of the highlights from the 2022/23 season.

Visiting Artist Workshops

CDC Robbyn Scott, xʷənen̓əč territory (Salt Spring Island)

- [Josh Beamish](#) taught a workshop with Dance students from Gulf Island School for the Performing Arts (GISPA)
- [Vanessa Goodman](#) and [Caroline Shaw](#) led a workshop with the public and Dance students from Gulf Island School for the Performing Arts (GISPA)

CDC Kenley Knock, Secwepemc homelands (Revelstoke)

- In collaboration with the [Luna Festival](#), [Ralph Escamillan](#) offered a movement workshop with local community members
- [Dancers of Damelahamid](#) offered an Indigenous dance workshop to a group of community youth and adults

CDC Allison Girvan, Unceded territory of the s̓n̓çay̓ckstx Sinixt Arrow Lakes and the Yaqan Nukiy Lower Kootenay Band peoples (Nelson)

- [Ballet Kelowna](#) offered a workshop with a group of community youth and adults.

CDC Katie Wertz, Wet'suwet'en Territory (Smithers)

- [OURO Collective](#) offered an introduction to the fusion of street dance and contemporary that OURO Collective practices to a multigenerational (ages 9 to 65) group of community members

CDC CDC Lindsay Delaronde on ləkʷəŋən and WSÁNEĆ homelands (Victoria)

- Dance artist [Lisa Gelley](#) was invited to facilitate a workshop with Visible Bodies, a group of BIPOC dance artists who gather weekly in residence at Dance Victoria.

Projects with Youth

CDC Kenley Knock, Secwepemc homelands (Revelstoke)

- *Encore*, a full-day youth arts festival that included workshops led by local artists and culminated in a final open house. This was truly a youth-driven event - the Creative Director of the event was a 17-year-old high school student.

CDC Holly Bright, and facilitated by Ecko Aleck Nanaimo, Snuneymuxw homelands (Nanaimo)

- *Body Talk*, a group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth met weekly and then throughout spring break to create a production with Artists: MJ Megaman, Dakota Bear and Casey Desjarlais

CDC Allison Girvan, Unceded territory of the s̓n̓çay̓ckstx Sinixt Arrow Lakes and the Yaqan Nukiy Lower Kootenay Band peoples (Nelson)

- Three young dancers opened for Ballet Kelowna with a dance piece entitled *Reflect*, choreographed by Nelson choreographer/dancer, Acacia Schachte and co-produced with a local studio.

Community Art Collaborations

CDC Fior Saorise Ts'msyen Łaxyuup homelands (Prince Rupert)

- *Winter Solstice - Illuminated Dance* involved youth and community volunteers creating illuminated props and costumes which they used to parade through downtown to the courthouse followed by an evening spent in a 3 hour flash mob dance!
- Fior hosted a watch party to watch the live stream together of [Quick and Dirty Virtual Residency](#) that brought together Indigenous drag, burlesque, and gender mentors with Northern LGBTQ2S+ folks and Indigenous folks

- Community members wanting to learn about and connect with Indigenous Culture on Ts'msyen Łaxyuup homelands attended a variety of dance and drumming celebrations, primarily as witnesses/ observers but were sometimes given the opportunity to participate in dancing, singing and drumming.

Community Training

CDC Lindsay Delaronde on lək'wəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ homelands (Victoria),

- Lindsay developed a workshop on Ethics and Accountability in the Arts titled *Grounding in the Soil* and offered it online to a group of eight Community Dance Connectors.

CDC Katie Wertz, Wet'suwet'en Territory (Smithers)

- Katie hosted an online workshop titled *Grounding in the Soil: Ethics and Accountability in the Arts - Building Bridges*, facilitated by Lindsay Delaronde, with a group of participants from northern communities on Gitxan (Hazelton, BC) and Wet'suwet'en (Witset and Smithers, BC) territories to discuss ethics and accountability considerations in their artistic and community work.

Seniors

CDC Claudia Moore, working on Okanagan Nation Territory (Kelowna),

- Claudia offered movement classes to community members aged 40+ titled *Dance Your Body/Move Your Heart* through the Rotary Centre for the Arts.
- Working with the Rotary Centre for the Arts as part of their [Creative Aging Festival](#), Claudia brought her *Old and Reckless* series that she has developed over the years with her company [Moonhorse Dance Theatre](#), to offer movement workshops, a community performance project and a showing of work by: [Davida Monk](#), [Rosario Ancer](#), [Danny Nielsen](#), [Sean Ling-Allen](#), and [Randi Gardypie](#) (Traditional Indigenous Jingle Dance), and [Claudia Moore](#).

Film Showings

CDC Fior Saorise, Ts'msyen Łaxyuup homelands (Prince Rupert)

- A group of youth and adults were invited to watch and discuss a series of films regarding dance and the LGBTQ2S+, Indigenous and other cultural communities, in an evening titled *Our Dance of Revolution*. CDC Kenley Knock, Secwepemc homelands (Revelstoke)
- Closing up her season, Kenley hosted a showing of *Uprooted: The Journey of Jazz Dance*, a film celebrating the history and lineage of this dance genre, to a group of both youth and adults in her community.

Consultations with Indigenous Artist and Consultant Olivia C. Davies

(Anishinaabe, French-Canadian, Finnish and Welsh heritage)

- Following discussions in 2021-22, Olivia C. Davies continued conversations with the CDCs this season regarding how they could continue to build relationships with local Indigenous communities on the territories on which they work, as well as how to create a safe and welcoming space for visiting Indigenous artists. These conversations will continue to be an important element of the work of the CDCs during the 2023/24 season.

Fun Stats

- Over 1000 participants were involved in CDC activities in 2022/23 involving 60 local and visiting artists!

Some words from the CDCs about their work this year:

“Moving across the country from Toronto to Kelowna last fall was a major shift for me. I was anxious about leaving my Toronto dance family and the company I founded and directed since '96. Thanks to support from Dance West Network, the other remarkable Community Dance Connectors and my new Kelowna friends, my dance dance dreams live on. I'm so grateful!” **CDC Claudia Moore, working on Okanagan Nation Territory (Kelowna)**

“Each year that I have the opportunity to host events as a Community Dance Connector I discover new things about our town and make new connections. Seeing the way that people benefit from exposure to dance and the arts helps to keep me inspired and grounded.” **CDC Kenley Knock, Secwepemc homelands (Revelstoke)**

Community dance and movement have shifted my artistic practice in so many beautiful ways. I have had the honour of moving, breathing and holding spectacular human beings, mostly Indigenous and from mostly the BIPOC community living on Lekwungen territory. It has been a humbling and joyful experience to train, create and perform with diverse and generous artists and I am proud of overcoming all the hurdles that have risen since doing this work.
CDC Lindsay Delaronde on lək'wəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ homelands (Victoria),

It's been interesting, sometimes confusing, and always inspiring to be in this (new for me) role of CDC with Dance West Network and ArtSpring. The opportunity has brought me back into the fold of a dance community: a world filled with interesting activities, creative ideas, artistic outlooks and artistically passionate humans! The CDC is a new type of role for me. I am no longer busy dancing, so it's great to be supporting those who ARE busy dancing now!
CDC Robbyn Scott speaking of her new role as CDC on xʷəneŋəč territory (Salt Spring Island).