



# Katz

## Katz School of Science and Health

# Empowering Dance Project of Washington Heights: A Strategic Marketing Approach

Bharath Prabhu, Nathaly Camargo and Saahas Ramaul,  
M.S in Digital Marketing and Media

Faculty Advisors: Thomas Kennon and Joseph Panzarella, M.S.

### ABSTRACT

This project presents a comprehensive marketing strategy for the Dance Project of Washington Heights (DPWH), aimed at revitalizing its community engagement and support through innovative outreach. DPWH is a nonprofit dance organization that provides access to dance education to New York City's Washington Heights community. Leveraging ethnographic research, our team identified critical opportunities for DPWH to enhance its visibility and connection within the local community and proposed strategic initiatives focusing on building partnerships with educational institutions, launching targeted fundraising campaigns, and expanding digital marketing efforts. These recommendations are designed to foster deeper community connection, enhance participation, and secure sustainable support for DPWH, ensuring its impactful presence in Washington Heights.

### INTRODUCTION

The Dance Project of Washington Heights (DPWH) embodies the rhythmic pulse of its community yet faces a challenge common to many cultural institutions: the need for broader engagement and awareness. Recent studies underscore the need for grassroots marketing tactics tailored to arts-focused non-profits, emphasizing the significance of community involvement and digital presence (Chief Executive, 2012; Mass Cultural Council, 2020; AFP Kudos, 2023).

The intent of this project is to close the gap identified in the literature by establishing robust marketing strategies that align with the community-centric nature of dance, ensuring that DPWH's offerings resonate widely and deeply within the community it serves.

This project addresses the imperative to translate academic insights into concrete marketing initiatives for DPWH.



### STRATEGY

The methodology embraced a community-centric approach, focused on qualitative insights derived from ethnographic practices, including:

- In-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including DPWH staff, dance participants, and residents of Washington Heights.
- Observational studies during dance sessions and community events to capture the authentic interaction and reception of the arts initiative within the community.
- These methods were supplemented with a review of secondary sources, examining successful marketing strategies from similar cultural organizations.

This approach was grounded in the principles of participatory action research, ensuring that strategies developed were reflective of and responsive to community needs and values.

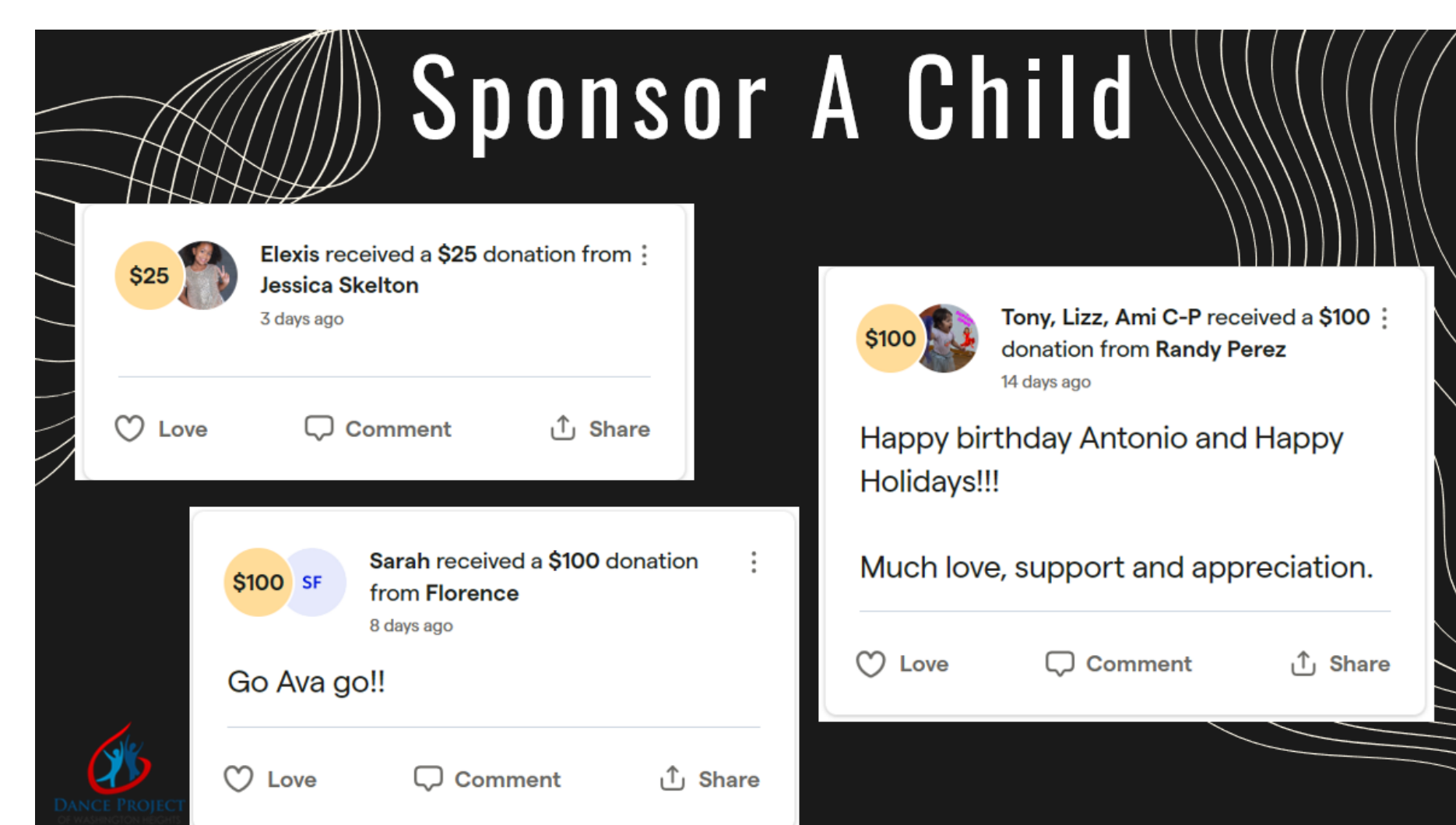


Figure 1. Sample Fundraising Campaign

### FINDINGS & OUTCOMES

This exploration revealed vital insights:

- There is a high level of appreciation for dance within the community, yet a significant lack of awareness of DPWH.
- Many residents are eager for more local arts engagement but are unaware of existing opportunities.
- Observations at community events suggested dance could be a powerful tool for social cohesion if prominently featured.
- Local schools were interested in partnerships for dance education, yet no formal outreach program existed.
- Social media analysis showed that DPWH's online presence could be significantly amplified to reach a younger demographic.

These findings led to a set of tailored recommendations focused on partnership development, community engagement, and utilization of social media, specifically:

- Increasing local school collaborations to introduce dance programs.
- Enhancing online outreach to elevate DPWH's digital footprint and visibility
- Initiating fundraising campaigns that resonate with community values (Fig. 1, left).

Each recommendation was designed to be actionable and measurable in terms of increased engagement and attendance figures, providing a clear framework for implementation and success evaluation.

### CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

DPWH is well-positioned to become a central hub for dance in Washington Heights, provided that strategic marketing efforts are employed. Our findings point towards the necessity for targeted communication strategies, partnerships with educational and cultural institutions for program development, and a stronger digital footprint to ensure the longevity and vibrancy of DPWH in the community. Future strategies should continually adapt to community feedback and technological trends for sustained growth.

These efforts will significantly bolster DPWH's community presence, expand program awareness and increase participation, ultimately enriching the cultural fabric of Washington Heights.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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