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## BANK OF AMERICA GRANTS \$200,000 NEIGHBORHOOD EXCELLENCE AWARD TO THE WOODEN FLOOR

SANTA ANA, California (November 03, 2009) - Bank of America awarded the prestigious Neighborhood Excellence Award to The Wooden Floor, previously known as Saint Joseph Ballet, for its continued dedication to community development by providing hope and opportunity to low-income youth in Santa Ana through dance, academic, and family programs. Only two organizations in Orange County received the award, totaling \$200,000 over a two-year period.

"We are thrilled to have received this generous support from Bank of America," stated Executive & Artistic Director Melanie Rios Glaser, "In a time of economic uncertainty, honors like the Neighborhood Excellence Award help ensure that our year-round programs will be sustained and that we continue to serve the nearly 400 deserving low-income youth in our organization."

A capacity-building grant, the Neighborhood Excellence Award will assist in bridging the budget gap for the fiscally-conscious organization, which, like other non-profits, faces a short-fall for the 2009-2010 year due to the economic climate. Additionally, it will provide indispensable leadership training for select staff members.

The announcement was made at an event attended by Santa Ana's Mayor Miguel Pulido, The Wooden Floor board members, and community supporters. Shari L. Battle, Senior Vice President of the Bank of America Foundation, stated during the announcement, "The Wooden Floor has the ingredients and has developed the recipe for Neighborhood Excellence. We couldn't be more delighted to have The Wooden Floor be the recipient of this year's award."

Founder of The Wooden Floor, Beth Burns, received Bank of America's 2005 "Local Hero" Award, which is also a part of the same philanthropic award program.

### **About The Wooden Floor**

For 26 years, The Wooden Floor in Santa Ana, previously known as Saint Joseph Ballet, is an after-school organization that has delivered hope and opportunity to nearly 400 low-income youth annually. Dance education and performance are the core transformational elements through which youth change the way they think about themselves and develop the ability to reach their full potential. In the dance studio, rigorous training, creativity and self-knowledge lead to confidence, leadership, teamwork, well-being and joy. Academic programs, pre-collegiate mentoring and college scholarships ensure that our students succeed in school and are college ready. Since 2005, 100 percent of graduates from The Wooden Floor have enrolled in college, exceeding the national average for their peers threefold. Family Services at The Wooden Floor-counseling, crisis intervention and social service referrals-help families overcome hardships and navigate challenges. Community support enables these year-round programs to be offered free of charge. Bringing about generational change to break the cycle of poverty in our community is the long-term goal of The Wooden Floor.

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*To request an interview with Executive & Artistic Director of The Wooden Floor, Melanie Rios Glaser, please contact Payal Kumar at 714-541-8314 x19 or Payal@TheWoodenFloor.org*

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