



DANCE

NOVA SCOTIA

Building A Community
United In Dance



2025
Annual Report

Annual Report

April 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025

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Letter from the President

Dear Members and Stakeholders,

Looking back on the past year at Dance Nova Scotia, it is wonderful to see all of the progress we have made as an organization, and what we have achieved as a collective. As we are set to celebrate our 50th Anniversary in October of this year, it is crucial to look back on what we have accomplished, but also to look ahead at the next 50 years of DANCE and what we hope to contribute to our dance communities across the province.



This year, we have re-prioritized access and inclusion, and have reunited in our passion for ensuring a community united in dance. Through a period of transitions for our board and executive team, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to highlighting the constant creativity, ingenuity, and dedication to dance in this province by many talented colleagues, partners, and friends.

Some of those achievements include the continuation of the Dance Nova Scotia podcast: United in Dance; our Community Spotlights through our blog and social media; the program partnerships, including our Dance for Health: Seniors program; DANCEspace at the Lighthouse Arts Centre; the updates to our fundraising capabilities by prioritizing fund development in our committees; and, of course, the lead up to our 50th anniversary celebrations.

We have made an effort to ensure financial barriers to accessing dance are reduced, and hope to continue our bursary programs to help those who want to dance, be able to access dance. We are accomplishing this by creating easier ways to donate online. Through this dedication, we are hoping to support youth and professional artists throughout their dance journeys.

The above examples are just a few of our accomplishments this year. A full list of our activities and initiatives is available in our year-end report. As a board, we will continue to set strategic priorities that reflect our vision and aim to unite the dance communities across the province. Our focus remains on enhancing communication among members and stakeholders, and supporting accessibility and diversity in our dance communities.

I would like to extend a sincere thanks to Executive Director Kenney Fitzpatrick, Administrative Officer Lynn "Baker" Graham, and the Directors of the Board for their work and commitment to dance in our province. None of this would be possible without their guidance and dedication!

Respectfully submitted,

Maeghan Taverner

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Stakeholders, Members, and Dance Nova Scotia friends,

I am excited to share highlights from Dance Nova Scotia's 2024–2025 year—an extraordinary period of growth, engagement, and evolution. This year marked a major leap forward in our efforts to connect communities across the province through the power of dance.

This year, we expanded the reach of our flagship programming with the launch of our first-ever **Dance Week Kickoff Event**, hosted at the DANSpace community studio in the Lighthouse Arts Centre. The four-hour event exceeded expectations, packing the studio with attendees and drawing in a wide virtual audience, establishing a new annual tradition with a strong provincial impact. Our **Dare to Dance Challenge**, held in partnership with the Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE), saw tremendous growth, yielding more than 2,000 students — evidence of the growing interest in dance in our classrooms.

Building on this momentum, we have begun developing our very first **Provincial Dance Week**, to be launched in fall 2025. This initiative responds directly to the needs of the local dance community and the busy spring competition season. Our goal is to create a province-wide celebration that not only showcases local talent but grows into a multi-day dance festival that attracts national and international attention—positioning Nova Scotia as a cultural destination for dance.

Beyond events, Dance Nova Scotia has continued to support studios, educators, and independent artists through advocacy, partnership-building, and community-focused programming. We've deepened relationships with schools, studios, and municipalities, and remain committed to ensuring equity and inclusion are woven into all aspects of our work—so that every Nova Scotian feels welcome to participate in and benefit from dance.

Looking ahead, we have undertaken new funded projects that will see us moving our **Dance for Health: Seniors** training to an online platform. Ensuring Nova Scotian's can access it regardless of their location. Likewise, we have begun work on our new **Ready to Rise** youth training project, providing Nova Scotian youth with creative process training, culminating in a youth presentation showcase. And as we continue to surge, we are focused on expanding our capacity, strengthening partnerships, and continuing to elevate the role of dance as a vital contributor to wellness, education, and community connection across Nova Scotia.

Sincerely,

Kenney Fitzpatrick
Executive Director, Dance Nova Scotia





BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024-2025

NAME	POSITION
Maeghan Taverner	President
Hadear Marzooque	Vice-President
Jen Cole	Treasurer
Elaine Mailman	Secretary
Sara Adams	Director
Robin Levy	Director
Chenlu Shao	Director
Lesley MacLean	Director
Sara Corkum	Director

STAFF MEMBERS 2024-2025

Kenney Fitzpatrick Executive Director	Lynn Graham Administrative Officer
Nat Dooks Manager / DANSpace Studio Coordinator / Dance Week & Provincial Dance Day	
Olivia Rossong Coordinator Dance for Health: Seniors	Juliet Merchant Student Assistant Digital Marketing

Dance Milieu

*"Dance is the hidden language of the soul."
-Martha Graham*

We believe that dance is a cornerstone of the fine arts. It can inspire us, uplift our spirits and challenge us;

We encourage schools to strive for the highest quality dance training;

Ensuring that dance benefits all children in many ways, providing future generations of creators and interpreters as well as opening the doors to a range of arts-related careers;

Through our programs for young dancers, we are working to develop and enhance dance practice in Nova Scotia;

We support channels and opportunities to extend communications to dance students;
Fostering excellence in artistic practice as support for the future of dance as an artistic and creative choice;

Support the national movement for the decolonization of dance, which will open professional activity and presentation, to members of communities that face mainstream bias.

Mission

To foster dance as a cultural, educational, social, recreational and healthful activity for all.

Vision

A Community United in Dance.

Values

Equity

We demonstrate respect for all forms of dance, and all who dance.

Trustworthy

We serve and are accountable to our members, stakeholders and community.

Collaboration

We facilitate community building and partnerships.

Communication

We are a dependable source of information; we are transparent and foster freedom of expression.

Accessibility

We reach out and empower individuals and communities (of various abilities, geographies, socio-economic backgrounds), to access dance.

Programs & Operations Activity

Governance and Committees

Over the 2024–2025 year, Dance Nova Scotia continued to strengthen its governance framework through a commitment to policy review, board development, and inclusive practices. As part of our ongoing efforts to ensure responsible and forward-looking governance, we undertook a comprehensive review of our organizational policies to ensure they remain relevant, effective, and aligned with our values.

Recognizing the importance of equipping our Board of Directors with the tools and knowledge necessary to lead with confidence and integrity, we have advanced our onboarding and training procedures. This included the design and implementation of a new online training module, which aims to streamline orientation and provide accessible, consistent support for new board members as they begin their terms.

In alignment with our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, Dance Nova Scotia also began the process of becoming a **Rainbow Registered** organization. This involved actively engaging in the Rainbow Registered accreditation program offered by the CGLCC – Canada's 2SLGBTQI+ Chamber of Commerce. This national designation affirms our organization as a welcoming and inclusive space for 2SLGBTQI+ individuals and communities.

Through these initiatives, Dance Nova Scotia reaffirms its dedication to transparent, inclusive, and responsive governance as we look ahead to a vibrant and celebratory year.

Committee Work

Our committee structure continues to evolve. New terms of reference for each committee were created in 2024 and a structure was established that now include standing and ad hoc committees:

Standing Committees

Accessibility, Communications (Outreach and Marketing), Education, Finance, and Governance

Ad Hoc Committees

Nominations, Dance for Health, and Fund Development

Ad hoc committees also continue to be established on a case by case basis within the various projects we have begun to undertake.

Our committees remain active and engaged. In particular, much new work has been done in our accessibility, communications, and fund development committees.

Nominations Committee

Members: Maeghan Taverner (Chair), Chenlu Shao, Elaine Mailman, Sara Corkum

In 2024 we had four we had four new members appointed to the Dance Nova Scotia Board of Directors:

1. Jen Cole (Hants, NS): Jen is a School Owner & Director and Chair of the Hants Border Community Club with a deep passion for dance and the arts, as well as advocacy.
2. Robin Levy (Halifax, NS): Robin is a professional fundraiser and Campaign Manager at St. Francis Xavier University with a plethora of board experience and therefore many skills in finance, human resources, strategic planning, and governance.
3. Hadear Marzooque (Halifax, NS): Hadear is a Senior HR leader and Immigration Consultant and current director at NSCDA with a passion for dance and a lot of management, development and problem solving experience.
4. Chenlu Shao (Lower Sackville, NS): Chenlu is a Senior Labour Market Analyst for the Nova Scotia Department of Labour, Skills & Immigration with experience in fundraising, communications and leadership.

As we prepare for our 2025 Annual General meeting, we have an additional four new potential members we are excited to welcome into the Dance Nova Scotia board.

Accessibility Committee

Members: Maeghan Taverner (they/she - Chair & VP of board), Ryan Wilcox (they/them - Secretary), Sally Morgan (she/her), Elaine Mailman (she/her - board member), Melissa MacKenzie (she/her), Sara Adams (she/her - President of the board), and Kenney Fitzpatrick (he/him - ex officio)

The Accessibility Committee was formed in 2024 and has had 3 committee meetings thus far.

The committee was formed to analyze, identify, prevent, and eliminate barriers to accessibility within the dance sector and to highlight key areas to improve access for people with disabilities and those with intersecting identities to gain better access to dance and the dance community in Nova Scotia.

In our meetings so far we have highlighted areas to improve access and inclusion within dance in Nova Scotia such as education, performance, production, venues, and events more broadly.

We have also identified barriers within access to resources and information within the dance sector.

We have met to create a strategic plan and brainstorm ways to create accessible opportunities throughout the dance community in online and in-person spaces with a focus on physical, financial, and attitudinal barriers. We are focusing on how to eliminate these barriers for people to be involved within dance in the province by centering those with lived experience, engaging in community consultation, and creating "a community united in dance".

Our goals are to create resources that are accessible across the dance sector by providing multiple formats to disseminate information (ex: panel events, podcasts, online courses, documents, and interactive maps). We aim to foster an inclusive and accessible dance community in Nova Scotia.

Membership

This year has marked a significant step forward in the growth and revitalization of Dance Nova Scotia's membership program. Through intentional outreach and the adoption of more member-focused practices, we are proud to report that we have more than doubled our membership from the previous year.

A major milestone was the transition to a new membership management platform in 2024, allowing us to better align with the expectations and needs of today's members. This new system has enhanced our ability to communicate, organize, and deliver value to our community.

Ongoing efforts have focused on reconnecting with past members while also engaging new individuals and organizations. We've placed a renewed emphasis on expanding member benefits, forging new partnerships with organizations that share our commitment to dance in Nova Scotia.

Current initiatives include:

Early-stage collaboration with **Speakers Nova Scotia** to provide dance community members with professional speaking and engagement opportunities at provincial and national levels.

Developing a partnership with the **Nova Scotia Loyal** program, aimed at improving access to marketing tools and resources for our artist and studio members, while spotlighting Nova Scotia-based creators and productions.

We have also dedicated resources toward rebuilding and updating our **provincial dance database**, focusing particularly on schools, studios, and the dynamic competition circuit that thrives during the winter season.

Our membership strategy continues to be rooted in the pillars of:

Member Needs
Member Benefits
Networking & Engagement
Education
Opportunities
Access
Resources

Through these efforts, Dance Nova Scotia remains committed to growing a vibrant, connected, and empowered dance community across the province.

Member Needs

Understanding the different needs of our members is a key part to unlocking a more united community. With such a diverse intersectionality of people, one size does not fit all. To gain better knowledge of those needs we continue to survey our own organizational membership as well as the greater dance community. Upcoming needs assessments, surveys, community meet ups, and engagement events will help us grow and provide better service.

Member Benefits

To grow our current membership we must answer the question of “how does one benefit from a Dance Nova Scotia membership”? Through our research we have determined a number of interest points when it comes to benefits. Those points are: access, education, and community.

Having **access** to specialized offers, resources, and programs that they would not necessarily receive elsewhere. Receiving **education** to assist them in their careers, businesses, or personal growth. And belonging to a **community** of dance beyond valuing practice, but embracing all cultural aspects of dance. These three pillars of interest is what guides our approach to membership.

Networking/Engagement

Both organizational and community members want opportunities for connection, chances to network and learn from their peers as well as industry professionals. To facilitate that need and desire, Dance Nova Scotia has begun using virtual and in-person talks, and Q&A presentations.

Education

As previously stated, members are interested in education that assist them in their careers, work, and personal life. To that end, Dance Nova Scotia has begun to produce and acquire workshops and webinars dedicated to providing education around each of the aforementioned areas.

Opportunities

Dance Nova Scotia members have also voiced that they would enjoy benefiting from new opportunities, or opportunities they do not have regular access to. We have begun to discuss such possibilities with our out of province affiliates as well as with local businesses and organizations, to strategize affiliate agreements that will allow members of Dance Nova Scotia access to opportunities provided by third party organizations or in association with Dance Nova Scotia.

Resources

History is something very familiar to Dance Nova Scotia, as we have been collecting stories and more within the dance community for our near 50 years. From recent talks with community members, we know that there is a real interest in resources. Those resources may be information, space, advice, or history. In the past we have looked at creating an archive of on-hand history, as well as a resource library. We are now embarking on designing what that library could look like and what it should contain.

To make it accessible as possible, we will focus on the primary pieces of a new resource library to be kept online and housed on the Dance Nova Scotia website. For much of the historical items, we will be reviewing what should be readily available and what can be archived to preserve the history of dance in the province.

Access

Access, in its many different forms, continues to be a large conversation in the dance community. And in those conversations the topic of access always begins with understanding the barriers in place that must be removed or altered in order to provide greater access for all. The primary topics within the conversation around access come down to financial access, physical access, and virtual access or lack thereof.

Financial

Financial barriers continue to plague the dance community. For youth, funding for dance is almost non-existent. What funding is available is traditionally reserved for activities which fall under the "sport" label. While having a large physical, rigorous, and precision component to it, dance is not recognized in any sport funding. Speaking with parents, many youth miss out on opportunities due to a lack of funding opportunities. And while financial barriers to youth are extensive, financial barriers are felt across all of the dance community.

Physical

The challenges with physical access come in multiple forms. Lack of space is one. Unaccessible space is another. For dance to flourish, there must be dance spaces. When touring the province this past winter, we were able to get a small glimpse at some of the spaces where dance was happening. And while the metro and larger areas offer some spaces for effective dance training, many rural areas do not. And for even some of the more equipped spaces, many are not compatible with the needs of those who have physical or sensory limitations and challenges.

Virtual

While the digital world has made many things much easier to access, in some instances it has become an after thought for those unable to physically be present in a space. With virtual capabilities, adaptation is vital. In situations where gatherings for educational sharing have been organized primarily for in-person exchange, many times virtual access is unavailable. Leaving those who are unable to be physically present left out of the conversation.

Program Partnership

As the provincial umbrella agency for all forms of dance, Dance Nova Scotia remains committed to supporting the development of dance as a vital cultural and artistic activity. One of the key ways we fulfill this mandate is through our Program Partnership, which provides structural and administrative support to individuals and groups undertaking projects that benefit the broader dance community.

The Program Partnership enables members of the community to raise funds under Dance Nova Scotia's charitable status. Approved projects may receive tax-creditable donations, with receipts issued directly by Dance Nova Scotia. In 2024/2025, this program more than doubled, raising nearly \$50,000 to support a variety of community-based dance initiatives.

Participating groups in this program year included:

ROOTED in Dance (formerly Votive Dance)

KiDanCo

The Dance Institute

PHIN Performing Arts

Team Prague – dancers accepted to represent Canada at the 2024 World Dance Championships in Prague

Taya Tucker – Nova Scotia youth dancer accepted to represent Team Canada at the 2025 World Dance Championships in Spain

In response to recent changes to Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) guidelines for charities, the Program Partnership underwent a restructuring to improve accountability and transparency. We now require participating organizations and individuals to submit comprehensive financial documentation at the end of their project or fiscal year to confirm that funds were used for the purposes stated in their applications. While this has added necessary structure to the program, aligning these reporting timelines with both Dance Nova Scotia's fiscal year and CRA's taxation requirements continues to be an administrative challenge.

In addition to donation facilitation, the program also includes free or subsidized access to DANSpace and the use of Marley flooring. While these resources are less frequently requested than fundraising support, they remain important in-kind contributions. Importantly, there is no cost to participate in the Program Partnership.

Dance Nova Scotia continues to expand the scope of our support to include fundraising development resources. Program participants also now have access to:

- Information to help shape fundraising strategy and direction
- One-on-one support for generating and refining fundraising ideas
- Assistance with marketing efforts including social media promotion, newsletter inclusion, and help crafting a tailored marketing strategy

These expanded supports are designed to help our community members maximize the impact of their fundraising efforts while promoting their work to a broader audience.

The Program Partnership remains a vital component of Dance Nova Scotia's mission to nurture, sustain, and celebrate dance in all its forms across the province.

Dance Nova Scotia is proud to continue offering this support as part of our commitment to fostering inclusive, accessible, and sustainable opportunities for dance throughout the province.



PROGRAM PARTNERSHIP

DANCE NOVA SCOTIA

Education

Education remains a cornerstone of Dance Nova Scotia's mission and vision. As we look to the future, we are committed to expanding learning opportunities that support dancers at every stage of their journey. Over the past year, we have made significant strides in developing new programs and reassessing existing offerings to better meet the evolving needs of our community.

Co-Curricular Record Development

In response to the limitations of the provincial Personal Development Credit—which currently applies only to ballet and Highland dance—Dance Nova Scotia is developing a dance co-curricular record.

This initiative aims to provide a non-accredited, but meaningful, way for dancers to track their personal dance training history.

Through this program, dance schools and instructors will be able to validate participation and completion of classes, which will then be recorded on an official Dance Nova Scotia transcript. This document will be available to dancers upon request, offering them a comprehensive summary of their training that may support future applications or pursuits in education, work, or performance.

Personal Development Credit Review

Dance Nova Scotia is also undertaking a review of our participation in the provincial Personal Development Credit. Previously we offered two recognized courses: Dance Nova Scotia Ballet 12 and Dance Nova Scotia Highland Dance 10. We are assessing the relevance, usage, and accessibility of these credits and exploring ways to broaden participation and impact in the coming years.

Workshops and Webinars

This year, we launched our first live educational webinars, beginning with a marketing-focused session designed to provide the dance community with clear, actionable promotional strategies. These sessions are part of our larger plan to build a robust offering of workshops and webinars aimed at professional development, community building, and knowledge sharing.

Collaborative Educational Partnerships

In addition to developing our own programs, Dance Nova Scotia is actively seeking partnerships with external organizations that offer strong, relevant educational opportunities. By collaborating with like-minded groups, we aim to bring diverse, high-quality learning experiences to our members.

These initiatives mark the beginning of an exciting new chapter in our educational programming. We look forward to continuing to support dancers, educators, and the broader community through meaningful and accessible education.

Marketing/Communications

This year, Dance Nova Scotia communications significantly expanded in our outreach, marketing, and visibility across the province through a blend of in-person engagement, strategic marketing efforts, and digital media initiatives.

In-Person Community Engagement

We represented Dance Nova Scotia at a diverse range of events, fostering connections across multiple sectors and demographics. Highlights include participation in:

Alzheimer's Conference
Arts Health Antigonish (AHA!) AGM
Between Shores Flamenco Showcase
Buzz Dance Challenge
CGLCC Community Summit
Dance Nova Scotia Dance Day Kick-Off
GMB Dance Day Festival
Kinetic Open Series

MSVU Program Night
Nova Scotia Naval Charity Day
Nova Scotia Volunteer Conference
Out Fest Queer Arts Festival
Provincial Irish Feis
Seniors Expo
Vending days at Sunnyside Mall
and Bedford Place Mall

Outreach and Marketing Initiatives

Our marketing efforts have amplified our presence within the provincial dance community and beyond:

- Distributed regular newsletters to keep our network informed and engaged
- Invited the dance community to collaborate with us and host Dance Nova Scotia booths at events
- Featured local artists and initiatives through Community Spotlights on our blog
- Released seven podcast episodes, covering topics such as:
 - 2SLGBTQIA+ representation in dance
 - Recreational dance for adults
 - Arts in education
 - Community stories from DANSpace
 - Highlights on the work of Kinetic Dance
 - Coverage of youth dance achievements
- Welcomed guest writers to contribute to our blog, broadening perspectives and content
- Launched our first live marketing webinars, offering direct value to the dance community
- Sponsored a variety of dance events and performances, including:
 - Painted Dance, Rooted Dance, Mocean Dance, Kinetic, Nova Scotia Irish Feis, Out Fest, and the Merritt Theatre Awards
- Hosted multiple promotional giveaways to increase engagement

These initiatives demonstrate our commitment to inclusion, celebration, and support of dance across Nova Scotia. We look forward to building on this momentum in the coming year.

Fund Development

The Fund Development committee has had a productive and impactful year, laying a strong foundation for current and future financial sustainability.

A comprehensive list of funding opportunities has been established, covering a wide range of sources including government, business, organizational grants and bursaries, private foundations, and fundraising events. This proactive research is already shaping our ability to pursue strategic funding for both organizational operations and dance-focused projects.

We have also begun actively preparing to engage with private funders in the coming year, with the goal of securing new partnerships and financial support for future initiatives.

A key milestone this year was the launch of our first-ever fundraising raffle through Rafflebox, helping us reach new donor audiences and expand our fundraising methods. Additionally, we enhanced donor engagement by restructuring our CanadaHelps donation platform. Donors can now choose from three targeted giving streams:

Greatest Needs of the Organization
Dance for Health: Seniors
Youth Bursary Program

These clearly defined donation categories help us communicate impact more effectively and encourage donor confidence and connection.

Thanks to these collective efforts, Dance Nova Scotia more than doubled its typical annual fundraising revenue this year — a significant achievement that reflects our commitment to growth, transparency, and sustainability.

Additionally during the 2024/2025 year, Dance Nova Scotia was successful in obtaining grants for a number of initiatives. These initiatives, some of which have recently concluded and some which have only just begun, include:

\$15,000 provided by the Province of Nova Scotia's Culture Innovation Fund towards the Dance for Health: Seniors Classes program

\$15,000 provided by the Province of Nova Scotia's Culture Innovation Fund towards the Ready to Rise Youth Training Program

\$23,000 provided by the Province of Nova Scotia's New Horizon's for Senior's program towards the development of a Dance for Health: Seniors online Training Portal

Dance for Health: Seniors

The Dance for Health: Seniors program continues to build. In the 2024/2025 year we received funding from the province's Culture Innovation Fund to establish a support project for the year. Through this generous funding we:

- > Delivered over 130 free dance classes in 12 Nova Scotia communities, primarily in rural areas.
- > Reached between 10 and 22 seniors per class, fostering consistent and engaged participation.
- > Built new connections with community organizations and initiated lasting partnerships for future collaboration.
- > Successfully raised awareness of the program through senior fairs and local outreach efforts.
- > Launched new fundraising initiatives to ensure long-term sustainability.
- > Created a safe and joyful space for seniors to improve mobility, reduce pain, enhance coordination, and build confidence through movement.

Participants consistently reported improved social engagement, increased sense of joy, and renewed energy - especially important for those facing isolation. Positive feedback included requests for more classes and longer program durations, underscoring both the need and success of the initiative.

We continue to source funding to keep Dance for Health: Seniors classes happening throughout the province and continue to encounter more interested instructors and organizations looking for our Dance for Health: Seniors training.

To remedy that, we have now embarked on a new project through funding by the province's "New Horizons for Seniors" program to take our current training and convert it into an online training portal. This would effectively allow anyone in Nova Scotia and beyond to access training so that more classes for Seniors could be possible.

Alongside this project we will continue to raise funds for the program and actively support our current list of instructors who are providing classes.

We have also started receiving requests to provide demos of the programs at community centres, and aging facilities. Whenever possible we try to accommodate these requests.





Our participants say it best:

"These classes allow people like myself, with Parkinson's, the opportunity to get out and back into the public. If they didn't have that, it makes the day very long. It increases the isolation."

Doug McEwen, Musquodoboit Harbour

"I had two strokes, with left-sided weakness, and now I'm able to get up and dance without my walker. I find the socialization here is ultimately fabulous. And it's been very restorative. Physically, mentally, spiritually."

Jean Fleury, Antigonish

"The connections! A lot of my exercises I do at home, on video. So, I'm by myself. But when you come here, you're seeing other people – real people – that have the same problems as myself. So, the connections are very, very important."

Joe MacDonald, Dartmouth

"I love the balance...and the movement. I never ever took dance as a child, so it was quite an experience for me. When we first came, we were told it was dance – but it was movement and balance, and it's just wonderful to see that you can isolate different areas of your body."

Debbie MacInnis, Cape Breton





Studio Rental & Usage Overview

The past year has marked a period of strong growth and engagement at DANSpace, with a significant increase in both weekly and monthly studio rentals. The demand for accessible and affordable studio space has nearly brought us to capacity, underscoring the vital role DANSpace plays in supporting not only the dance community but the wider arts sector in Nova Scotia.

Studio Growth and Impact

Steady increase in weekly and monthly bookings, with multiple renters seeking expanded hours and additional days.

Enhanced communication and flexibility in our booking process has helped make the space more accessible to a diverse range of artists.

Transitioned studio management partway through 2024, with Nat Dooks taking over from Richard Zimich. This shift was met with renewed interest, higher usage, and increased studio revenue.

A wider community of artists—including those from theatre, film, and music—are increasingly accessing the space, reflecting its growing reputation and appeal.

Weekly Renters

Our core group of weekly renters continues to form the heartbeat of DANSpace. In 2024/2025, this included:

Breakspace – Dance NS's outreach program for breakers
Chelsi Madonna School of Music – LGBTQ+ and other choirs
Diaga Irish Dance – Youth classes in Irish dance
Drifted Collective – Workshops for Black dancers
Kinetic – Modern and exploratory dance projects
Maria Osende & Atlantic Flamenco – Ballet and flamenco for adults
Olha Trubchynina – Adult and youth dance classes

Monthly and Casual Renters

DANSpace also welcomed a vibrant and growing list of monthly and casual renters, including:

- Anqi Wen
- Atlantique Breaking Alliance
- Canadian Deaf Conference
- Don't Stop My Rock
- DSMR Femme
- Francine Dulong
- Halifax Dance
- Halifax Fringe Festival
- I'Thandie Munro
- Karv
- Lighthouse Arts Centre
- Maya Delphine
- Mercy Dance Productions
- Michel Dube
- National Ballet School
- Nova Ecstatic Dance
- Spontaneity Improv
- The Dance Institute
- The ReVamp project
- Unity Charity
- Votive Dance
- Wontanara Drum and Dance

Partnerships

This year, DANSpace forged new partnerships with the following organizations. Providing them with space to run events and programming we were excited to work closely with:

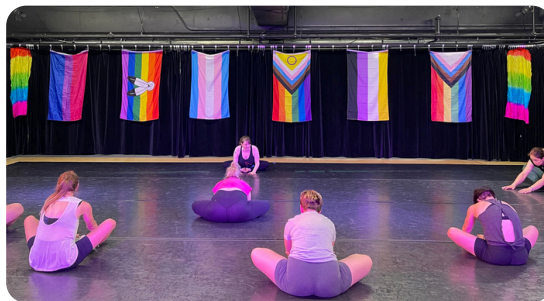
Drifted Dance Collective and Unity Charity

These collaborations have provided space for workshops and programming that expand the reach of dance and related art forms in the community.

Looking Ahead

DANSpace continues to be an invaluable hub for the arts. With an increasing number of renters and community partners, and as programming from Kinetic Dance and Dance Nova Scotia continues to grow, we envision DANSpace remaining at the heart of Nova Scotia's dance ecosystem.

To ensure our ability to support this growth, we have officially launched a new three-year strategic plan aimed at expanding capacity and deepening impact within the community.

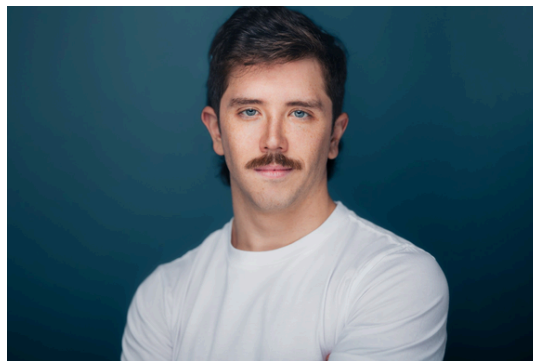




DANSpace Studio Features

- Mirrors
- Lighting grid, with fixtures
- New touch screen lighting console that can run any show, workshop or class that uses DANSpace
- Sound console with the ability to run multiple feeds, mics etc
- Speaker system
- Risers: 2 tier trundle riser.
- Seating capacity as a performance space: 80
- Classroom Capacity: 147
- Wireless internet for clients
- Drapery track that creates a 'U' shape around the dance floor.
- An office for the DANSpace manager
- Storage room
- Change room and washroom
- Cubby space for storage
- Ballet Barres
- Hardwood sprung floor, wall to wall in the space. Dance area is approx 46'x40'.
- Marly floor covers the dance floor and can roll up for dance styles that wish to use the hardwood.

Nat Dooks
Studio Manager



nova scotia DANCE WEEK

AND INTERNATIONAL DANCE DAY

April 20 - 29, 2024
October/November 2025

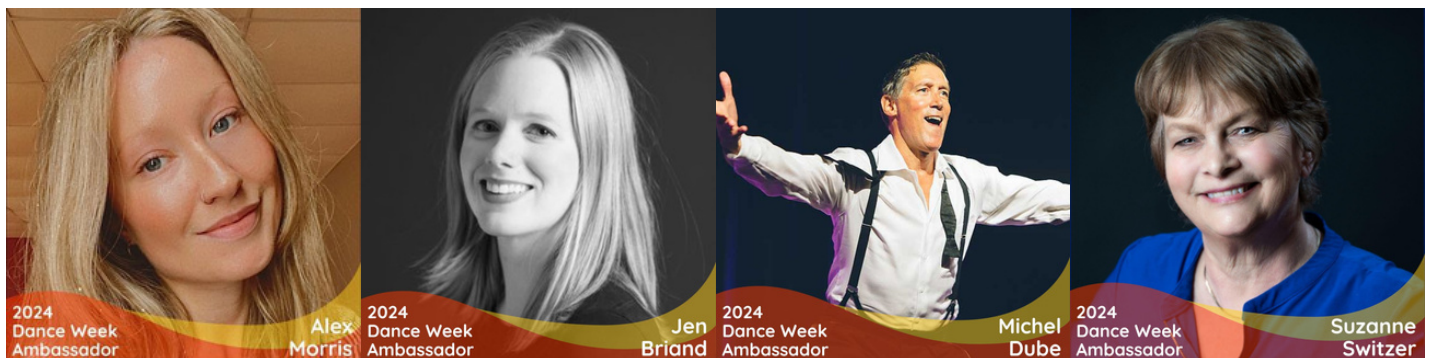
In 2024–2025, Dance Nova Scotia significantly expanded its celebration of National Dance Week and International Dance Day, introducing new programming aimed at raising the profile of dance across the province and increasing accessibility and participation.

A major milestone this year was the inaugural Dance Week Kickoff event, held on April 20, 2024, at the DANSpace Community Studio in the Lighthouse Arts Centre in Halifax. This dynamic and inclusive event featured open-style and breaking dance battles, performances by local schools and studios, and reflections from guest speakers on the role of dance in community connection and wellbeing. The four-hour event was livestreamed via Zoom, ensuring participation from across the province. With a full house in person and strong virtual engagement, the event was an overwhelming success and marked a bold new direction for Dance Nova Scotia's public programming.



Nat Dooks
Dance Week Coordinator

2024 Dance Week Ambassadors



The kickoff launched a week of province-wide engagement as part of National Dance Week, anchored by the annual Dare to Dance Challenge. In 2024, Dance Nova Scotia partnered with the Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE) to combine the Dare to Dance Challenge with the HRCE's internal dance initiative, expanding the reach and coordination of both programs. Over 2,000 students from across Nova Scotia took part in a virtual choreographed dance presented in three separate sessions, celebrating movement, creativity, and connection through dance.

Building on this momentum, participation in the combined Dare to Dance/HRCE Challenge in April 2025 had more than doubled to over 5,000 student participants. This exponential growth is a testament to the increasing value and relevance of dance programming in schools, and to the strength of partnerships built across sectors to support youth engagement in the arts.

2025 Dance Week Ambassadors



Into the Future

Recognizing that National Dance Week falls during the peak of Nova Scotia's competitive dance season, Dance Nova Scotia has also made the strategic decision to launch a standalone Nova Scotia Provincial Dance Week in the fall of 2025. Scheduled for early October or November, this new celebration will offer a more inclusive window for dance schools, studios, independent artists, and community groups to participate fully, without conflicting with existing schedules.

Plans are underway to expand this provincial initiative into a recurring annual dance festival, with ambitions to attract national and international participation. The long-term vision is to build a tentpole cultural event that will spotlight Nova Scotia's diverse dance community, enhance cultural tourism, and position the province as a hub for dance excellence and innovation.

Our Generous Partners





Launched in September of 2023, Dance Nova Scotia's Podcast United In Dance hit the ground running and quickly found an audience. Along with special guests each episode, United In Dance also supports the Nova Scotia music scene with our Nova Scotia Music Spotlight in each episode. With 6 episodes released and completely produced in-house by Dance Nova Scotia, United In Dance is ready to tackle the next phase of our latest service and resource.

In the 2024/2025 year, Dance Nova Scotia released 7 podcast episodes of United In Dance covering a wide range of topics. We continue to build on the momentum of our communities interest and look to broaden the scope of topics to include international guests as well as members of our own Nova Scotia and Canadian dance community.

2024/2025 Episodes Include

EPISODE 6

Guests: Isaac Mule, Robert Azevedo, Sid Ryan Eilers
Topic: Queer Dance / OutFest 2024
Music Spotlight: Jade Bennett and Natasha Sophia

EPISODE 7

Guests: Nat Dooks
Topic: DANSpace Community Studio/Space for Arts
Music Spotlight: Good Dear Good

EPISODE 8

Guests: Maria Osende
Topic: The Power of Recreational Dance for Adults
Music Spotlight: Pillow Fite

EPISODE 9

Guests: Pam Halstead
Topic: Art in schools and the PERFORM! Program
Music Spotlight: Izra Fitch

EPISODE 10

Guests: Emma Kerson, Kay MacDonald
Topic: KINETIC dance
Music Spotlight: casual Cries for Help

EPISODE 11

Guests: Kealan McLaughlin
Topic: Principal dancer returning to Nova Scotia
Music Spotlight: Freya Milliken

EPISODE 12

Guests: Taya Tucker
Topic: 10 year old Nova Scotian heads to Spain with Team Canada
Music Spotlight: G.Roy & Gizelle Grace

Hear United In Dance wherever you listen to podcasts or at:

DanceNS.ca/Podcast



Bringing Dance to Vulnerable Youth

In 2015, Unity Charities decided to cut funding to their weekly drop in at our DANSpace studio; a program Dance Nova Scotia had supported by supplying DANSpace at a reduced rate, mainly because the sessions were for marginalized youth, those limited by socio-economic challenges, and those who do not fit into the dance school mold.

When the drop-in sessions ended, it left a void in the Hip Hop/Breakdance community and nowhere for the youth who were faithful to the drop-in sessions to continue their practice. Though dance schools teach these dance forms, they are not representative of the communities and the roots that traditionally spawned the dance form/movement.

Urban Dance advocate, artist, and teacher Nick Nguyen created BreakSpace out of the need to continue to give those kids a drop in place where they can learn and practice WITHOUT the restriction of cost. BreakSpace was also an effort by Nick and DANS, to rebuild the void the Hip Hop/Breakdance community has suffered through the gentrification of the HRM communities where Urban Dance proliferated. The BreakSpace program also brings the history and tradition of the dance form forward as part of the learning process.

Over the course of the 2024/2025 year, Breakspace sessions continued to happen in our new DANSpace location in the Lighthouse Arts Centre. Dance Nova Scotia continues to seek funding to stabilize the program and grow a solid foundation of support for the future to continue to build the Breakspace program, and eventually offer similar sessions in other locations of the province.

During the 2024/2025, Breakspace was held each week on Sunday nights in the DANSpace studio. Attendance varied with an average of between 12 to 20 participants per Breakspace session.

Kinetic

Partnership with Dance Nova Scotia

Kinetic Studio emerged years ago from Dance Nova Scotia's own programming, and over time, our relationship has remained strong, collaborative, and rooted in a shared commitment to the growth of dance. In 2024, Kinetic entered a new chapter with the appointment of Emma Kerson and Kay MacDonald as Artistic Co-Directors. This leadership transition marked an exciting moment to formalize a renewed partnership between our two organizations—one built on aligned values, mutual respect, and a shared vision for the future of independent dance in Nova Scotia.

With this new energy and leadership, both Dance Nova Scotia and Kinetic are well-positioned to imagine and realize bold, collaborative projects. As we continue building meaningful connections across artistic, cultural, and professional communities, our partnership with Kinetic serves as a vital conduit to the evolving world of independent dance. Through this relationship, we remain attuned to the needs, ideas, and creative energy of the artists we support.

Dance Nova Scotia is energized by what lies ahead and looks forward to many future collaborations with Kinetic. Together, we are committed to uplifting and advancing dance in all its forms throughout the province.

2024/2025 Kinetic DANSpace Usage Hours

April 2024 – September 2024: 96 hours

October 2024 – March 2025: 129 hours

Key Kinetic Events

April 2024: Kinetic Open Series

A selection of dynamic works-in-progress from local and visiting dance artists

November 2024: Kinetic Open Series

A selection of dynamic works-in-progress from local and visiting dance artists

January 2025: Kinetic Explorations

Independent artist exploration into new or developing dimensions of their choreographic process.

February 2025: Pathways

Collaborative work-in-progress showcase

Throughout the year

Kinetic provides many opportunities within the DANSpace studio including bootcamp workshops, various classes, and artist residencies.

KINETIC

2024/2025 Activities Overview

Governance and Organizational Development

This year Dance Nova Scotia strengthened its organizational foundation by prioritizing best practices in governance:

- Continued to strengthen our governance framework through a commitment to policy review, board development, and inclusive practices. As part of our ongoing efforts to ensure responsible and forward-looking governance, we undertook a comprehensive review of our organizational policies to ensure they remain relevant, effective, and aligned with our values.
- Created a new **online onboarding and orientation** system to introduce for new board members, making the process more consistent and accessible across geographies. The module includes governance expectations, key policies, and a comprehensive organizational overview.
- Began the **Rainbow Registered accreditation** process through the CGLCC – Canada's 2SLGBTQIA+ Chamber of Commerce, a nationally recognized program that affirms our values and actions toward being a safer, more welcoming workplace and community resource.

These updates provide a stronger, more transparent framework for future growth and impact.

Board and Committee Development

Board Recruitment and Diversity

This year, Dance Nova Scotia undertook a targeted recruitment effort to build a more inclusive and representative board:

- We welcomed four new directors representing different regions and backgrounds: Jen Cole (Hants), Robin Levy (Halifax), Hadeer Marzooque (Halifax), and Chenlu Shao (Lower Sackville). These individuals bring a rich mix of lived experience, cultural knowledge, and creative leadership.
- Implemented outreach strategies to connect with underrepresented and rural communities, resulting in a wider candidate pool and increased awareness of board opportunities.
- We are preparing to welcome an additional four new board members from the Truro, Eastern Passage, Dartmouth, and Halifax.

Committee Structure

To support strategic goals, we restructured our committee system:

- Five active standing committees (Accessibility, Communications, Education, Finance, and Governance) are now meeting regularly with clear mandates and deliverables.
- Three ad hoc committees (Nominations, Dance for Health, Fund Development) were convened to respond quickly to timely issues and opportunities.
- Enhanced coordination between board leadership and committees has led to more agile responses and greater engagement from members.
- Ad hoc committees also continue to be established on a case by case basis within the various projects we have begun to undertake, such as a steering committee for our new Ready to Rise Youth Program.

This work ensures our governance remains responsive, inclusive, and forward-looking.

2024/2025 Activities Overview

Accessibility Initiatives

We continued to advance accessibility in the dance sector through targeted action:

- Established a dedicated Accessibility Committee to examine both internal practices and external sector needs.
- Conducted consultations and preliminary research focused on lived experiences of exclusion in dance spaces, particularly from artists with disabilities.
- Began shaping a long-term accessibility strategy, which includes the development of educational resources, venue audits, and broader promotion of inclusive dance forms and educators.
- Preparing to have guest speakers partake in presentations and panel discussions for community workshops and virtual sessions.

This allows Dance Nova Scotia to lead by example and build sector-wide understanding and capacity.

Communications and Outreach

Our communications and outreach expanded dramatically this year:

Event Participation

- Dance Nova Scotia had a consistent presence at over 15 public events:
- Engaged with broad audiences at community events like the Nova Scotia Volunteer Conference, TAPHE – Teachers Association for Physical & Health Education, Alzheimer's Society Conference, Senior's Expo, CGLCC Community Summit, and Out Fest Queer Arts Festival.
- Connected directly with dancers, educators, and families through sector-focused events like the Buzz Dance Challenge, Kinetic Open Series, Nova Scotia Irish Feis, and the GMB Dance Day Festival.

Media and Marketing

We expanded our reach and storytelling through various channels:

- Released 7 podcast episodes featuring local dance artists and thought leaders, exploring themes such as intergenerational dance, creative aging, and cultural identity.
- Continued regular newsletters and blog updates, featuring sector news, calls for participation, and spotlights on community initiatives.
- Hosted live marketing webinars to help members and organizations build digital capacity.
- Sponsored a record number of local events and productions, enhancing visibility and community support.

Together, these efforts boosted our profile and reinforced our role as a sector connector.

2024/2025 Activities Overview

Fund Development

We introduced new systems and tools to increase fundraising efficiency and effectiveness:

- Compiled and maintained a comprehensive list of granting and sponsorship opportunities, allowing us to plan applications more strategically.
- Successfully piloted an online raffle campaign in partnership with Rafflebox, which tested new low-barrier ways for the public to support our work.
- Upgraded our CanadaHelps.org donation platform with clearer donation streams tied to key initiatives. Donors can now direct support to organizational needs, Dance for Health, or youth bursaries.

These efforts collectively **doubled our fundraising revenue**, a significant step toward long-term sustainability.

Membership Growth and Services

We experienced notable growth in membership, along with improved retention and engagement:

- Updated our system to a modern membership system with capabilities to reminders, streamline onboarding, and capture useful demographic data.
- Re-engaged lapsed members through personal outreach and revitalized communications.
- We are preparing to partner with like-minded networks, including Speakers Nova Scotia and NS Loyal, to increase member benefits and visibility.
- Refreshed our provincial dance directory, mapping instructors, schools, and performance groups province-wide.

Our growing membership base, which doubled in the past year, strengthens the provincial dance ecosystem and our capacity to serve it.

Program Partnership and Community Fundraising

Our fiscal sponsorship model continued to unlock opportunity for dance creators:

- Helped raise nearly \$50,000 in charitable funds on behalf of independent artists and community projects.
- Supported diverse initiatives such as ROOTED in Dance, KiDanCo, The Dance Institute, PHIN Performing Arts, and Team Canada dancers.
- Updated internal guidelines and added new reporting tools to support compliance and artist accountability in response to CRA changes.

Additional supports included one-on-one grant coaching, access to our DAN\$pace community studio, and subsidized equipment rentals. These services remain essential for artists navigating project development in a complex funding environment.

2024/2025 Activities Overview

Education and Professional Development

We invested in initiatives that support lifelong learning and career development:

- Begun initial steps toward creating a Co-Curricular Dance Record template that dancers can use to track achievements, workshop hours, and performance credits—a step toward more formalized recognition of community-based training.
- Evaluated the current Personal Development Credit (PDC) course options for high school students and look to re-establish our involvement with the program.
- Delivered training sessions for artists and educators on promotion, branding, and grant readiness. These sessions are now being recorded to be made available on demand for Dance Nova Scotia members.
- Have begun work on a new Ready to Rise youth training program to provide early and strong dance educate to Nova Scotia youth dancers. The program is being designed and delivered by some of the strongest members of the dance community and will help connect our youth to dance in the province and begin adding to the ecosystem much earlier.

This year's work laid the foundation for more robust and equitable pathways into dance careers.

Dance for Health: Seniors

We significantly expanded our flagship health and wellness program:

- Offered more than 130 free classes in underserved and rural communities, helping reduce social isolation and improve mobility among seniors.
- Maintained high participation rates, with an average of 10–22 attendees per weekly session.
- Collected evaluation data indicating positive impacts on mental, physical, and emotional health.
- Are preparing to pilot demo sessions in new communities, increasing awareness and paving the way for future growth.
- Have begun work on a new instructor training portal with support from New Horizons for Seniors, which will allow us to scale training for community-based dance leaders province-wide.

This program continues to be a model for community-centered health promotion.

2024/2025 Activities Overview

Dance Week and International Dance Day

In 2024–2025, Dance Nova Scotia significantly expanded its celebration of National Dance Week and International Dance Day, introducing new programming aimed at raising the profile of dance across the province and increasing accessibility and participation.

A major milestone this year was the **inaugural Dance Week Kickoff event**, held on **April 20, 2024**, at the DANSpace Community Studio in the Lighthouse Arts Centre in Halifax. This dynamic and inclusive event featured open-style and breaking dance battles, performances by local schools and studios, and reflections from guest speakers on the role of dance in community connection and wellbeing. The four-hour event was **live streamed via Zoom**, ensuring participation from across the province. With a **full house in person** and strong virtual engagement, the event was an overwhelming success and marked a bold new direction for Dance Nova Scotia's public programming.

The kickoff launched a week of province-wide engagement as part of National Dance Week, anchored by the **annual Dare to Dance Challenge**. In 2024, Dance Nova Scotia partnered with the **Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE)** to combine the Dare to Dance Challenge with the HRCE's internal dance initiative, expanding the reach and coordination of both programs. Over **2,000 students** from across Nova Scotia took part in a virtual choreographed dance presented in three separate sessions, celebrating movement, creativity, and connection through dance.

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Recognizing that National Dance Week falls during the peak of Nova Scotia's competitive dance season, Dance Nova Scotia has also made the strategic decision to **launch a standalone Nova Scotia Provincial Dance Week in the fall of 2025**. Scheduled for early October or November, this new celebration will offer a more inclusive window for dance schools, studios, independent artists, and community groups to participate fully, without conflicting with existing schedules.

Plans are underway to expand this provincial initiative into a recurring **annual dance festival**, with ambitions to attract **national and international participation**. The long-term vision is to build a **tentpole cultural event** that will spotlight Nova Scotia's diverse dance community, enhance cultural tourism, and position the province as a hub for dance excellence and innovation.

2024/2025 Activities Overview

DANSpace Studio

Our downtown Halifax studio remained a creative anchor for the community:

- Reached near-full rental capacity, hosting regular programming from a mix of new and returning users.
- Welcomed artists across disciplines, including theatre companies, musicians, and visual artists, in addition to dancers.
- Provided affordable rehearsal and residency space to collectives such as Drifted, Diaga Irish Dance, and Breakspace.
- Appointed a dedicated Studio Manager, improving communication and support for renters.
- Created a concise 3 year strategic plan for the studio to carry us forward.

DANSpace continues to foster experimentation, collaboration, and community building.

Kinetic Partnership

While we have always maintained a strong working connection with Kinetic, this year we deepened our collaboration with Kinetic to support independent and experimental dance:

- Provided infrastructure, studio space, and shared promotional platforms.
- Supported emerging artists through residencies, mentorships, and showcase opportunities.
- Partnered with new leadership to align goals and grow visibility.
- Became active participants in the Kinetic Open Series.
- Welcome the new leadership as guests on the United In Dance podcast to help community have a better understanding of the work Kinetic brings to dance.

This partnership amplifies the voices of local artists and supports innovation in movement practice.

2024/2025 Activities Overview

Leadership and Sector Collaboration: Cultural Federations of Nova Scotia (CFNS)

In October 2024, Dance Nova Scotia's Executive Director was elected President of the Cultural Federations of Nova Scotia (CFNS), a collective of provincial cultural service organizations working together to support and promote the arts, culture, and heritage sectors. Since assuming this leadership role, he has made significant strides in reinvigorating the organization and fostering a renewed spirit of collaboration among its members. Under his direction, CFNS launched a brand-new website and established an active presence on social media, significantly improving the organization's visibility and accessibility. These digital enhancements have helped CFNS better engage with both its membership and the broader public.

A key focus during this period has been revitalizing internal connections and shared purpose among the federations. One early initiative was the re-establishment of the beloved CFNS Holiday Party, a long-standing tradition that had fallen dormant. This event served as both a celebration and a reconnection point for sector peers.

In addition, CFNS welcomed a new office administrator, contributing to more effective day-to-day operations. The federation has also begun designing a range of new collaborative initiatives aimed at strengthening sector impact and outreach. These include:

- Regular meetings with the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage, fostering ongoing dialogue and more responsive policy development.
- Plans for a CFNS "Road Show", a provincial tour to engage local communities and showcase the vital work of the cultural sector.
- Participation in the 2025 federal election through the national "Arts Vote" campaign, advocating for strong arts and culture policy platforms.
- Initial steps toward a new five-year strategic plan, with a focus on resilience, collaboration, and shared sector priorities.
- Exploration of shared resources and spaces, aiming to increase efficiency and enhance services for members across all federations.

Through this work, Dance Nova Scotia's leadership has played a central role in reinvigorating CFNS and positioning it as a key voice and driver of positive change within Nova Scotia's cultural ecosystem.

2024/2025 Activities Overview

Looking Ahead: 2025 and Beyond

October 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of Dance Nova Scotia, and we are thrilled to announce a year-long celebration of dance, culture, and community. Since its founding in 1975, Dance Nova Scotia has been a pillar of the arts community, fostering the growth of dance across the province and uniting dancers from all backgrounds.

Throughout the next year, Dance Nova Scotia will showcase the diversity and vitality of dance across all genres, abilities, age groups, traditions, and cultures with a variety of projects that will engage our provincial community.

- Programming will highlight the social, educational, and cultural impact of dance across generations and communities.
- Events will include professional performances, virtual presentations, public workshops, storytelling initiatives, and a retrospective on the organization's history.
- We aim to strengthen sector cohesion, raise visibility, and lay the foundation for the next 50 years.

Our commitment remains rooted in inclusivity, creativity, and service to Nova Scotia's vibrant dance community.

Audited Statements

Please see Appendix A

Completed by
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