DANCE IS MEDICINE FIRST ANNIVERSARY

CELEBRATING THE LAUNCH OF OUR VERY FIRST GAME CLASS



COMMEMORATING SEPTEMBER 20TH, 2023

The inaugural GAME (Gospel Afrobeat dance MEdicine) class took place at the Community Center in Eagle Heights, Madison, Wisconsin, on September 20th, 2023. Led by our first instructor, **FRANCIS MEDRANO**, who continues to deliver his incredible lessons today. The event was supported by many friends and family. Their presence made the experience even more memorable and enjoyable.



ONE YEAR LATER

Our number of participants has grown and continues to grow, and we are incredibly grateful to them. They are the reason we've been able to sustain and expand the program, reaching more people who benefit from it. We now offer three regular weekly classes and have also hosted sessions at community events throughout the area.

We've also expanded our team of dance fitness instructors, each bringing unique backgrounds and styles, which has added a vibrant diversity to our classes.

CELEBRATION AT EAGLE HEIGHTS



CELEBRATION AT LIFE CENTER



We celebrated with a special chocolate cake and balloons alongside our wonderful participants, showing them how much we appreciate their presence at every class. Dancing together and sharing each other's energy brings us so much joy. It's their smiling faces that truly inspire and motivate our instructors.

OUR INSTRUCTORS



A heartfelt thank you to all the incredible instructors we've been fortunate to have since the program's inception. This includes our founder, OLUFUNMILOLA ABRAHAM, her husband KAROSIBINA ABRAHAM, and the rest of the team: CHELSEA CARVAJAL, ERNESTA COLE, EPHRAIM DANQUE, FRANCIS MEDRANO, MOSES OLUWANIFISE, DEBORAH ONAJIN, ISRAEL SARPONG-ADU, and LILI VARELA.

OUR "BEHIND THE SCENES" TEAM

DANIEL OFURUM and SYDNEY THAO are the backbone of this program. They handle everything from sending out weekly email reminders, conducting surveys, implementing your feedback, organizing classes, taking attendance, creating materials, and facilitating activities. Their dedication keeps the program running smoothly. We are incredibly grateful for their unwavering support and invaluable contributions to Dance is Medicine.

PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT

ANDREA GUZMAN & PEDRO GONZALES



ANDREA:

Andrea was drawn to the classes by the words "Afrobeat" and "GAME" in an email from the Community Center. As a fan of Afrobeat music, she was curious to see if the class involved dancing or playing games.

Participating in GAME has positively impacted her life. As a Ph.D. student. Dancing helps her relieve stress, boosts her mood, and refreshes her creativity. It has also improved her health—she's increased her running distance—and provided a fun activity she and her husband, Pedro, can enjoy together. Additionally, the classes have strengthened her friendships and introduced her to new people.

Andrea says she appreciates the family-friendly nature of GAME, which allows graduate students with children to participate in a welcoming environment.

PEDRO:

Pedro joined the class after Andrea recommended it, and now finds it to be a great way for them to connect. The sessions have helped him manage stress and improve his health wellbeing.

He enjoys the exercises and the sense of community, noting that dancing connects people from around the world. He feels that the GAME classes offer a safe and inclusive space for both experienced and beginner dancers alike.

HARRIET ALLEN



Harriet, one of our Life Center attendees, shared that she initially joined our GAME classes because she loves dancing as a form of exercise, and the location was convenient for her. She also wanted to support the program after hearing about it from Emma WaWa, another Life Center attendee.

Harriet expressed that these classes have been life-changing, as they've helped her establish a regular exercise routine, which has boosted her energy levels, and she's also made new friends. She's grateful for the free classes and believes it was a fantastic idea.

A WORD FROM THE FOUNDER



"CREATING THE GAME PROGRAM AND SEEING ALL THE SUPPORT FROM OUR FAITHFUL ATTENDEES AND AMAZING DANCE INSTRUCTORS IS TRULY A DREAM COME TRUE FOR ME.

"THE GAME PROGRAM IS ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF MY RESEARCH TEAM THAT HAS BROUGHT ME A LOT OF JOY. GETTING TO SEE MEMBERS OF FAMILIES OF ALL AGES AND DIFFERENT CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS HAVE FUN WHILE EXERCISING TOGETHER IS SOMETHING I WILL ALWAYS TREASURE. HELPING ONE ANOTHER STAY PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY HEALTHY IS A GREAT BLESSING, ONE THAT I HOPE WILL CONTINUE FOR MANY YEARS TO COME!"

-OLUFUNMILOLA ABRAHAM

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