

Press Release

To respective media outlets

June 11th, 2019

KDCCF

**Event Report**

**Toyosu Cultural Center**

**dNaga Dance Company Performance in Japan  
Dance for PD Trial Class**

**Experiencing a Dance Program Developed for Parkinson's Disease (PD) Patients**

At the Toyosu Cultural Center, we hosted a performance by the dance company “dNaga Dance Company” based in California, USA. The dance was characteristic in that it was a performance for Parkinson's Disease patients by Parkinson's Disease patients.

This performance featured three works titled “deep brain matters”, “Layers”, and “Proteinology”. Based on interviews to Parkinson's Disease patients, their stories are expressed through dance. 6 out of the 12 performers are currently battling with the disease. Visitors totaled to 78 people over two days. Along with the performance, a



*The first dance performance for the gallery*



*Dance for PD trial class*

trial class for the internationally acclaimed dance program Dance for PD was carried out, and 11 people participated.

From the visitors, we received comments such as, “I previously took care of my grandmother who was fighting Parkinson's Disease, and the performance reminded me of it. It was expressed through their dance” (Male), and “I felt a strong message by the dance, to keep living optimistically regardless of Parkinson's Disease or any other obstacles” (Female).

**【Event Date/Time】** Performance: June 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019 (Fri. & Sat.) 7:00PM~8:20PM

Class: June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019 (Sat.) 3:00PM~4:30PM

**【 Venue 】** Koto District Toyosu Civic Center Gallery

(1 min. walk from Tokyo Metro Yurakucho Line, Toyosu Station, Exit 7)

**【 Instructors 】** Claudine Naganuma (dNaga Dance Company, Founder)

Translator: Eri Majima (Majima Eri Ballet Studio, Founder)

**【 # of Participants】** Performance: 69 Class: 11

## Koto District Cultural Community Foundation (KDCCF) Memo

### dNaga Dance Company

A dance company based in Oakland, California comprised of members of varying ages. Its founder is Japanese American Claudine Naganuma, who founded the dance company in 2001.

In addition to Parkinson's Disease, they take issues such as drugs, abuse, gender equality, and racism as their themes. This time, the dance company visited Japan for the World Parkinson Congress held from June 4<sup>th</sup> to June 7<sup>th</sup> in Kyoto.



*Members of the dNaga Dance Company*

### Interview with Founder Claudine Naganuma (Originally translated by Eri Majima)

#### Question 1 How was the first day of performing in Koto District?

We are in Japan for a performance during the World Parkinson Congress, but we are honored to have performed in Koto District's Toyosu Cultural Center. The dancers all enjoyed performing as well. There seemed to have been visitors with PD among the audience, and we feel that we were mutually empowered through the performance. It felt as if the performers and audience were one.

#### Question 2 What was the significance of performing in Japan?

I am a Japanese American born in San Francisco. Among my relatives are those who were put into internment camps during World War II, and we still carry that past with us today. At the extension of these complex thoughts was my meeting with PD patients. I believe that a community where we can share our accomplishments, our hardships, our weaknesses and accept each other is important. I myself was saved by such a community.

For the performance in Japan, we translated the interview audio used during the performance and projected them as slides.

#### Question 3 What activities and initiatives does dNaga Dance Company undertake?

Our dance studio is located in Oakland, California. We do not receive any administrative funding but operate with the support of individual donations. Kids have been coming to this dance studio from a young age—some have left for college, and some have returned here afterwards. We have been continuing a free class called Dance for PD for 12 years now. When we held a kids class and PD class together one time, something interesting happened. The seniors were stimulated by the youth which motivated them, and the energized youth learned to respect their elders. There is another project called Girls Project which target 11 to 14 year-old girls in impoverished areas, and these are the two projects run by the company.

Although it varies by year, we create one theater performance every season, and 12 other smaller performances.



*Claudine Naganuma who organized the performance (right) and Eri Majima who assisted the performance in Japan (left)*