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**NJDTE Alumna Lisa Rumbauskas Named Director of Young Dancers Program**

WALL, NJ – NJDTE is thrilled to announce Lisa Rumbauskas, NJDTE alumna and faculty member, as the first Director of the Young Dancers Program.

“I am beyond excited to be chosen as the Director of NJDTE's Young Dancers Program. It is truly a joy and an honor to work for such an inspiring company,” Rumbauskas said.

This new position is the latest chapter in Rumbauskas’ lifelong affiliation with NJDTE. After joining the company at age 7, she had the privilege of working with renowned teachers and choreographers including Nancy Turano, Pedro Ruiz, Eduardo Vilaro, Lynn Glauber, Jodi Melnick, Rosemary Sabovick-Bleich and many others. Rumbauskas went on to study at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, and at the same time began working as a rehearsal assistant for NJDTE, under the artistic direction of Nancy Turano. During her prolific professional career, Rumbauskas performed with the national tour of the Broadway show *Swing*, and at many theaters around the country, including The Metropolitan Opera, Radio City Music Hall, The Fulton Opera House, Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera, Houston's Theater Under the Stars and many more. Last year, NJDTE offered Rumbauskas a scholarship to study the American Ballet Theater curriculum and become an ABT® Certified Teacher.

“She was always a ‘diamond’ in my eyes, even as a young dancer. It has been a solid and natural progression towards her new position of Director. I did not give it to her, she earned it,” Turano said proudly.

The Young Dancers Program began in the summer of 2012. As Rumbauskas explained, “We started these technique classes, and had a small group of children studying with us.  Within a very short amount of time, it went from a small group to a large group, and now the program is thriving and is full of exciting futures!”

 “Lisa is selecting and producing a wonderful group of talented young dancers, focusing on a strong base in alignment and vocabulary. These dancers are now beginning to feed into and strengthen our most advanced levels,” Turano added.

Attaining this high level of pre-professionalism begins with the Young Dancers Program. YDP sets the foundation for correct technique, focusing on alignment, coordination, musicality, artistry, and terminology. Once these ballet fundamentals are established in YDP, the dancer is introduced to modern and contemporary techniques, as well as an array of eclectic repertory. NJDTE dancers learn and understand the tools of the creative process and professional etiquette in the studio. After dancers graduate, NJDTE continues to foster their career development by offering employment and professional networking opportunities.

“It has always been a dream of mine personally that one day NJDTE would be the home for successful alumni as teachers, staff, choreographers, and rehearsal assistants.  Lisa is an example of a full-circle success story for NJDTE. We are certain that Lisa will continue to develop the Young Dancers Program, and be a very important link to the larger vision of NJDTE in dance education as we broaden our reach for talented dancers from New Jersey,” Turano said.