

To Whom It May Concern :

I'm writing this letter in support of Ms. Lynn Welters and the New School of Dance & Arts, which I have been a part of for many years now. My wonderful experience with Ms. Welters began in 1993 and is continuing. At that time she gave classical ballet classes at Duke Ellington School of Arts to students that were in the performing arts program for dance. The program required a comprehensive audition by younger dancers who wanted to attend Duke Ellington when they reached the 9th grade. This program was called TADPOLE, and many children ages 8 to 13 took free classical ballet classes, after school, for two days a week. When she and her daughter Reagan opened the New School of Dance & Arts, I was in the 8th grade, because they had so much confidence in my ability, Ms. Welters taught me and two other teenagers the Trio for Le Cosair for the June Recital. Throughout her years of teaching at Duke Ellington, she presented many of her students with extraordinary opportunities to travel to other countries, most of which had never been outside of the D.M.V (DC, Maryland, Virginia) area. They visited countries such as China, Russia, Holland, and Switzerland, in which they participated in classical ballet classes daily and performed as dancers and ambassadors for the USA. During this time 95% of the graduates participating in the dance program went on to professional companies and/or college. "Odara Jabali-Nash started dancing at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington, DC under the direction of Ms. Lynn B. Welters. After graduating, she attended Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA. Afterward she moved to New York City where she continued her dance training at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center," said in the Philadanco Dance Company article. Ms. Welters has shaped and molded many of the famous dancers known today. She's been given many awards for her excellence, professionalism, and longevity in the areas of Dance and Arts. "The Walt Disney Company picked Lynn B. Welters, chairperson of the dance department at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington, D.C., as one of thirty-six educators to be honored with American Teacher Awards," said in the CBS Interactive Business Network article. When she was forced to resign early at the school her love of dance was shown by her persistence. Not letting anything such as her disability, low financial income, or little studio space stand in the way of giving back and doing what she loved. There aren't many people that are passionate about what they do anymore, but people quickly learn that she isn't one of those people. She started the New School of Dance & Arts in spite of her challenges. There children are taught classical ballet steps along with vocabulary so that they fully comprehend how to do the step correctly. She has taught classical variations such as the Nutcracker, Le Cosair, Raymonda, the Fairies from Sleeping Beauty, and Kingdom of the Shades from La Bayadere to name a few. She is currently re-teaching Swan Lake to children who are novices, ages 9 to 12. I've been fortunate enough to have been a part of both and the experience is magnificent. When she teaches she builds up your self esteem, she is more confident in you than you are in yourself, and she challenges you in ways that only make you stronger and gives you confidence. With barely enough money to afford to keep the space she's renting for classes she isn't able to afford other dance teachers. I volunteer my help during classes as the assistant and demonstrator every day she has class, which is four days out of the week. For as long as I've known her all she's ever done was give her all, even when it was her last. She makes the best of her situations and is a wonderful example of a role model. For her lifelong work with giving, teaching, and coaching for no personal rewards other than seeing her students make progress and gain self confident, Lynn B, Welters deserves the attention and support from anyone or any organization who believes in the arts and the future of children. After I graduated from college, with a degree in Communications, I could not wait to find her to continue my own dancing, she is currently teaching me the solo of Odile from Swan Lake. / Sincerely Erica Leake