

news

Ashland University Dance Company

Strength, technique, passion and confidence

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A new club is ready to put on their dancing shoes and hit the floor. The Ashland University Dance Company started this spring semester that allows dancers to express themselves through various styles of dance. Co-founder of AUDC, Schuyler Berger, has been dancing for 18 years and wanted to continue her passion for dance in college. Berger drove as far as Columbus to continue dancing at a profes-

sional dance company a couple times a week but driving the distance was strainful. Once she decided that traveling to Columbus to dance was enough, she teamed up with her best friend and co-founder Sabrina Maristela. “It is very hard as a dancer to be in a place with no opportunity to continue pursuing your passion,” Berger said. “We wanted to provide that opportunity for other dancers on campus that felt as deprived of their passion as we did.” The company provides different styles including ballet, jazz, tap, hip hop, lyrical and contemporary

that are held in a “serious” and “encouraging” environment, according to Berger. Auditions were also held not to cut potential members, but to help place them in categories where they can grow and dance with others from the same dance background. “We split each style into beginner and advanced groups,” Berger said. “We wanted to ensure that everyone was placed in an environment that would be most conducive to their growth.” After the audition process, 20 to 25 people were chosen for the

company. The process wasn’t easy-going according to Berger. “We wanted to give people an opportunity to feel the type of pressure that an audition produces,” Berger said. “If you are unable to handle the pressure of an audition, you will be unable to handle the pressure of a performance.” Berger also has mandatory requirements and practices for the dancers. “We meet for ballet on Thursday nights,” Berger said. “Beginners have class from 9:00 p.m. to 9:45 p.m. and intermediate and

advanced have class together from 9:45 p.m. to 11 p.m.” Berger says that scheduling rehearsals for other dance styles will be soon for dancers nice groups have been finalized. Overall, the one goal for Berger is to bring something to Ashland University that can help those who feel their best when they dance. “I hope to see our small community of dancers rediscover and nurture their love of dance and share it,” Berger said. “I hope to see our group grow in strength, technique, passion and confidence.”

Speaker visits Ashland to speak on racial profiling

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Ashland University welcomed speaker Dr. Ronnie A. Dunn, Director of Institutional Diversity and Associate Professor of Urban Studies at Cleveland State University to present his series called; Racial Profiling: The Content of Their Character or the Color of Their Skin? Dunn ended the day of celebration for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as the whole morning and afternoon were filled with opportunities to volunteer. Many from AU’s campus and the Ashland area were in attendance. Prior to Dunn’s speech, A.U.G.I.V.S. hosted a day of service with the Oxfam Hunger Banquet. Those students who volunteered were educated to raise awareness about those who suffer from lack of food. After over 75 boxes were made to send to senior citizens in need. Kyle Hutchinson, Executive Board Member of A.U.G.I.V.S. spoke about how the volunteers were able to understand how people who rely on services such as

Meals On Wheels. Those who had low income were sat on the floor and were given rice and water. People in the middle class were given chairs and served rice, beans and water. Finally, the upper class was given tables to sit at and served spaghetti, meatballs and water. This exposed volunteers who have never dealt with hunger to the harsh realities. The boxes that were given out were donated by the Ashland Salvation Army Kroc Center in Ashland. “When the weather is rough, that is when our boxes step in to feed the seniors,” Hutchinson said. The boxes are filled with items such as nonfat milk, canned fruit and canned vegetables. The next speaker was senior and Diversity Intern Ariana Graves who spoke on the growth of diversity on Ashland’s campus. “Here at Ashland University, I still fight for the same things that Dr. King fought for,” Graves said. “He made it possible for us to be in the same chapel today.” Graves feels honored to have the support of the Ashland community to continue the strive for growth in

diversity. “At Ashland, I do not have to face the same hatred, the same violence and the same negativity that he went through,” Graves said. Graves said she wants to connect outward to minorities and hope they come to Ashland. “We want to create a safe space for students of color,” Graves said. Graves mentioned how diversity is still in the process of bringing Black Greek organizations onto the AU’s campus soon. Dunn was the last speaker of the night. Even though it was Martin Luther King Day, Jan. 21 also held another significance as well, he said. “Yes we celebrate the legacy of Dr. King. This day also marks the first documented Africans to land on American soil in Jamestown, Virginia in 1619 over 400 years ago,” Dunn said. “20 Africans, through the Atlantic Slave trade were sent to America while others were sent to Brazil, France and Britain.” The minority population has always struggled with authority, he said.

“From slavery into the 20th century, the minority population has had a long struggle with authority, especially during the Civil Rights Era,” Dunn said. One of Dunn’s focuses during the speech was based around cop and human interaction since that is the most common interaction with civilians. “As the 1980s came, so did the crackdown on blacks being targeted and arrested during the war on drugs era lead by former President Ronald Reagan,” Dunn said. “There was also an increase in blacks and hispanics getting pulled over. More minorities were added once Sept. 11th came and Muslims and Arabs were now being targeted.” Even though there aren’t that many African Americans in the U.S. population, a disproportionate amount are incarcerated, he said. “Though only 2.3 percent of African Americans make up the U.S. population, 33 percent are incarcerated,” Dunn said. “In prisons, 34 percent are in due to drug arrest. 53 percent are in for convictions and 63 percent are repeat

offenders.” For his main topic, Dunn shared with the attendees the most common interaction that civilians have with officers: traffic stops. Dunn said experts at Cleveland State looked at four major areas in Northern Ohio. These areas were Cleveland, Shaker Heights, Westlake and Brook Park. Cleveland and Shaker Heights are seen as more diverse than the areas of Westlake and Brook Park, Dunn said. From ride alongs with the Cleveland Police Department, to analyzing traffic tickets along with the population in each area, the experiment broke down each area and who were ticketed based on race. The question that arose from this was: “Are minorities heavily surveillanced during traffic?” “From the totals in each area, blacks are more likely to be stopped and given a ticket. In a population of 83,123 blacks share 53 percent of the tickets, whites share 33 percent,” Dunn said. “Other minorities only share 7.51 percent of tickets,” Even during this time, racism is still common everywhere, he said.

ASL club joins Ashland University campus



NICKOLAUS JACOBS

Many students of all majors gather for the first meeting for the American Sign Language Club to learn more information.

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Ashland University’s American Sign Language Club, other wise known as the ASL Club, met for the first time in hopes of teaching future educators the skills needed to communicate with students who suffer from hearing disabilities. ASL Club founder and president Maggie George is aiming to fill a void in student life at Ashland as there are no sign language classes or certification courses currently available.

“I decided to start this because I thought that it would be really cool to have that on campus and I feel that it is a very important issue that people need to be more aware of,” said George before Monday’s inaugural meeting. George, who is a freshman Music Education major, is not new to the world of sign language. She studied ASL for two years during high school. She furthered her knowledge of the language when she taught her friend Nikki, who is 100 percent deaf, to sign. Prior knowledge of sign language is not

required to attend ASL Club meetings, and students of all majors are welcome. According to George, the club will first focus on basic ASL, then move on to advanced sign language and deaf culture. George and her fellow co-founders feel that sign language is a very important skill to share with future educators. As the large room began to fill with students, it became apparent that their peers feel the same way. Sophomore co-founder Melanie Armstrong pointed out that, because this club is not an official class, students are coming to learn and not to get a grade.

Armstrong, who is a Special Education major, commented on the importance of sign language to her. “For special needs teachers, communication is not the easiest, especially with kids that have cognitive disorders or can’t speak well. Just simple signs like wait, or stop, or please, or food, or drink are huge” American Sign Language Club is held weekly on Mondays at 9 p.m. in room 231 of the Recreation Center.

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