



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **SEVEN MORTON SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE STUDENTS TAKE SWING DANCE ON THE ROAD**

***YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago Partnership with Joffrey Ballet Affords Students  
Opportunity to Choreograph and Take Performance on Chicago Elementary School Tour***

**CHICAGO** - Seven Morton School of Excellence students recently got the opportunity to take their show on the road thanks to a partnership between the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago's Community Schools Program and The Joffrey Ballet. Similar to a professional dance troupe, the students experienced what it is like to travel to different locations to perform and showcase their dancing skills and routines before audiences at three Chicago elementary schools across the city.

Throughout the 2008-2009 school year, the seven YMCA Community School students worked with a teaching artist as part of Joffrey's Middle School Dance Club program to learn about dance and create their own original swing dance. As a culminating component of the program, called the Intensive, the students joined participating groups from schools across the city in a weeklong schedule of performances.

"The students' performances were really terrific," said Antwon Mallory, Resource Coordinator for the Y's Community Schools Program at Morton School of Excellence. "Our goal through this partnership with Joffrey was to expose the children to the art of dance and the discipline necessary to be successful. They worked very hard over the course of the school year and it was truly fantastic to watch them perform at each school and take pride in what they had achieved."

The group of four fifth graders, Anfernee Carter, Kaila Douglas, Lashonda Hooks and Jamon Johnson, and three eighth graders, Brandi Anderson, Shavonne Haden and Tiara Williams, began meeting twice weekly in October 2008. Over the course of eight months the students choreographed, practiced and perfected two individual routines to take on tour.

"I really enjoyed being on stage because of the excitement and the applause we received from the audience," said Morton Eighth Grader Tiara Williams. "It made me feel so proud of myself."

The YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago's Community Schools initiative is a collaborative partnership of individuals and organizations working to provide quality out-of-school programming focusing on positive child and youth development, while also meeting the community's academic, emotional, health and wellness needs. The YMCA currently provides Community Schools programming in 9 Chicago public elementary schools

Through its 65 locations and more than 100 extension sites, the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago helps children learn and grow, teaches young people to lead, brings families closer, and encourages individual health and well-being. The fourth largest non-profit in Chicago and one of the largest human services organizations in the nation, YMCA programs impact hundreds of thousands of lives annually, helping to strengthen neighborhoods and respond to community needs across Chicagoland. To learn more, visit [www.ymcachgo.org](http://www.ymcachgo.org).

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