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Urbanity Dance Launches Crowd-Funded Campaign

Boston, MA - Urbanity Dance, Boston's premiere contemporary dance company, has launched a Kickstarter campaign to help aid in the opening of a new studio and community center in the South End, at 1180 Washington Street. The Kickstarter launched September 10th and will continue through October 14th, with the hope of raising \$12,000 towards the opening of the new community center. Prizes for contributors include merchandise from Urbanity, live feeds to Urbanity company rehearsals and the chance to attend a special, invite-only performance in the new space, once completed.

Betsi Graves, a dancer in the Boston area, founded Urbanity in 2008 after graduating from Boston College and spending ten years at Boston Ballet as a teacher and administrator. "I really felt like Boston was missing dance that was contemporary, dance that felt up to the moment," Graves says, "Boston didn't have anything like that and so Urbanity was born". Originally comprising of Graves and six dancers, the company has since grown to a 60-person company, a studio, and a community outreach organization. Urbanity currently teaches 200 students a week out of its studio in the South End and 400 in the greater Boston area, at community centers and in the Boston Public Schools.

Moving into a new space at 1180 Washington Street will double the square footage of the studio and make the space yet more accessible for Urbanity's community, allowing for increased programming for those who have made a home at Urbanity. Construction costs for the 1180 Washington studio total approximately \$100,000 including installing a raised floor and soundproof ceiling and ensuring that the space is accessible and conducive to Urbanity's diverse classes.

"We wanted to make sure that our community felt very involved in this move," said Urbanity Director Betsi Graves. "We didn't want it to be the kind of decision that was totally divorced from the people who have helped build us up at 280 Shawmut. It was very important to us to stay in the South End, and now we're turning to our community for help. We believe that art can make a difference, and we are excited to see how many people in the South End seem to agree with us."

Since September 2012 Urbanity Dance has operated out of 280 Shawmut Avenue, a one-room jewelry-studio-turned-dance-space, teaching students, holding company

rehearsals, and running the growing organization. The studio plays host to everything from administrators to classes to community programming, including a Dance for Parkinson's Disease program, a dance therapy program for Boston residents with Parkinson's Disease and their care-takers.

Urbanity's Kickstarter can be found at bit.ly/urbanitykickstarter. The organization has until October 14th to raise the \$12,000 to be funded.