

**March 28, 2017**

**Dear Parents of Rising Sixth Graders,**

My name is Elliott Epps and I am writing to provide information about a manners and dance program called **Columbia Social Dance** that I along with a group of other parents began four years ago to teach young people life lessons and skills in manners, culture, and dance, and to have fun!

**Overall program**

Columbia Social Dance is ideally a three-year program although registration for these programs are done on a year to year basis, and participation in one year is not required to be eligible for another. The first-year of our program begins in the sixth grade and includes manners and dance instruction from January to May (see full description below). The second year program for seventh graders runs from December to May and focuses on perfecting and learning new dances as well as reinforcing social manners. This year includes a Holiday Dance with parents, an in-home teaching dinner party, and a final dance in the spring. The third year for eighth graders is called Dance Club and involves a monthly themed dance.

**First Year**

The first year class for sixth graders is divided into two parts: manners and dance. The manners component takes place on three consecutive Wednesdays in January. It will culminate in a two-hour seated teaching dinner on a Sunday afternoon in January.

The second part of the class will reinforce the manners taught while teaching contemporary ballroom dance. This dance component will be held approximately twice a month starting in February. There will be a Spring Fling Semi-Formal Dance for the students in April. The year will end with a Semi-Formal Dance in the middle of May. Parents will be invited to this final event to see the culmination of all of their child's hard work.

This past year the first year class was divided the first years into three classes with two being held on Monday (5:30-6:30 and 7:00-8:00) and a third on Wednesday from 5:30-6:30 at 1208 Washington Street. However the locations for next years' program and the dates for the practices and the large events have yet to be finalized.

**Partners**

One aspect that makes this program unique is the use of partners. This is the same model used in Greenville, Charleston, Aiken and Augusta. The reason for the partner's model is for teaching and for organizational purposes. Our preference is for you to connect with a parent of a child of the opposite gender and agree that your children will partner. However if that is not possible, you may choose for me select a partner for your child on the registration form. Please understand if you choose this option it may lessen your ability to get your first choice for class times because of partner availability. Finally, although we have set partners, your child will switch partners multiple times each class.

## **Proper Dress**

Proper attire for the program will be expected at each event. Proper attire for the girls will be: dress & skirts (knee length or longer), no socks, and dress shoes (no crepe soles, platforms or backless shoes.) White gloves will be required for all dance classes and will be provided. The proper attire for boys will be suit or sport coat and tie, dark socks, and dress shoes (hard soles, leather preferred, no crepe soles).

## **Program Cost and Additional Information**

The cost of the program including 3 manners classes, 7 dance classes and 3 events (the sit-down dinner and both semi-formal dances) will be \$300.

You can read more about the program, view pictures from this year's class, and register for next year's class by visiting our website [www.youtharchitects.com](http://www.youtharchitects.com) and clicking on the **Columbia Social Dance tab**.

**Youth Architects** is a new Columbia business that is meant to provide families and youth from middle school to college with coaching, resources, and support to exceed their goals and to live their priorities in an overscheduled world. Columbia Social Dance is a program that is part of the Youth Architects network. Check out the website!

## **Registration steps:**

- 1) Go to the website ([www.youtharchitects.com](http://www.youtharchitects.com))
- 2) Click on **Columbia Social Dance**
- 3) Click on the **Year One Class Registration Tab**
- 4) Fill in Information
- 5) Choose whether you are registering with a designated partner or not.
- 6) If so, confer with them prior to registration to enter the same preferences as you rank your class dates and times.
- 7) If you choose to register without a designated partner then rank your class preferences. We will use those class preferences to pair you with someone at the same time. Additionally we will pair your child with someone from the same school when possible.
- 8) Pay non-refundable \$100 deposit and processing fee.
- 9) You will receive an email letting you know when your registration is complete. (Registration is not complete until you have paid.)

As you are making your decision regarding which social program is the right fit for your child and family, I encourage you to email me at [columbiasocialdance@gmail.com](mailto:columbiasocialdance@gmail.com) or call me 803-673-6473 with any questions that you have about my program. I can also provide you with contact information for several parents who have offered to answer questions regarding their children's experiences with this program.

We are accepting 100 young men and 100 young ladies into this year's first year program. **The program is open to all and I encourage you to forward this anyone you think is interested.**

Sincerely,

Elliott Epps