

February 16, 2022

Dear Toledo Alliance for Performing Arts Board Members,

As the leadership of the Toledo Ballet Guild, we are writing to inform you of our resignation, which is effective immediately. This is the result of the unacceptable treatment and non-renewal of Lisa Mayer-Lang by the Toledo Alliance for Performing Arts (TAPA) executive officers. It is our opinion the actions of the TAPA executive officers were borne of a complete lack of understanding of the culture of the Toledo Ballet by TAPA leadership despite three years as a united organization. The lack of succession planning demonstrated a stunning disregard for the well-being and training of current and future dancers. The plan for rotating guest artists and the provision of regular positions for teachers who were previously not on the schedule for known deficiencies is unacceptable for the health and safety of the student population. To be clear, the Toledo Ballet faculty still boasts some of the best teaching staff in the area, but for how long? When will they also be targeted by TAPA leadership?

We wish to point out that Christina Ramsey was a founding member of the Toledo Ballet Guild 17 years ago. This was the time her oldest daughter, Elizabeth Ramsey, now a professional with the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, graced the Toledo Ballet halls. Since then, she served in numerous roles with our organization, most notably as the treasurer for ten years and more recently as honorary past president. Another of our members, Claudia Schroeder, served as secretary for 10 years in support of the ballet that her granddaughter, Anna, dearly loved. Many others gave freely of their time, money, and creative efforts to achieve greatness for their children and grandchildren, their organization, and their community. You have all chosen to marginalize that effort.

Here is a summary of our activities since approximately May 2018. We chose this timeframe to represent the time the merger between the Toledo Symphony and Toledo Ballet was officially sanctioned by both organizations and ultimately approved. It is our opinion this highlights our willingness to work as a team during this critical time in the formation of TAPA, a grace that was most certainly not extended toward the ballet as evidenced by recent events.

1. Increased overall Guild cash on hand from approximately \$32,000 to approximately \$50,000 while supporting numerous projects at the ballet as described below
2. Re-wrote the Guild by-laws to establish multiple committees, officers, and processes essentially operationalizing function of the group
3. Established the Toledo Ballet Guild Scholarship Fund in 2020; the fund was established with \$5000 and was increased to \$7500 in 2021
4. Established partnership with local dancewear company to provide dance attire/shoes to students in need at a lower cost and paid by the Guild
5. Managed and provided volunteers for Toledo Ballet productions such as Nutcracker (approximately 30 volunteers), Showcase (10-20 volunteers depending on the year and venue), and spring productions (approximately 10)
6. Provided volunteers for Nutcracker photography day, open houses, costume fittings, community outreach
7. The *Tea with Clara* was an annual event for at least 10 years but grew over the last 4 years despite the COVID pandemic (2020 was virtual and still a successful fundraiser); it sold out within days in 2021 with only virtual advertisements
8. Provided financial support for American Ballet Theater (ABT) training for multiple instructors

9. Provided funding for physical improvements to our facility: new water bottle filling station, upgraded monitors and electronics for virtual classes, baby changing station, storage upgrades for the costume area, placement of a cardiac defibrillator and training for the ballet staff
10. Funded cast parties for numerous productions including Nutcracker and spring shows
11. Provided gifts for all cast members and volunteers of the Nutcracker
12. Provided dinner for cast members on Saturday between Nutcracker performances for last two years (this was previously paid by each cast member)

Please understand that we did not make this decision lightly. We take our responsibility as leaders at the Toledo Ballet (and by extension, TAPA) seriously. We respect our students, teachers, and our supportive community immensely. There comes a point, however, when even the most supportive leaders of an organization cannot stand by watching while the executives of a company disassemble it without regard for the people most affected by their decisions. It is at that breaking point that even the strongest leaders must step away and find other ways to support their community. It is our sincere desire that you find a way to repair the processes that lead to this situation and the unhappy, even toxic, environment existing for employees under your charge. We sincerely believed in the mission of TAPA, and we gave it our best shot.

Very Respectfully,

Traci Curth (Co-President)

Claudia Schroeder (Secretary)

Christina Ramsey (Past President)

Carolyn Savage (Past President)

Natalie Bronaugh (Committee Chair)

Catherine Ariss (Committee Chair)

Maria Theis (Committee Chair)

Christine Angevine (Committee Co-Chair)

Jeanette Brown (Committee Co-Chair)