

# MRAC awarded with Wal-Mart Community Grant in support of Lula Washington Dance Theatre performances

In support of the Mimbres Region Arts Council 30th Anniversary Performance featuring the Lula Washington Dance Theatre, Co., which was held Oct. 17 and the Youth Outreach Performance held Oct. 19, Wal-Mart Store No. 1357 of Silver City awarded a Community Grant of \$1,000 to the organization.

The first event drew approximately 300 attendees, and the second nearly 1,000 to the Western New Mexico University Fine Arts Center Theatre.

Wal-Mart Store No. 1357 Community Liaison Miriam Cwieka said the grants are given to organizations and events that benefit multiple areas of the community.

“They are awarded in order to improve the lives of the entire community through education, culture and anything to enrich the lives of the people in Silver City and Grant County,” Cwieka said.

The Lula Washington Dance Theatre Co., is celebrating its 30-year anniversary in 2009 and in an outreach effort returned to New Mexico for the first time in 10 years visiting rural areas to enrich the lives of individuals who might not otherwise have the opportunity to see modern, interpretive dance of this quality.

Mimbres Region Arts Council Board President Dale Marcy said, “The Lula Washington Dance Theater inspired our younger audiences to dream of new opportunities and avenues of expression, while more mature audience members had the rare opportunity to experience one of the largest and most admired African-American dance companies in the West. It is socially-minded business like Wal-Mart that help to make these events possibly here in our own backyard through their generous support and contributions.”

Artistic Director Faye McCalmont expressed gratitude to Wal-Mart Store No. 1357 and Wells Fargo Bank of Silver City who were able to support the presentation of the “amazing, high energy, beautiful dance performance” to students from across Grant County.

“They are wonderful supporters of the arts, showing by their contribution that they believe in the power of the arts to inspire our young people. We truly appreciate their donation,” she said.

MRAC Board Member Doug Fowler explained the amount of effort it takes on behalf of the Arts Council to provide residents of the Silver City area and beyond with a broad range of artistic events and said that without the financial support provided by Wal-Mart, the performance by a premier national dance company simply couldn't take place.

The Lula Washington performances are also funded by New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project (NDP), with generous support by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the MetLife Community Connections Fund of the MetLife Foundation.

It was also sponsored by WESTAF, New Mexico Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts and the New Mexico Tourism Department.

Lodging Sponsor was Holiday Inn Express-Silver City and Exclusive Radio Sponsor was Q92.9. Major funding for the Lula events was also given by Wells Fargo Bank of Silver City.

For more information about the event and the dance theater company visit: <http://www.mimbresarts.org/PerformanceSeries.html> or [www.lulawashington.com](http://www.lulawashington.com).



*Pictured above are Mimbres Region Arts Council Board President Dale Marcy, left, Operations Manager Nikki Szajer, Wal-Mart Store No. 1357 Community Liaison Miriam Cwieka, MRAC Bookkeeper Cameron Martin and Board Member Bonnie Maldonado; not pictured is Wal-Mart Store No. 1357 Manager Johnny Williams.*

