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Professional Dancer Pivots After Pandemic Hits Artists Hard
New Classical Ballet School in Hermosa Beach

Hermosa Beach, CA (October 15, 2021) - The majority of the performing arts community were left unemployed and struggling through what has become a very long pandemic. According to professional ballet dancer Robbie Downey, "It was like a high speed train coming to a screeching halt. Dance is not just a job, it's a way of life. It's our passion, our meditation, our everything. Many of us have sacrificed from very young ages to get where we are. Everything changed overnight. Shows, classes, auditions, and every aspect of our routine was cancelled." Robbie, who had just completed her second year performing with Colorado Ballet, returned to Southern California to be with her family and sort things out. She took a job as an essential worker hoping things would return to normal shortly. As closures and lockdowns continued Robbie relocated to Hermosa Beach and tried to keep classes going online. With competitions cancelled and studios closed it appeared many were scaling back their training. It's been a rough road.

As things have slowly started to get moving again, Robbie has realized she is a California girl at heart. While she would love to continue dancing professionally she also wants to stay by the beach. She began to map out an idea for a classical ballet school that would eventually feed into a company. Having experience as both a student and performer Robbie knows where schools, and companies, fall short. There is so much room for improvement in every aspect of working with young dancers and professional artists.

Phase 1 of her plan is West Coast Ballet School. Classes are for ages 4 - adult and limited to 12 students per class. Robbie will run the program at the Hermosa Beach Community Center. It is the perfect spot and highly accessible to aspiring dancers in the community. Everyone is welcome from complete beginners, to boys, to adults. Dance is for everyone and students deserve not only qualified, but kind and patient teachers. Not everyone is a prodigy and sometimes those are the most passionate and long lasting dancers. Students deserve a chance to show you what they are capable of and a chance to bloom. While many dance as a hobby, many have dreams of being center stage and it is important to not crush the spirit of any child that is drawn to performing arts. It is also important to pay those dancers a living wage should they choose performing as a career. Robbie is on a mission to create some change in the industry. She is offering trial classes and hopes that anyone interested in learning more about her, the school, or collaborating will reach out. Words of encouragement are welcome!

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For interviews/questions call Robbie at 619-206-1730. The school website is westcoastballetschool.org Robbie's is robbiedowney.com High resolution photos are here (please credit Rachel Neville Photography): <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/njyvwwz5uqna1ot/AABKy2wPKnP5VCf6bPxEX2eeja?dl=0>