

TIFFANY BARNES '89 has three passions in life: dance, the pursuit of knowledge and a desire to give back to her community. Thanks to the values instilled in her at Stone Ridge, an unwavering trust in God's divine plan and a strong confidence in her abilities, her career path has incorporated all three of these passions.

Since 2010 Tiffany has been the director of the Junior Division at The Ailey School, the official school of The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. She oversees the administrative and artistic operations of three dance programs for over one thousand children. Her day-to-day responsibilities are vast—writing and maintaining curriculum, conducting local auditions, evaluating and hiring teachers, planning eleven yearly performances, guiding parents in making decisions for their child's dance training, advising high school seniors who aspire to earn their BFA in college, attending rehearsals, sitting on the parent board for the school, and working to maintain enrollment, all while supervising 48 faculty members and teaching assistants.

Though Tiffany started dancing at the age of ten, a career in the performing arts wasn't always a part of her plan. Her goals included dancing through high school, attending college and then entering the business world. And, that is what she did. She attended Stone Ridge for high school while also dancing for the Jones-Haywood School of Ballet in DC. After Stone Ridge she matriculated at Hampton University, earning a BA in English and interning during the summers for Kaiser Permanente. Kaiser offered her a position right out of college and she accepted but asked if they would allow her to first study for six weeks at Ailey. Kaiser obliged, she attended Ailey in New York for a "life changing" summer and returned to Maryland to start her career at Kaiser.

Something didn't feel right, however, and two years later she got the "artistic itch" to change direction. She had been rehearsing nights and weekends with a local modern dance company called Forward Movement. The artistic director there saw something in Tiffany and suggested she return to New York to train professionally. That encouragement, along with a desire to continue learning and go to graduate school pushed her to return to New York. She was accepted at the Gallatin School for Individualized Study at NYU (earning an MA in literature and dance) and resumed full time training at Ailey.

Since moving to New York in 1995, Tiffany has performed as a dancer with Nathan/Trice Rituals, Footprints — a Christian dance company, and The Radio City Rockettes. She has served as an



Tiffany Barnes '89

The Ailey School's Junior Division Director Tiffany Barnes Teaching Horton, photo by Eduardo Patino

Ailey School faculty member and an Alvin Ailey teaching artist.

In 2005 she was selected to be a New York City Teaching Fellow and worked until 2010 as a middle school English language arts and drama teacher in a high-needs New York City public school. While working as a teacher, she also earned an MA in adolescent education from Pace University.

She no longer dances, due to an injury while training for her second year of the Rockettes, but in hindsight she sees this as all a part of God's plan. "Clearly God had a different plan for my life than I imagined and in retrospect I see that the major through lines are faith, a respect for education and intellect, a deep abiding love of dance, and a passion for working with service-oriented arts organizations that strive to edify communities and to change the lives of children."

She fondly remembers reflecting upon the *Goals* [of Sacred Heart education] just before her Upper School admissions interview and thinking if she were to live up to the values as a high school student, who knew what she would get to do when she grew up. **"The Sacred Heart Goals definitely became an innate part of a personal philosophy that I began to develop as a Stone Ridge student. Seamlessly, the ideals and values contained within the Goals have come to govern many aspects of my adult life. I am extremely grateful to my parents to have been afforded the opportunity to receive the gift of a Sacred Heart education. It certainly served me well and has enabled me to serve others."**