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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BALLET DANCERS STUDY WITH MASTERS IN DONETSK, UKRAINE

Eight serious ballet students from Wissahickon Dance Academy just returned from a two week study abroad program in Donetsk, Ukraine. Nancy Malmed, director of the Academy, organized the trip which included the ballet students plus three parent chaperones. Malmed has had an ongoing relationship with Artistic Director, Vadim Pisarev of the Donetsk Ballet, since 1991 and has initiated two other successful study abroad programs with the Pisarev Choreography School in Donetsk.

This trip was the best yet. The children studied ballet, pointe, yoga, historical dance, character, partnering and learned classical variations (the dances reserved for soloists in traditional ballets). They danced from 9 AM to 5 PM every day. They were exhausted, but happy. The attention to detail and the demands made on them were at least five times greater than what they had ever experienced in the states, including other prestigious summer programs. The teachers at the Pisarev School are all former principal dancers and master teachers. The ballet studios, housed in the theater in the heart of the city, created an atmosphere which is hard to replicate here. Each day in order to get to their class, the children would walk through the bustling stage of the theater, with stage crews building sets, opera singers practicing and professional ballet dancers rehearsing. As a special bonus, the group was invited to see the Donetsk Ballet Company perform "A Thousand and One Nights" as well as the Gala closing of the Theater which was a collaborative performance of the Ballet and Opera.

The culmination of the study program was a performance by the children of everything they learned in their two week stay. It was noted by the accompanist of the Pisarev School that the Wissahickon Dance Academy children had an impressive work ethic. She was amazed at how hard they worked and how well they performed with such a short amount of study time.

Upon return, most of the children are involved in other summer programs. Many are back at Wissahickon Dance Academy where the summer study program will continue through August 3. On July 16, Vadim Pisarev will arrive from Donetsk to guest teach at Wissahickon Dance Academy's Summer Ballet Intensive. Teaching with him will be former Principal Dancer, Elena Tiuriakulova, from the Kirov School in St. Petersburg, Russia. Elena is regular faculty member of WDA. For further information on Wissahickon Dance Academy, call 215-849-7950 or visit www.wissahickondance.com.

Photo caption:

Wissahickon Dance Academy students at the Pisarev Choreography School in Donetsk, Ukraine