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FOR BERKSHIRE COUNTY RESIDENTS WITH TRANSPORTATION NEEDS**

July 7, 2017–(Becket, MA) Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in Becket, Massachusetts recently launched the Pittsfield-Pillow Express, a Saturday bus service connecting Jacob's Pillow and three Pittsfield neighborhoods. This free bus service is open to all and is specifically aimed at helping families, community groups, and individuals without independent transportation access the Pillow's many free and low-cost events and programs. The service kicked off June 24, and runs through Saturday August 26, 2017.

"Jacob's Pillow is just 20 miles from Pittsfield, but without public transportation to Becket, so many community members have never experienced the magic of the Pillow or had the opportunity to take advantage of our hundreds of free offerings," said Pamela Tatge, Director of Jacob's Pillow. "We knew that we had to address this challenge, and a key part of our new Vision '22 strategic plan focuses on deepening our civic and community engagement. A generous member of the Pillow's Board of Trustees stepped up to help fund this initiative and we are thrilled to launch this service during our 85th Anniversary Season."

The Pittsfield-Pillow Express route includes three pick-up and drop-off locations in the Morningside, Westside, and Downtown neighborhoods. Those who take the bus can enjoy a matinee performance with discounted tickets available only to bus riders, a free PillowTalk, free tour, a free Inside/Out performance, and more. Outside food and beverages are welcome and picnicking is encouraged. Pittsfield pick ups occur on Saturdays at noon and 3pm and the bus departs from Jacob's Pillow at 4:15pm and 7:30pm. To reserve a spot on the bus, call 413.207.4082. For more information, visit <https://www.jacobspillow.org/visit/pittsfield-pillow-express/>

The bus service is made possible, in part, by a gift from a Jacob's Pillow Trustee.

Every summer, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival offers more than 200 free performances, classes, art and photography exhibits, talks, and tours. The Norton Owen Reading Room also provides access to the Pillow's unparalleled dance Archives, and visitors are welcome to browse books, videos, photography, and more.

About Vision '22

Vision '22 is a strategic approach for the Pillow's development over the next five years, through 2022. The plan provides a blueprint for enabling the Pillow to become a year-round center for dance creation and to more robustly serve artists and audiences alike. Three key areas of focus include: strengthening the artistic core, boosting civic leadership and community involvement, and renewing essential campus facilities. Jacob's Pillow is America's first and longest-running dance festival; as it celebrates its 85th anniversary this summer, the organization sets its sights on important future milestones.

Boosting Civic Leadership & Community Engagement: New Programs

Vision '22 launches the Pillow's expanded commitment to its Berkshire-area neighbors, and new collaborations with the City of Pittsfield and the Town of Becket. In Pittsfield, the Pillow will sponsor a summer-long series of Pillow Pop-Up performances and events in conjunction with the City's monthly Third Thursday celebration. The organization will also host community engagement residencies with choreographer Camille A. Brown and fellow artists, focused on social dance and identity, collaborate with local veterans support groups, and more.

Vision '22 will also enable the Pillow to provide discounted tickets to Festival performances to students enrolled in Berkshire County dance schools, studios, and programs, through the Dancing Berkshires Fund. Hundreds of young people study dance in Berkshire County but rarely have the opportunity to experience a live performance at the Pillow campus. The Dancing Berkshires Fund enables local dance students to visit the Pillow, observe classes, and attend a professional dance performance.

As part of Vision '22, the Pillow will expand its work with Berkshire area schools, bringing its Jacob's Pillow Curriculum in Motion® (JPCiM) program to Morningside Community School next year, with a plan to serve all eight Pittsfield elementary schools over the next five years. JPCiM is a nationally-recognized arts-integrated curriculum program designed to foster new ways of learning, strengthen social interactions and creative thinking, and advance learning for students in a range of academic subjects such as social studies, biology, math, and Spanish. The program links choreography, kinesthetic intelligence, and critical and imaginative thinking to academic learning. This summer, JPCiM will be incorporated into the STEAM Team, a pilot program for rising third grade students that also involves IS183, Flying Deer Nature Center, Berkshire Community College, and the Pittsfield Public Schools.

The Pillow also has plans for enhanced partnerships with MASS MoCA, the Berkshire International Film Festival, the Clark Art Institute, Cultural Pittsfield, the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, Greenagers, Berkshire Community College, the Lift Ev'ry Voice Festival, and Tanglewood Music Center, among other cultural partners.

ABOUT JACOB'S PILLOW: Jacob's Pillow, celebrating its 85th Festival in 2017, is a National Historic Landmark, recipient of the National Medal of Arts, and home to America's longest-running international dance festival. Each Festival includes more than 50 national and international dance companies and 350 free and ticketed performances, talks, tours, classes, exhibits, and events. The School at Jacob's Pillow, one of the most prestigious professional dance training centers in the U.S., encompasses the diverse disciplines of Ballet, Cultural Traditions, Contemporary, and Musical Theatre Dance, as well as an Intern Program in various disciplines of arts administration, design, video, and production. The Pillow's extensive Archives, open year-round to the public, chronicle more than a century of dance in photographs, programs, books, costumes, audiotapes, and videos. Notable artists who have created or premiered dances at the Pillow include choreographers Antony Tudor, Agnes de Mille, Alvin Ailey, Donald McKayle, Kevin McKenzie, Twyla Tharp, Ralph Lemon, Susan Marshall, Trisha Brown, Ronald K. Brown, Wally Cardona, Andrea Miller, and Trey McIntyre; performed by artists such as Mikhail Baryshnikov, Carmen de Lavallade, Mark Morris, Dame Margot Fonteyn, Edward Villella, Rasta Thomas, and hundreds of others. On March 2, 2011, President Barack Obama honored Jacob's Pillow with a National Medal of Arts, the highest arts award given by the United States Government, making the Pillow the first dance presenting organization to receive this prestigious award. For more information, visit www.jacobspillow.org.

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