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Misty Copeland Surprises Brown Girls Do Ballet Founder on The Kelly Clarkson Show

NOVEMBER 14, 2020 · TAKIYAH WALLACE, MISTY COPELAND, KELLY CLARKSON SHOW, LOL SURPRISE

Kelly Clarkson, Grammy®-winning singer-songwriter and host of [The Kelly Clarkson Show](#), launched the #BeTheDifference campaign in September. The campaign's intention is to amplify and support black-owned businesses and nonprofit organizations that are making positive impacts in their communities.

"This show has a huge platform, and for me, it's not just a duty to share these stories, it's an obligation," Clarkson stated, "I want to encourage everyone to be the difference."

As part of the #BeTheDifference campaign, Brown Girls Do Ballet's founder, TaKiyah Wallace, was invited as a guest on the show last month, where she introduced Brown Girls Do Ballet's mission and explained how it blossomed into a non-profit organization.

“My daughter was 3-years-old; she told me she wanted to take ballet,” TaKiyah explained, “I started looking for ballet studios where we live in Dallas, Texas, and learned very quickly that there were very few images of little girls that looked like her on our local dance websites and beyond.”

In an attempt to increase the amount of representation given to Black and Brown ballerinas, TaKiyah started shooting a dance [photography project](#) to highlight dancers of color. She posted a casting call on Facebook, which quickly went viral.

“People from all over the world started submitting their own images as well, so that was the beginning of Brown Girls Do Ballet,” TaKiyah said.



Photo: [TaKiyah Wallace](#)

The photo project grew into a non-profit organization after Takiyah began collecting donations in exchange for photo shoots of ballerinas. The funds were given to ballerinas in her community who needed financial support to begin or continue their dance training. Through her work with Brown Girls Do Ballet, TaKiyah noted some of

the important changes she's already noticing in the ballet world.

"There are so many crucial things that are happening, especially when it comes to being inclusive in dance," she said, "Ballet-pink tights and pink shoes - that color was chosen because the pink typically matched white skin tones, but you have so many Brown dancers who that ballet-pink does not match."

"That rattled me. I didn't even put that together - that they made the ballet shoes a lighter skin tone," singer-songwriter [Meghan Trainor](#) stated, as she and actor [Glenn Howerton](#) - who were also guests on the episode - discussed their ballet experience.

TaKiyah is constantly in conversation with dance studios, companies, and dancewear brands to make their products more inclusive to dancers of color. Through the organization's [Supply Closet](#), [Pointe Shoe Program](#), and other initiatives, TaKiyah has been able to provide scholarships, supplies, and mentors to Brown ballerinas nationwide.

TaKiyah explained that the idea of Brown Girls Do Ballet was sparked before Misty Copeland, a trailblazer in the African-American ballet community, was promoted to principal dancer for the American Ballet Theatre - which was a first in the company's 75-year history. Through her fantastic talent and passion for philanthropy, Misty Copeland has become an idol and role model for ballerinas of color around the world.





Photo: [Misty Copeland](#); shot by [Sebastian Kim](#)

To TaKiyah's surprise, Kelly Clarkson arranged a surprise appearance from Misty Copeland on the show.

"TaKiyah Wallace, what you have done for so many little Brown girls and Brown boys with Brown Girls Do Ballet is really a phenomenon," said Copeland. "As you know, I'm constantly reaching out and purchasing all of the amazing

products you have that are so supportive of Brown girls and ballerinas. I love what you do. I'm a huge supporter and thank you for giving our girls a platform to be heard, to be seen, to be loved, and to know of their value and their worth. Keep going and I hope I'll see you soon."

Kelly Clarkson later announced that [LOL Surprise](#), a popular toy and doll company that prides itself on celebrating diversity and empowering girls to live out their dreams, donated \$5,000 to help Brown Girls Do Ballet continue its mission.

"The whole experience has been surreal," TaKiyah said, "I'm so grateful to have Misty's support and I'm super thankful to both Kelly Clarkson and the folks at LOL Surprise Dolls for sharing our mission and providing us with such a generous donation to help move our mission forward."



Photo: TaKiyah Wallace on [The Kelly Clarkson Show](#)

"As we approach our 8th anniversary, it feels good to be recognized for our efforts in providing mentorship and resources to dancers. Misty is the ultimate mentor. Having her speak life into our girls means the world!"

The Kelly Clarkson Show is a daytime talk show featuring

live performances, candid conversations, and spotlights on community heroes. To watch the full video clip of Misty Copeland's surprise appearance, click [here](#).



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