

## PHASE1 STEP TEAM (Rachel Tabinga)

YOUTH ARTS PITCH CONTEST WINNER, 2007

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“DOING A PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE AS PART OF THE PITCH ALLOWS YOU TO SHOWCASE TO YOUR AUDIENCE EXACTLY WHAT YOU DO AS A CRAFT, AND EXPLAIN HOW YOU USE THAT TO BETTER YOUR COMMUNITY. THEY CAN SEE IT.”

Rachel Tabinga enjoyed the pitch contest both as a participant and an audience member. “There aren’t a lot of contests that allow young people to showcase what they have”, Rachel says, noting that ArtReach is able to fill this gap. “It’s important for Toronto as a multicultural city to have people aware of different cultures, different art forms and different crafts.” Rachel’s chosen craft is ‘step’, a form of dance that is prominent in the United States, but lesser known to Canada.

At the time of the pitch contest, Rachel's dance group, the Phase1 Step Team was similarly new to performing publicly. The pitch contest was the first time Phase1 had danced before a judging panel. “Confidence” was the key take-away for Rachel. The \$3000 prize money allowed Phase One to “perform more, become more unified as a team, and be more professional”, according to Rachel. The team was able to acquire uniforms and cover travel expenses, which “meant a lot” to Rachel. She continued, “It made us feel more established. It made us feel as a whole.”

Confidence and professionalism have been crucial to Rachel's advancement as a dancer. With funding from ArtReach, Rachel and another member of Phase1 initiated and ran PHASENUMBER1, a series of step programs for girls in two Toronto high schools, Vaughan Road Academy and Weston Collegiate Institute. Rachel was simultaneously a coach, choreographer, and organizer. Rachel has been instrumental in bringing step onto the national stage in Canada, arranging and choreographing a public performance by the youth she mentors. It wasn't just any public performance, PHASENUMBER1 performed in front of thousands at the Air Canada Centre during the All-Canada Classic Basketball tournament. Since winning the pitch contest, Rachel isn't just comfortable with larger audiences; she is able to wow them. And Rachel hasn't stopped there. Her increased self-assurance, talent and experience mean she is able to balance continuing to pursue her passion for dance and completing a diploma program.

**VIDEO:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfCpQBKSKzs>

***The 2007 Youth Arts Pitch Contest was an initiative of ArtReach Toronto and City of Toronto Cultural Services. \$3,000 prizes were awarded to 3 Community Arts Groups to support them to pursue their dreams and kick start their futures.***