

## Halle Mathieson

Halle Mathieson will graduate in May with a bachelor's degree in dance performance and a minor in business management. She has had numerous opportunities to choreograph and perform dance works during her time at La Roche, taking the most pride in a dance piece she choreographed as a tribute to the Tree of Life Synagogue. She has made the dean's list each semester and is a nominee for the President's Award for Leadership and Scholarship. Ms. Mathieson has served each year as an orientation leader for incoming freshman and held the position of vice president of the La Roche Activities Forum for a semester. She plans on spending a year abroad to investigate dance in different countries and to pursue a master's degree in creative dance education at the University of Salford in Manchester, England. Ms. Mathieson plans to use her education to teach dance at a University level.

### Honors in Performing Arts – Dance

*Using Dance to Heal the Body*

#### HONORS COMMITTEE

Kelly Basil, M.Ed.\*

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From the twitch of a finger to a leap through the air, movement is one of the body's most basic human functions. While most people know that the brain informs bodily processes in order for movement to occur, many do not know that this also works in reverse; movement of the body triggers automatic neurological responses in the brain. With that in mind, how can dancers and movement therapists harness the brain's natural responses to movement in order to actually heal the body? This research investigates how simple dance movements can help to re-pattern and engage those affected by certain diseases and afflictions, particularly focusing on dance as a tool for patients with Parkinson's disease. Introducing dance movement to Parkinson's patients not only helps them to access more complex mental coordination, but also alleviates the primary motor symptoms of Parkinson's such as bradykinesia, stiffness of the limbs, tremors and impaired balance and coordination.

