

DTP Happenings

Dancing Through Parkinson's

January 2020

Invertigo Dance Theatre

Dancer Spotlight: Jeanie McNamara @ DTP-Culver City

Dancing Through Parkinson's has had a profound effect on me. I have been a dancer for most of my life. I studied ballet, tap, jazz, contemporary dance, and was a song leader ("song girl") in high school and college. I continued to study as an adult while working in my career as a middle school teacher. As I grew closer to retirement age, I looked forward to spending every day dancing. However, this dream was dashed by my diagnosis of Parkinson's Disease. I was very depressed about the thought that I would not be physically able to do what I loved most. I thought there would not be a place for me. Enter, Dancing Through Parkinson's!



I began attending class during the summers when I was not teaching. I fell in love with the professional dancers who teach the classes, the curriculum, the music, and the friendliness of everyone associated with the program. Their knowledge of the symptoms and challenges that Parkinson's presents and their approach to teaching to this community is above and beyond anything else that is available to people with PD.

From the Name Game, the warmups, the Brain Teasers, ballet barre and seated and standing choreography, there is no end to the creativity of our teachers! The music inspires the movements and we all end up having a great time "strutting our stuff!" All of the above is so unique and extraordinary because everyone, regardless of disease progression, is included, valued, and benefits from the class. We all arrive in different frames of mind and may bring new symptoms that we hadn't experienced the week before. But we know that our classmates and teachers will not judge us. We know that they understand. We know that we are safe and that we can allow ourselves to be submerged into an experience that will set us free from tremors, rigid muscles, leaning torsos, rounded shoulders, strange facial expressions, and whisper soft voices. Research shows that the only weapon we have to fight PD is exercise. Yes, we have drugs to help manage symptoms, but it is movement alone that can slow disease progression. I can attest to that. I was diagnosed almost eight years ago. I have very few tremors, my posture is relatively erect, my mind is still sharp, I feel confident being in public. Yes, I have challenges, but because of Dancing Through Parkinson's I know that I can overcome them and deal with them if I keep moving and dancing. I know that I have a community that supports me. We lift one another up, share ideas, and care for one another regardless of what we bring to the dance floor. And the best part is, we get to take it all home with us and realize that the tremors, rigid muscles, and other discomforts can be assuaged if we keep moving. Stay active, stay positive, and keep coming to class because there's always a reason to dance! Thank you, DTP, for saving my life!

Always grateful, Jeanie



Optimist Screening at Electric Lodge January 27th!

The Optimist has released the Living on One micro-documentary featuring our DTP community. Please join us at the **Electric Lodge** class on Monday **January 27**, usual time **1:30-2:30pm**. We will screen the short video, do DTP dance sequences and enjoy snacks together! We will also share a dance-poetry project featuring a poem by one of our dancers. Please invite friends and family to celebrate with you & us! Parking in the lot is free, come early as spots are limited. For more info, contact Invertigo: 424-229-2141.

Thank you - this program is funded in part by:



Happy New Year from Invertigo!

Happy new year from all of us at Invertigo Dance Theatre. May 2020 be a year of health, healing & joy in our bodies and in our world. We are grateful to end the decade with such a creative, productive year -- and Dancing Through Parkinson's is a huge part of that. We wish you many blessings as we enter 2020 and look forward to a year of creating even more vitality and community through the power of dance!

DTP has grown leaps and bounds in the last year. We launched a new pilot series in Inglewood at Magic Circle Adult Day Health Care, we've strengthened our DTP teacher/staff teamwork, we're moving ahead with plans for 1-2 new community sites and we're training a new DTP teacher -- our very own Kelsey Ang, Marketing Associate for Invertigo! This newsletter, DTP Happenings, is also growing. We've added a new feature, "Dancer Spotlight", as a way to showcase a DTP dancer from our different classes and to share the creativity and stories of our community. And we're moving the newsletter into a monthly format so we can spread the word about resources and events for the PD community. We hope this will contribute to the network in LA to better the lives of people living with PD.

Beverly Hills Arts & Culture Commission

On December 10th, Invertigo's DTP team gave a presentation to the newly expanded Beverly Hills Arts & Culture Commission. A "Listening Tour" was part of the Commission's expansion initiative during the fall, and Invertigo was happy to be one of the presenting organizations giving an interactive talk on our program's offerings, community engagement strategies and upcoming events. We were featured in an article in the Beverly Hills Courier on December 13, 2019. Google for more details!

Interim Artistic Director Rachel Whiting

Dancing Through Parkinson's Teaching Artist, Rachel Whiting, is starting a new role with Invertigo as Interim Artistic Director while Laura Karlin is on parental leave. We are excited to have Rachel in this new position at Invertigo and adding her talents to the team!



Women with PD: Join us!

"Twitchy Woman" is a social network for women living in the Los Angeles area who have Parkinson's Disease. It is not a traditional support group, but a group that wants to learn new and different ways to best to manage PD, while meeting other like-minded women. The group was started by Sharon Krischer, after she was diagnosed in 2009, to best manage her disease and health. The group has been a wonderful resource for women to educate and empower their health regimen and create community. Dancing Through Parkinson's is delighted to present their program of dance to the group once again, and we hope you'll join us! For more info: www.twitchywoman.com.

Sunday, March 15, 2020 from 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

**** CLASS CANCELLATIONS ****

Jan 28, Feb 4, Feb 11: Cancelled Wallis Classes

Wallis Dancers please join us at Electric Lodge/Venice on Mondays & Culver City Y on Thursdays!
 Electric Lodge class: open on MLK and President's Day

DTP CLASS SCHEDULE

Mondays, 1:30pm-2:30pm at The Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave, **Venice**, 90291

Tuesdays, 11:30am-12:30pm at Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts,
 9390 N Santa Monica Blvd, **Beverly Hills**, 90210

Tuesdays, 1:30pm-2:30pm at LA Star Dance Studio, 19320 Ventura Blvd, **Tarzana**, 91356

Thursdays, 1:30pm-2:30pm at Culver Palms YMCA, 4500 Sepulveda Blvd, **Culver City**, 90230