



Photo: Michael Mella

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Cynthia Fischer

OUR MISSION

The mission of Career Transition For Dancers is to empower current and former professional dancers, with the knowledge and skills necessary to define their career possibilities after dance, and to provide the resources necessary to help make these possibilities a reality. To accomplish this mission we also reach out to students, pre-professionals and professionals, to heighten their awareness of the organization and to encourage them to begin this process while they are still performing.

In a few short sentences our mission statement must describe our vision, keep the organization and Board focused on those goals and allow clients, supporters and donors to understand that vision. Our Board has recently re-examined, revised and expanded our mission statement. This is a major step for the organization and a challenge to our Board, staff and supporters.

Please take a moment to read our new mission statement above. At our 2005 spring Board Meeting we revised our Mission Statement to "reach out to students, pre-professionals, and professionals, to heighten their awareness of the organization and to encourage them to begin this process while they are still performing."

As you know from my message in our last newsletter, we are focusing on outreach, locally and nationally. Our Board has decided to formally state that we will provide our services to students and pre-professionals as well as to the professional dancers we have always served.

We regularly survey and talk with our clients asking for their input and guidance on the effectiveness of our programs and the needs they feel are not being addressed. Likewise, we are constantly assessing our view and definition of our constituency, who they are, where they are and how best to reach and assist them.

Throughout its history, CTFD has redefined its mission and its constituency as needs arose and means were available.

In 1994, at the urging of Board members, we began to offer our services to non-union as well as union dancers. In 2000, as part of a strategic planning initiative, the mission statement itself was re-examined and the concept of "empowerment" was added. Changing one word may not seem very significant, but think what it expresses to the dancers and supporters.

This recent change is the most significant change of our mission statement in the history of CTFD. Our decision to expand our mission was supported by the invaluable information developed by the aDvANCE Project (see the fine article on page1)

As is often the case, our programs have already evolved to meet this need. We believe that when students are deciding whether or not to follow their passion and make dance their first career, they need to know that there is another career and another life after dance. Likewise, there comes a time for many pre-professionals when they regretfully decide that they will not achieve their goals and it is time to move on. We can help these students and pre-professionals, make these decisions less painful by giving them better information and the knowledge that CTFD will provide support when they need it.

Our scholarship programs will continue to be available only to professionals, as is appropriate. However, we are opening up our counseling, and of course, increasing the hours that our professional career counselors will be available. This goes hand in hand with our national and local outreach programs which I spoke of in our last newsletter.

It's a courageous act for an organization to expand its goals and services. Once again, we are looking to you, our supporters and our clients, to pass the word and to help us raise the funds to accomplish these goals and fulfill our vision.



IN MEMORIAM...

Eddie Weston

Career Transition For Dancers is deeply saddened by the loss of our great friend and Board Member Eddie (Edward) Weston, who passed away in his home on September 7th, 2006. One of the organization's founders and original Chairman, Eddie's vitality, creativity and devotion will be greatly missed. Eddie's legacy survives in the incredible efforts he made for dancers everywhere, the numerous lives he touched during his lifetime, and the organization he helped create to serve the needs of dancers like him.

As a former dancer, Eddie was a true embodiment of CTFD's mission. Beginning his career in 1942, Eddie performed in numerous shows on and off Broadway, in stock and live industrial shows, as well as on television and in film. Eddie's rich performance career, which included shows such as, *Best Foot Forward*, *Allegro*, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, *Say Darling*, *Brigadoon*, and *Oklahoma!*, illustrates his tremendous talent and love of dance. Eddie's dance career allowed him to touch the lives of theatre goers worldwide – as he performed for audiences throughout the United States, Europe and Asia.

After making his own career transition from dance, Eddie was elected as an official for Actors' Equity Association in 1950 – a position he held for 18 years. In 1968, Eddie became the Western Regional Director for Actors' Equity – a position he held for 22 years until his retirement in 1990. In 1982, inspired by the Dancers' Resettlement Program in England, Eddie secured a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for a seminar held at Lincoln Center to address the trauma facing professional dancers at the end of their careers. The purpose of the seminar was to find ways to help dancers utilize their skills learned from dance that could be used in other professions. That seminar, held under the leadership of Agnes De Mille, was the force that triggered the formation of Career Transition For Dancers.

Throughout his life, Eddie championed the cause of dancers and all performers. Eddie strongly believed that the skills developed in dancers' careers could translate to other endeavors outside of dance. Because of their tremendous work ethic and dedication to their art, Eddie knew that dancers could achieve any goal, and prosper in any career. With this unique vision, he advocated for performers in arts legislation, participating in the policy panel of the Opera-Musical Theatre program for the National Endowment for the Arts. Committed to his fellow performers, Eddie also actively supported The Actors' Fund and, of course, Career Transition For Dancers.

The success that CTFD has experienced throughout its history is due, in large part, to Eddie's original vision and undying devotion to dancers everywhere. Eddie was an integral part of this organization, as well as a wonderful role model for all who are involved with CTFD. Thus, it is with heartfelt gratitude and tremendous respect that Career Transition For Dancers honors the life of Eddie Weston: for his generous commitment to dance and the creation, growth, and impact this organization has made in the philanthropic sphere.

MAIL CALL



Dear Ms. Palitz,

Thank you so much for making my grant possible through your generous gift. There has been nothing in my life that I have loved so much as dance, and the prospect of leaving it is very difficult for me. I've made my living as a professional dancer for the past 16 years and trained to be a dancer for another 8 years before that. Clearly, dance is a labor of love, and it means so much to know that the same love is shared by individuals such as yourself. If I am not at the end of my career, then I am very close to it, and receiving this grant goes a long way towards easing my financial and mental burden. Thank you again for your incredible generosity and please know that it is greatly appreciated.

SINCERELY,
CHRIS HANNON, HOUSTON, TX

Dear Alan,

As a former dancer and AGMA member, I would like to thank you and AGMA for your continued support of Career Transition For Dancers. In my case, CTFD not only provided me with career advice but also recently awarded me a grant to cover tuition expenses related to my continued post-ballet transition. On top of that, CTFD is a professionally-run organization with high standards and accountability. My experience with them has been outstanding! In the fall, I will be entering the MBA program at Harvard Business School, Class of 2008, and I will continue to rely on support from CTFD in the pursuit of my education there. So, I hope that AGMA and its membership will continue to support CTFD in the future.

BEST WISHES,
JOHN WINFIELD, OAKLAND, CA

Ms. Westerfield,

This past January I received a grant from Career Transition For Dancers. I am going back to finish my undergraduate degree after a 20 year lapse. I took one class last fall, but was nervous to go back and take four classes this past semester. Fortunately, I was thrilled when I got two "A's" and two "A+'s" this past semester. The grades may be a reflection of how I did on tests, but the education and opportunity to learn was the reward. I look forward to continuing my education at Hunter, and with any luck I will finish my degree as soon as possible. This grant shows support from my past and help for my future. Thanks again.

SINCERELY,
JONATHAN STAHL, NEW YORK, NY

Dear Ms. Kennedy,

Words cannot express my gratitude regarding your generosity towards Career Transition For Dancers. I have appeared in several shows on Broadway/National Tours including "The Producers" with Nathan Lane, "Cats", "Crazy for You", "42nd Street", "Copacabana", Joffrey Ballet and many others. After ten shows, I decided to pursue an undergraduate degree that I had originally postponed due to my wonderful Broadway experience. It would not be at all possible without your grant. I now attend UCLA, and currently have a 4.0 with hopes of attending law school.

Please know how sincerely grateful I am for this opportunity.

SINCERELY,
J. PAIGE CHAMBERS, ATLANTA, GA