

President's Message

CTFD extends far beyond the fundamentals. Check us out.

By Cynthia Fischer

While our scholarship and career counseling programs are fundamental to a successful transition, CTFD provides so much more! Starting with our offices: chosen for easy and safe access, our New York office is in the heart of Times Square and our LA office is in the AFTRA building that houses the performing arts unions on Wilshire Blvd. There are extensive resource libraries, video viewing of past Career Conversations, information on events, programs and opportunities at CTFD and elsewhere.



Cynthia Fischer
CTFD Board President

Career Conversations

These in-depth presentations and discussion sessions with a panel of experts cover life skills, employment choices and guidance for the practical and emotional challenges facing dancers in transition. Just in the last year, typical programs covered included financial management, legal issues, health insurance and the basics on starting your own business. Video tapes of all Career Conversations are available for viewing at the New York and Los Angeles offices.

Focus Groups

Over the years, support and focus groups have developed in response to our dancers' particular needs and interests. Focus Groups are six week career counseling programs with weekly meetings for up to six dancers where a CTFD career counselor facilitates discussion of career exploration, financial management and job search experiences. Dancers exchange both information and support. The Dancers Managing Change Support Group meets monthly to help dancers process the emotional side of transition. The Business Group provides practical business advice

and mentoring by dancer entrepreneurs and outside volunteer business people. The Diamond Group, formed by a group of mature dancers, addresses their particular needs and points of view.

Networking Directory

The National Networking Directory is a brilliantly conceived resource, listing volunteer dancer clients by their educational institution and by career. Thus, any dancer seeking advice on a particular educational institution or exploring a possible career can speak directly and be mentored by a CTFD client who has "been there and done that!" 350 of CTFD's dancer-clients have volunteered to be listed in order to supply information or even mentor other dancers.

Take care and best wishes for a happy new year.

Board Profile

Anka K. Palitz is a name virtually synonymous with the New York Dance community.

Anka K. Palitz is an arts patron who has served for many years on the boards of American Ballet Theatre and Career Transition For Dancers. Her wealth of knowledge of the dance world is immeasurable, and her philanthropy is boundless. Exposed



Anka K. Palitz

to dance at an early age, Anka shares an innate fondness for the art, and she shares this fondness with all of the dancers she serves. Her efforts to satisfy the needs of the dance community illustrate the tremendous amount of respect, admiration and devotion she possesses for these dancers. Walking through her elegant Fifth Avenue apartment overlooking Central Park, one can find several awards she has received placed carefully around her home — pieces of evidence which indicate that her feelings

of love and admiration for these dancers are more than reciprocated.

Anka's involvement within the dance community has been recognized and commemorated by numerous dance organizations, foundations and non-profits. One particular award she received, the Lucia Chase Award from American Ballet Theatre, encompasses this mutual respect and loyalty. In her acceptance speech, Anka spoke about her love for dance. Echoing the words of Ted Shawn, a pioneer of modern dance in America: "I believe that dance is the oldest, noblest and most cogent of the arts. I believe that dance is the most perfect symbol of the activity of God and his angels. I believe that dance is the universal language and as such has the power to promote one world." These words reflect her testament on the world of dance, and represent what CTFD communicates.

The notion of using dance to "promote one world" was celebrated in CTFD's most recent gala, "ONE WORLD: A Spectacular Global Celebration" which Anka chaired this year. Anka has been involved with the CTFD gala since its beginning at the invitation of her beloved friend, and CTFD benefactor, the late Caroline Newhouse, when it was first held at the Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College in 1994. She described this recent gala as a showcase on the "evolution of dance." As a natural expression of the body, "dance is a spiritual and very human aspect... the body of the dance is fused with the music... they're connected. It's a very happy form of expression." Regarding the CTFD gala itself Anka says enthusiastically: "Thanks to the dedicated hard work of all of our gala chairs it has grown and grown... leaving people dumbstruck... every year is the best!" Her enthusiasm derives from her understanding of how much work is put into the organization's gala each year.

This year, as 21st Anniversary Chair, Anka worked with fellow chairs, Patricia Kennedy, Denise Cobb, Yolanda Santos Garza, Janice Becker, Ann Van Ness, Roberta Silbert Greene and David Goldring to help create one of our most successful galas ever, raising over \$1.1 million. Anka knows much of this year's success is due to the tremendous efforts of the gala chairs as well as the gala producers, Ann Marie DeAngelo and Alexander Dubé: "the reason why this year's gala was so successful was because there were more people



Dance China NY

Photo: Richard Termine

Lorena Feijoo

Photo: Richard Termine

Drum Café NY

Photo: Richard Termine

involved in it." Regarding her fellow chairs, Anka mentions how great it was to have each chair contribute their own individual talents: "it was a unison of different talents... we worked together as a team very well."

As a dance enthusiast who has worked alongside dancers at American Ballet Theatre, and as a sponsor for principal dancer at ABT, Ethan Stiefel, Anka empathizes with all of the various aspects of a dancer's life. "I know how much practice goes into perfecting the art form. Their lives are so dedicated ... for not that great of a remuneration. And if you ask a dancer — they will tell you its something they must do — they have to dance." Anka also understands how dancers develop strong bonds with other dancers during their performance careers. Working together for long hours, dancers form a special kinship with their colleagues. "This is why it is especially difficult for dancers to leave their dance careers. To leave this community is very tough for them." This is an issue Anka relates to first hand, as Mr. Stiefel has recently injured himself and has had to refrain from dancing. With the thought of not being able to perform again looming over him, Ethan has looked towards his fellow dancers for support. Anka's involvement with CTFD reflects her concern for these life-altering issues: "I just want to really do good and help dancers."

Through her work, Anka is exposed to all of the stages of a dancer's life — the steps towards establishing a successful career and maintaining it, as well as the issues dancers face when contemplating new career options. Anka has witnessed these daunting and fragile moments in a dancer's life, and possesses great compassion to want to help them during these processes. Thus, through the Clarence Y. Palitz Scholarship Fund at CTFD, which Anka created six years ago to honor her late husband, Anka has benefited the lives of 25 deserving CTFD clients. The dance community is lucky to have such a wonderful cheerleader rooting for them. Acknowledging just how lucky they are to have her on board, CTFD has chosen to commemorate Anka's contribution towards its success and growth by honoring her in its 22nd Anniversary Jubilee gala next October. This will be a very special event, marking Anka's fourteen years with the organization. As honoree, Anka deserves all of the recognition she receives, for this organization thrives on the counsel, love and dedication of people like her.

Confessions of a Dancer

By Michael Blake

I read Stephen Pier's article, "After The Dancing Stops," and recognized myself. I was a modern dancer with the companies of Murray Louis, José Limón, and Donald Byrd for 22 glorious years before severe arthritis of the hip brought a halt to my career at age 40. I needed a lot of help finding a new identity and a new career, and I was lucky enough to get that help from a great organization.

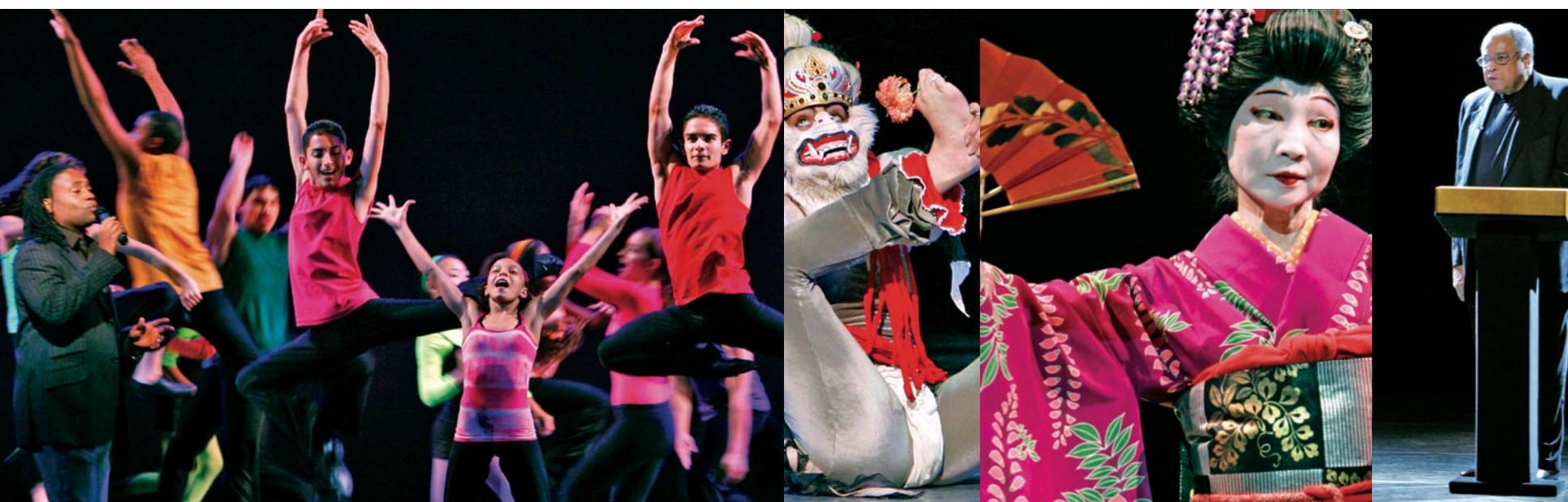
Dancing was all I'd done since I began at 18; I went to college for dance and never looked back. But when the pain in my hip went from inhibiting me from working fully to stopping me from working altogether, I went to two doctors who concurred: I needed to stop dancing and consider surgery.

My career of more than two decades was over. What does a dancer do then? I cried for about a month without stopping. I hid in my apartment, drinking heavily and watching movies on TV. Without dance, I didn't want to live. What other skills did I have? I had never even waited a table in my life (which I shamelessly boasted about during my career). I went from being the lucky dancer who was always working to someone who had no income.

But I had bills to pay. Depressed or not, I needed my booze and cable service! I got out of bed and stumbled upon an organization called **Career Transition For Dancers** in New York City (there is also a branch in Los Angeles). I went to CTFD in tears, and sat in an office with career counselor, Suzie Jary. I was embarrassed, angry, and upset — but Ms. Jary let me know I was not alone. We made a detailed list of my interests. We set goals. I was skeptical at first, but I had nothing to lose. Much to my surprise, there were many options on that list — not easily met, but obtainable possibilities. Those options gave me confidence. Not being alone gave me strength. I took control of my life again.

I couldn't go back to the physical demands of full-time modern dance, but I could still perform. I had never done a Broadway show, yet always dreamed of doing just that. I took voice lessons, while I taught dance to make money. I auditioned for everything I saw in the trade papers.

I landed a tour of **Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat**, starring Deborah Gibson and Patrick Cassidy. So what if I was the oldest in the cast, at 41! When the tour was over, I didn't waste time being depressed — I went back to CTFD. I enrolled at Empire State College to complete the undergraduate degree I had never finished; CTFD even gave scholarship me a grant to help pay the tuition. When I finished that degree with honors, I went on for a graduate degree, also partially funded by the organization.



**National Dance Institute of New Mexico,
Rosie's Broadway Kids with Billy Porter**

Photo: Richard Termine

Balam Dance Theatre

Photo: Richard Termine

Sachiyo Ito

Photo: Richard Termine

James Earl Jones

Photo: Richard Termine