

# GIVING BACK. PAYING FORWARD.

Dance moves me.

When I was 8 years old I saw my first dance class. My older sister began taking Jazz class and my mother brought me along to wait during the one-hour class. Not one for sitting still, I began to copy what they were doing in the hallway. After that continued for a few weeks, my mother decided to enroll me in the next session and I've never looked back since.

I spent my school years balancing studying with my rigorous dance training. I did it all: ballet, tap, jazz, modern, musical theater, even Celtic dancing. While my classmates were going shopping and to the movies, I was taking dance class. Fortunately, I was able to travel all over the United States for dance competitions and workshops.

I continued dancing through college, attending Ohio State University and receiving my BFA in Dance. A glitch in the freshman housing assignments led me to learn early on about persuading others about the importance and professionalism of the arts. I was housed in the Engineering dorm – I can't even tell you how many people said "Dance, that's a major?" Although it was frustrating at the time, my passion for dance was so strong that I tried to convince everyone how special and valuable it is!

Although I never pursued a professional dance career, dance has continued to be the driving force in my life. I spent time after college studying Labanotation in order to become a Professional Notator. I was driven by the need to make sure dance works were preserved, and could be performed on stage no matter how long ago they were choreographed. Even though I wasn't performing, I was motivated by the fact that my work would help preserve the diverse and intricate history of dance.

Over the past few years, I have put my passion for dance to work while fundraising for arts organizations. Who better to

convince others of the importance of supporting dance? I feel so fortunate that I am able to use my skills to help other dancers. While the arts are always one of the first things to go when the economy sours, the recession gave me an opportunity to passionately explain the need for supporting dance to donors, foundations and audiences.

Almost twenty years after seeing my first dance class, I'm still dancing. I try to take class once a week, because although I am doing my part to help dance, I have to do something to help myself. That one class helps to remind me why I spend my time fundraising. There is nothing else that I have done that makes me feel the way that I do when I dance! I want everyone to have that feeling!

- Jennifer Garda

Former Development Associate

## Opening Heart Expressing Soul



L to R: Anka K. Palitz and Simon Teakle

To think that the average dancers' performing career could end around age 30 devastates me. I am an avid ballet lover and attend many diverse performances. Watching these impassioned artists touches my heart and by extension compels me to give back. Career Transition For Dancers is an organization very dear to my heart. The services they provide are essential to the health and lifespan of a dancer. The more I began to understand the challenges faced by dancers, the more I championed supporting programs for dancers.

In my city of Palm Beach, we are a close-knit community of art lovers. I knew if I were to create an opportunity for my fellow community members to learn more about services provided by Career Transition For Dancers, they too would champion and support programs that cared for the entire lifespan of dancers.

To touch the hearts of my friends and fellow snowbirds, I created a luncheon event to combine two things Palm Beach is known for: Dance and Fashion. This combination was the birth of the Palm Beach Fashion Awards.

For this past year, I asked all the major national ballet and dance companies to loan me two costumes; one male and one female. All done with appreciation for the programs, services and scholarships offered to and received by professional dancers when their performance career had come to an end. The dance students from The Alexander W. Dryfoos, Jr. School of the Arts modeled the costumes while a narrator shared the year the ballet was created, the choreographer, the donating company's name and the star of the ballet. It was the most unique fashion show any guest had ever seen. Everyone raved! I am pleased to report that this year, we have raised \$20,000 for programs and services at Career Transition For Dancers.

In Florida alone, Career Transition For Dancers has assisted 94 dancer-clients and has awarded \$101,700 in scholarships and grants. Knowing that I helped to increase these numbers moves me beyond words.

- Anka K. Palitz

Vice President, Board of Directors