

FIRST, FIERCE, FOR EVERYONE

40TH DANCING
ANNIVERSARY WHEELS
COMPANY



The Dancing Wheels Company & School
3030 Euclid Ave. ♦ Suite 100 ♦ Cleveland, OH ♦ 44115 ♦ dancingwheels.org ♦ 216-432-0306



A UNIFYING EXPRESSION FOR ALL. OF MOVEMENT

If dance is an expression of the human spirit, then it is best expressed by people of all abilities. That is the fundamental belief behind the Dancing Wheels Company & School. Considered one of the premier arts and disabilities organizations in the U.S., Dancing Wheels is a professional, physically integrated dance company uniting the talents of dancers both with and without disabilities.

Mary Verdi-Fletcher, the first professional wheelchair dancer in the U.S., founded the Dancing Wheels Company in Cleveland in 1980. Born with spina bifida, Mary wanted to offer others with disabilities full and equal access into the world of dance. An almost unimaginable concept at the time, Mary's vision and passion have since helped to revolutionize our very notion of dance – as well as what defines a dancer.

Furthering the mission of inclusive arts and recreating opportunities for all, the School of Dancing Wheels proudly opened its doors in 1990. Its state-of-the-art studios were soon regarded as a world-class training center for dancers, choreographers and educators. That same year, a partnership with the Cleveland Ballet created the ground-breaking Cleveland Ballet Dancing Wheels which went on to delight audiences for nearly a decade.

To date, the Dancing Wheels Company's inspirational mission has touched over 5.5 million people through performances, school assemblies, residencies and workshops. Millions more have enjoyed their artistry via appearances on CNN, Good Morning America, 20/20 and the TV special "Christopher Reeve: A Celebration of Hope."

Dancing Wheels travels the globe advocating disability awareness and entertaining 30,000-50,000 people each year. With a repertory of over 75 works from nationally-esteemed choreographers and a message of inclusion and accessibility, the Company continually expands the reach of artistic possibilities while celebrating the universal spirit of dance.

Mission & Purpose:

The Dancing Wheels

Company & School is an organization of artists with and without disabilities that educates, entertains and advocates through inclusive dance worldwide. The purpose of the organization is to provide artistic opportunities inclusively, which involves several principles and goals:

Enhance integration and diversity in the arts with works uniting people of all abilities.

Provide successful, independent and creative role models for those with disabilities.

Erase negative stereotypes about people with disabilities in professional careers, primarily in the arts.

Instill greater understanding and professionalism in individuals of all ability levels.

Dancing Wheels is organized under Professional Flair, Inc., a 501(c) arts and disabilities organization.





PERFORMANCE OFFERINGS

For four decades, The Dancing Wheels Company has offered performances recognized for their artistry, diversity, and infusion of eclectic works from renowned choreographers. This skilled ensemble of stand-up and sit-down dancers has reached over five and a half million people worldwide with innovative mainstage performances, school assembly programs, guest appearances, master classes, and varied outreach activities.

From live to virtual streamed performances in typical theater venues, site-specific locations, hospitals, universities, festivals and private events, our company presents enlightening and entertaining works from contemporary pieces to classical story ballets.

Guest Appearances

The 10-35 minute special performance is an ideal addition to entertain guests at galas, dinners, corporate or private gatherings. Performances can be tailored to highlight event themes.

Keynote Speaking

Dancing Wheels founder, Mary Verdi-Fletcher, is a tireless advocate for the arts and disabilities rights. She pioneered the creation of physical integrated professional dance companies. As someone who has forever changed the way society views the artistry and talents of people with disabilities, she is an inspiring keynote speaker.

Mini-Mainstage Performances: Mixed Repertory or Story Ballet

A 60-minute performance featuring 6-8 dancers in fully costumed excerpts from any of the mainstage repertory and/or story ballets. Perfect for high school or college performances. In a theater, this concert is designed for student matinee performances or to accommodate when full production requirements or time availability is not possible.

Mainstage Performances: Mixed Repertory or Story Ballet

This 70-90 minute, full Company concert-style performance requires full technical and production facilities. Typically a ticketed event for the general public, performances may feature one of the Company's extensive repertory selections or one of its enchanting story ballets.

For a list of performances, see the repertory page at Dancingwheels.org.

The Dancing Wheels Company
is represented by KMP Artists.



15 Years of Partnering for Community Impact

For booking inquiries, contact
KMP at +1.312.342.7898
Email info@kmpartists.com

Or visit

[http://kmpartists.com/artists/
dancing-wheels-company/](http://kmpartists.com/artists/dancing-wheels-company/)



For more information and to
select the performance of your
choice, please visit
dancingwheels.org.

Or, contact our Tour Manager at:

216.432.0306 or
touring@dancingwheels.org





EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Featuring dancers representing a spectrum of age, ethnicity, gender, and physical abilities, The Dancing Wheels Company has the unique ability to connect on a personal level with children and adults of all abilities. Fine Arts Content Standards and general content standards are met in all educational programs. Available in-person and remote virtual learning options are shown below.

*Please contact our Director of Outreach for details at 216.432.0306
or email outreach@dancingwheels.org.*

STANDARD ASSEMBLY-BASED PROGRAMS

Perfect for K-College, these 45-60 minute programs combine dance and dialogue to educate kids about disability-related issues in an entertaining and informative manner.

After a series of energetic dance excerpts, audience members hear the story of a dancer with a disability who has lived out their dreams despite societal obstacles, emphasizing the important aspects of accessibility. Dancers demonstrate the language of dance through adaptive translation using methods like sign language, shadowing, and audio-description. The final message relates to the founder's dream to dance despite her disability, and to make the arts accessible and available to people of all abilities.

Components of an assembly-based program may include:

Assembly-Based with Story Ballet Theme: These are abbreviated versions of mainstage concerts for in-school performances with the full Company:

- **Alice in Wonderland, Like You've Never Seen Before.**
A contemporary production that's both edgy and family-friendly using imagery and characters to take a kaleidoscopic trip through Wonderland.
- **Daring to Be DUMBO!** A reimagined story set in a contemporary junior high school, where Dumbo is a bullied 13-year-old girl who exemplifies turning differences into strengths.
- **Helen Keller: A Tribute to My Teacher.** Honoring the 2006 Cleveland Sight Center centennial, this story ballet showcases Keller as a pioneering force for women, people with disabilities, and the civil rights movement.
- **The Snowman** brings to life the captivating, and heartwarming children's book and video, *The Snowman*, by Raymond Briggs.

Programming Basics:

The Dancing Wheels

Company & School has reached over 5.5 million people through our educational outreach and professional performances.

Our company performs in schools, universities, concert halls, libraries, community centers, and hospitals across the nation.

Lecture Performance Costs

vary depending on the program selected, the number of dancer-instructors assigned, travel and accommodation expenses incurred. We tailor programming to the interests and budget of host schools.

Types of Programs:

- ❖ General one-hour assembly
- ❖ Themed one-hour assemblies based on story ballets, current social issues, history, or science
- ❖ Residencies
- ❖ Workshops
- ❖ Master Classes

Assembly-Based and

Residency Programs include curriculum and study guides for teachers and students.

In-person and remote virtual learning options now available!



Assembly-Based with Historical Topic: Featuring 4-6 dancers:

- **Far East of the Blues.** World-renowned choreographer Donald McKayle captures the mood and imagery evoked in the great jazz legend Duke Ellington's "Far East Suite."
- **Sweet Radio Radicals** features music of female singers and songwriters whose music changed society.
- **Unconquered Warriors** infuses traditional Chinese dance with modern dance and is based on the Asian culture of the Chinese Warriors.
- **Walking on Clouds.** Using stories of equality/Rosa Parks, this piece mixes words and movement to explore humanity and the boundaries of differences and equality, both emotional and historical-between people with disabilities and people of color.

Assembly-Based with Science Topic: Perfect for secondary education students, this 45-minute to 1-hour program, including a question-and-answer session, presents information about dance, disability related issues, and science in a fun and informative manner.

- **Science: A Catalyst for Art in Motion** is an interactive assembly program with dance, disability awareness, and curriculum-based subject matter centered on Newton's Three Laws of Motion. The program demonstrates such factors as force, acceleration and opposing reactions through the use of the Dancing Wheels Company's highly technical wheelchairs used for everyday mobility and dance. The program also touches on the science behind wheelchair construction, development, and the technologies that go into the composition of the chair's metals, wheel circumference and design elements. The main objectives of our Art in Motion and other assembly programs are to inspire, entertain and educate.

RESIDENCIES

Residencies of 3-5 days can conclude with a lecture performance with the Dancing Wheels Company. Students will have the opportunity to learn the Dancing Wheels technique while expanding on one of the following topics:

- **Making a Difference**, a one-day residency, incorporates dance with Social Studies and English Standards to address diversity, relationships, communication (both oral and visual) and accessibility.
- **Out of the Blues**, a four-day residency that explores the history of jazz music with an emphasis on the great Duke Ellington and his revolutionary approach that changed the face of jazz. As the culmination of the residency, students will have the opportunity to present their accomplishments in dance and narration at an assembly-based performance with the Dancing Wheels Company.
- **First, Fierce and For Everyone** Students will identify traits they can develop to create their own first, fierce and for everyone story. With a curriculum tailored to students in Grades K-12, participants will consider the stories of people whose bravery and confidence broke boundaries in world-changing ways. Together with interactive narratives, current event discussions, movement and choreography, students will enjoy an immersive learning experience that will expose them to the principles of inclusive arts and the difference each one can make as pioneers in their own spheres of influence.
- **And other programs previously described including:** [Alice in Wonderland, Like You've Never Seen Before](#) | [Daring to Be DUMBO!](#) | [Helen Keller: A Tribute to My Teacher](#) | [The Snowman](#)

WORKSHOPS

Workshops provide participants an in-depth look at physically integrated dance through adaptive translation, integrated partnering techniques, and the opportunity to try dancing in a wheelchair. Multiple instructors are involved to assist study in small groups. A workshop may be tailored to the specific needs of your organization and lasts between 1-3 hours.

MASTER CLASSES

An instructor from The Dancing Wheels Company & School teaches a Master Class in various genres of dance such as modern, ballet, or jazz for participants of mixed abilities or specifically for disabled or non-disabled groups.



THE DEDICATED TEAM THAT KEEPS OUR WHEELS IN MOTION

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Dana A. Kuhn, Manager of Development
& Communications

Eytan Hoenig, Administrative Assistant

Stacy Windahl, Marketing Services

Sara Lawrence-Sucato, Rehearsal Director,
Director of Outreach & Community Engagement

Matthew Bowman, Director of School of Dancing
Wheels, Marketing, Social Media & Archives
Manager

Marissa Thomas, Tour Manager

Company Members

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Tanya Ewell

Jared Harden

Molly Haslag

Cody Krause

Sara Lawrence-Sucato

Raul Panzar

Celina Speck

Marissa Thomas

Mary Verdi-Fletcher

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***Advisory Board Member**

****Emeritus**

†In memoriam

The School of Dancing Wheels Teaching Artists

L. Taylor Ashton-Beil, Matt Bowman, Andrea Belser McCormick, Molly Haslag, Bryant Henderson,
Cody Krause, Sara Lawrence-Sucato, Dominique Patton, Celina Speck, Mary Verdi-Fletcher

If dance is an expression of the human spirit, then it is best expressed by people of all abilities.





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